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CONCEPTUALIZING EASTERN EUROPE: PAST AND PRESENT

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Annotation

The ideas presented in the dissertation are based on the premise that the concept of Eastern Europe is a construction, which received its meaning(s) through events and shifts, which also shaped the idea of Europe. To analyze these influences several labels and aspects of history, which constructed the concept of Eastern Europe can be recognized. The author argues that there can be five important aspects, forming the concept and providing meanings, discerned and considered: (1) geography associated with the Eastern border of the European continent and its flexibility; (2) cultural trends, mainly provided by the ideas of the Enlightenment, which present the eastern part as wild, barbaric and uncivilized; (3) political formations, which by military and political means conquered or lost the region, alienating it with the West or making it a 'buffer zone'; (4) Economic aspects of backwardness and the constant try to catch-up with the West; and (5) the discourse about the region itself, historiography depicting the formations and ascribing labels to discourse.

Keywords

Eastern Europe, East Central Europe, Europe, History, Civilization, Enlightenment, Imperialism, Core, Periphery, Backwardness, Otherness.

Statement:

1. This statement is to confirm that this paper is a product of my own work and also to confirm that I used the listed sources in producing it.
2. I agree that the paper can be checked for research and studying purposes.

Prague, 21 May 2010

Vilius Mačkinis

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mačkinis', written in a cursive style.

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I. Introduction

1.1. Eastern Europe: Between history and destiny

Illustrations used in history books and textbooks, can usually show historical events in a certain light, one that has the power to evoke the mood and destiny lurking behind the picture. One illustration, which does just this, is Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune's 'Le Gateau des Rois' (The cake of Kings or Royal cake). Moreau le Jeune's work is an engraving, which represents eighteenth century East Central Europe by allegorically depicting the first partition of Poland in 1772. The work shows Catherine the Great of Russia, Joseph II of Austria, and Frederick the Great of Prussia around the map of Poland, while the last king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth tries to hold on to his crown. The event is an important part of European history, and also illustrates East Central European destiny.

To understand Eastern Europe is to know its history and to engage with its destiny. Here, it might seem that the word 'destiny' sounds too poetic to be attached to Eastern Europe. But Eastern Europe's destiny and history are inextricably linked. In other words, one cannot simply study the history of Eastern Europe. When theorists try to use history as a link between what Eastern Europe is today and how it has developed, the result is often one that depends on a Western concept of history. Thus, to truly understand Eastern Europe is to understand not only its history, but also its destiny. This destiny is best exemplified by a constant struggle to show that Eastern Europe is not merely some peripheral attachment to the West, but also an important part of Europe. Writers, such as Milan Kundera and Vaclav Havel have interpreted this sentiment best; creating works that show the region is something integral and an essential part of everything European.¹

The initial difficulty in trying to retrace how the concept of Eastern Europe was formed is the duality of problems. One has to deal with the history of Europe and the history of the region, at the same time trying to retrace the differences or similarities, which influenced the creation of Eastern Europe. The problem, of course, is the enormous amount of material and insights, and the long course of history itself.

¹ The ideas of "Kidnapped West" and "Return to Europe" are discussed in Joshua Hagen's article 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe: the Rise and Fall of the "Center"', *Political Geography*, 22, 2003, pp. 489-517 (thereafter Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe').

The 'eastern' label was attached to the region by the Western part of Europe after several major events and changes in thinking overtime. Evolving enemies, borders, and other shifts in European history, participated in conceptualizing Eastern Europe. From ancient Greece to the Iron Curtain, all divisions in Europe have been represented by a dichotomy between two opposing sides, for example: barbarism versus civilization, economic advancement versus backwardness, great discoveries and the taming of the ocean versus the shifting frontier and the threat of the Orient. These oppositions have constructed lines and walls, both mental and physical, which have divided Europe. Europe has also been divided by many events throughout history, for instance: the Roman Empire, Christianity, The Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Industrialization, and the World Wars. All of these events have had a hand in the development of Europe, changing its destiny and creating a new vision of what the region does or does not encompass. To understand the influence of the oppositional dichotomies and events that have shaped Europe, one must first engage with its history.

The history of Europe, however, is ambiguous and can mean many different things to many different people. That being said, every historian can write the history of Europe differently. A. J. P. Taylor, for example, when asked to describe what European history is, wrote in his journal:

European History is whatever the historian wants it to be. It is a summary of the events and ideas, political, religious, military, pacific, serious, romantic, near at hand, far away, tragic, comic, significant, meaningless, anything else you would like it to be. There is only one limiting factor. It must take place in, or derive from, the area we call Europe. But as I am not sure what exactly that area is meant to be, I am pretty well in haze about the rest.²

If European history can be everything a historian wants it to be, then Eastern European history is the history of struggle to be part of that everything. And it is, although, sometimes with different results. The main idea here is that diversity is a part of Europe. It is what Europe is all about. Essentially, it is made up of a large number of comparatively small areas comprised of: enemies, friends, nations, countries, economies, politicians, ideas, religious splits, conquerors, and unifications.

² Quoted from Norman Davies, Europe, New York: Oxford University Press 1996, (hereafter, Davies, Europe), p. 45.

The aim of my thesis is to explore Europe's diversity and to portray how it has affected and constructed the concept of Eastern Europe overtime. My research will focus on Eastern Europe by examining the history of Europe as a whole and the events and 'trends' witnessed overtime. An ever-evolving history has dictated what Eastern Europe is and how it is conceptualized. But because history also encompasses many different elements, my thesis will adopt a theoretical framework, argument, and structure, which will explore different aspects of history, and ultimately discuss the construction of 'Eastern Europe'.

1.2. Eastern Europe constructed: note on theoretical premises, methods, argument and structure of the thesis

Conceptions of Eastern Europe have been formed from historical understandings, which have also led to stereotypes about its backwardness and its inability to civilize itself according to the standards of Western Europe. However, the region is so diverse and has had so many different roles within European history, that it is impossible to attribute only one characteristic to it. In other words, conceptualizing it from a western stereotypical point of view is only one way to view it. Ultimately, some conceptions are just 'western prejudice' and discourse based on ignorance and narrow understandings. The problem, however, is that it is impossible to escape this discourse. Even one willing to show the Enlightenment's fruits in Bohemia or Poland would have to employ the Enlightenment's own labels, which disregard the region. E. Hobsbawm argues, that all historians are engaged in the process of creating an invented tradition 'as they contribute, consciously or not, to the creation, dismantling and restructuring of images of the past which belong not only to the world of specialist investigation but to the public sphere of man as political being.'³ Hobsbawm encouraged others to not only show how history was or is portraying the region, but to argue against these simplified depictions, and show that diversity is the most significant aspect of the region, not one-sided 'eastern' labels.

This goal dictates the major theoretical premises of my research: to regard the concept of Eastern Europe as constructed. The region's history is part of European history, but all of the historical events in Europe attached certain parameters to the concept, forcing the label 'eastern'. This not only depicts its place in relation to the West, but also associates it with an

³ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.) The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 (hereafter, Hobsbawm, 'Inventing traditions'), p. 13.

often-negative discourse. Historically, events can be connected to each other, emphasizing the division between Eastern and Western Europe. In E. Hobsbawm's words 'inventing the tradition'.⁴ The tradition of Eastern Europe is to be somehow 'lesser' or 'not quite European', relying on a distorted picture of Europe that only the western part provides. Hobsbawm's 'invented tradition' influenced the method of my analysis. Thus, the major aim is to show those sets of practices and certain values and norms of behavior, which by repetition imply continuity with a suitable historical past.⁵ In order to prove the relevance of this concept, I will examine how certain historical events and divisions were associated with each other.

But as Hobsbawm contends, the study of invented traditions cannot be separated from the wider study of a society's history.⁶ To analyze the history of society more thoroughly, methodology from 'political geography' was used. Political geography gave valuable insights into imagined geography, which according to J. Hagen 'refers to ways of perceiving spaces and places, and the relationships between them, as complex sets of cultural and political practices and ideas defined spatially, rather than regarding them as static, discrete territorial units'.⁷ The constructions of regions are representations of worldviews and discursive formations, influenced by power, knowledge, and spatiality.⁸

In order to understand the discursive formations, some historical background is needed, showing the power relations and mindset of the time. To do this, P. Burke's suggested history of 'mentalities collectives' was utilized. Burke argued that in order to understand what Europe meant for earlier generations, it must be placed in the 'repertoire' of concepts, which express group identity in different times and places.⁹ These concepts derive their meanings from their place in the repertoire, 'a system in which it is associated with some concepts and opposed to others'.¹⁰

The methodology used is part of a two dimensional analysis: one dimension is devoted to the idea of Europe and events and practices, which changed it and the other focuses on Eastern Europe, which discusses how not only these events, but also the changing idea of Europe influenced it. The analysis of ideas about Europe is mostly background and horizontal, while analysis of Eastern Europe is deep and vertical, divided according to certain parameters, which influenced the concept during any particular time period.

⁴ Hobsbawm, 'Inventing traditions'.

⁵ Hobsbawm, 'Inventing traditions', p. 1.

⁶ Hobsbawm, 'Inventing traditions', p. 12.

⁷ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 490.

⁸ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 490.

⁹ Peter Burke, 'Did Europe Exist before 1700?', (hereafter, Burke, 'Europe before 1700'), History of European Ideas, 1, 1980, pp. 1-6, (p. 22).

¹⁰ Burke, 'Europe before 1700', p. 22.

This work will argue that several labels and aspects of history have influenced the concept of Eastern Europe, but some have been more influential than others. In my view there are five important aspects to consider: (1) geography associated with the Eastern border of the European continent and its flexibility; (2) cultural trends, mainly provided by the ideas of the Enlightenment, which present the eastern part as wild, barbaric and uncivilized; (3) political formations, which by military and political means conquered or lost the region, alienating it with the West or making it a 'buffer zone'; (4) Economic aspects of backwardness and the constant try to catch-up with the West; and (5) the discourse about the region itself, historiography depicting the formations and ascribing labels to discourse.

The biggest difficulty is trying to keep the balance between what is happening (in general) in Europe and how it influences Eastern Europe, and at the same time creating a distinctive idea about it. This is problematic for several reasons. First, though it is the history of Europe, questions about when Europe received the meaning attributed to it today, have to be accounted for. It is rather slippery to talk about Europe before the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, one cannot exclude the Middle Ages and Christianity, as these are the basis of European identity.

There is also a constant question: What is included in the region? Though the region stretches (or might stretch) from the Baltic coast to the southern end of the Balkan Peninsula, the majority of examples about the actual landmass Eastern Europe composes consist of lands from the historic kingdoms of Poland-Lithuania, Bohemia, and Hungary, as well as the lands of their conquerors and rulers (Germany, Austria and Russia). Thus the history of Eastern Europe is indivisible from the history of Central Europe. It is based on the regional divisions of Oscar Halecki,¹¹ which represent the most appreciated view used in the thesis. It is never just about the East, the ideas are coming from the West and end in the vastness of Russia.

The many arguments about the parameters of Eastern Europe help guide the structure of my thesis. The first part is dedicated to introductory and background history about the idea of Europe. It then analyzes the major 'trends' and upheavals, which influenced and changed it. These events are later reproduced in other parts of the paper, which deal with specific aspects of Eastern Europe to correlate them and show how certain events in Europe influenced the concept of Eastern Europe. The other five sections are labeled according to the main argument of the work: the concepts of Eastern Europe contain geographical, cultural, political, economic, and historiographical patterns. The first four parts are framed in a time

¹¹ Oscar Halecki, Borderlands of Western Civilization. A History of East Central Europe, 2nd edn, Safety Harbor, FL: Simon Publications 2000 (hereafter, Halecki, Borderlands).

scope from the Middle Ages until the twenty-first century, while the last historiographical part analyses the more general problems of history writing and its influence on concept formation.

II. Historical Background: Ideas of and about Europe

If one tries to explain or describe what Europe means, there are several ways and outcomes of the decision. For example, Europe could be viewed as a: continent, way of life, or a conglomerate of certain states. Europe has its geographical, cultural, political, and economic meanings and descriptions, and it is always something more, something that can be not only noticed but also felt. However, all these conceptions are subordinate to time and history, which has formed the concept of Europe. As Gerard Delanty points out, Europe is created by history and it is history at the same time.¹² But all of this history has to start somewhere, and this beginning can best be traced to a myth.

Europa was the name of an Asian princess who was the daughter of Agenor, King of Tyre, and was abducted and carried to Crete by Zeus. She was carried to another continent, for which she gave her name. The myth comes from ancient Greece, and is regarded as the birthplace of European civilization, inspiring artists for ages to come. Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' immortalized Europa with a lavish feminine accent, preserving the mythical birth of Europe until the end of time. It is not only the name of the continent it is also the Greek Other, oppositional Asia. Conflict between the two continents was locked for hundreds of years, and determined what Europe was, is, and will become.

For Greeks, Europe was a geographical term. It was used as a name for the continent, discerning it from Asia and Africa. However, Europe for Greeks was also associated with Hellas¹³, the lands around the Aegean Sea, opposed to Asia and Africa. As G. Delanty describes, Classical Antiquity linked the idea of Europe with the concept of Occident, which at the beginning meant the Eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea basin.¹⁴ It was not a cultural idea, but a geographical Hellenistic Occident. The most important distinction made by Greeks was between *Us* and *Them*, and the *Them* were not only peoples from Asia. The Northern lands of the continent were unknown and alien as well.

¹² Gerard Delanty, *Europos Išradimas: Idėja, Tapatumas, Realybė*, trans. Almantas Salamavičiuc, Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla: Vilnius, 2002 (hereafter, Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*), p. 16.

¹³ Anthony Pagden, 'Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent', (hereafter, Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent') in Anthony Pagden (ed.) *The Idea of Europe from Antiquity to the European Union*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 33-54, (p. 36)

¹⁴ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 37.

The distinction between the Greek world and people, who were not touched by Greek culture and whom Greeks could not understand - barbarians - was the most important distinction in their worldview. The Greek division of the world into civilized and barbarous was a precursor to the conception of Europe's cultural superiority.¹⁵ 'In the Greek worldview, and in the conceptions of generations of Europeans, to live like a "barbarian" or a "savage" meant living as something less than human'.¹⁶ It was not the opposition of Europe against Asia, but political dualism (*Us* versus *Them*; Civilization versus Barbarism) and the formation of ethnocentrism, which are the most important formations of the Classical period.¹⁷

Jacques Le Goff summarizes that Ancient Greece's legacy to Europe was embedded in its opposition to the East and a democratic model. The latter, in his opinion, reappeared in improved forms only at the time of the French revolution.¹⁸ Le Goff also adds Greek polis as a precursor to medieval towns, and the city that is most significant in the development of European identity.¹⁹ But the most influential Greek heritage, shaping European ideas in later centuries, was classical civilization itself and its association with the name 'Europe' given by the Greeks.

Roman civilization followed the Greek division of the world into three continents, but the Roman World was concentrated around the Mediterranean and it encompassed a region and not the continent. Nonetheless, the Roman way of life was distinct, which discerned it from the *Other*. Additionally, communal life was attributed to Europe, as a specific environment, and reached its peak with the dominant stance of Rome.²⁰ Romans did not discern separate identities between the people outside their world, as a result all were seen as uncivilized barbarians. In this worldview, the most important civilizing aspect was 'the law'. As Anthony Pagden affirms, 'Romans elevated the law to a place it still holds today - as the sole guarantor of the continuity of "civilization"'.²¹

It has to be said that despite the distinctiveness of Roman civilization, it was first Roman and not European. Gerard Delanty argues that even though the word Europe existed,

¹⁵ Norman Davies, *Europe East and West*, London: Pimlico, 2007 (hereafter, Davies, *Europe East and West*), p. 34.

¹⁶ Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent', p. 41.

¹⁷ Delanty, *Europos Iŝradimas*, p. 36.

¹⁸ Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, trans. Janet Lloyd, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005 (hereafter, Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*), p. 9.

¹⁹ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 10.

²⁰ Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent', p. 41.

²¹ Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent', p. 42.

the concept of 'Europeans' was very rare.²² Hellenism and Rome were more important points of distinction, as the idea of European identity did not yet exist.

Nonetheless, as Le Goff describes the Romans considered the Bible to be of 'capital importance'.²³ And 'it was through [the] intermediary of Christianity that God became a part of the thought and history of Europe'.²⁴ With the adoption of Christianity, the distinction of civilized and barbaric was supplanted by Christianity versus paganism. The division of the Roman Empire into two parts in 286 is what brought the opposition between East and West. When Constantine moved the capital to Constantinople and the western part was absorbed by barbarians, the occidental tradition was moved to the East.²⁵ In the years to come, however, Constantinople became increasingly oriental and Greek; it became Byzantine, Oriental, as well as heir of the Roman Empire, retaking its imperial traditions. In such a division, the concept of Occident and Europe was attributed to the western part of the former Roman Empire, and it became the European Occident. It started to identify itself with Latin Christianity,²⁶ and in later years Europe and Occident became synonyms of Christianity.

The major impact on the formation of Europe related to Christianity was the rise of Islam. The Medieval ages witnessed a constant battle between Christianity and Islam, which coming from the East, became Oriental and alien *Other*. Europe, as Christian West, formed itself in opposition to the Orient, which became its most fierce enemy and cultural *Other*. The collision of two separate religions and cultures formed the distinct, unique and autonomous Europe, and Europe identified with Christianity.²⁷ It was Christianity and not Europe, which was a significant mark of identification. As Peter Burke asserts, in the medieval repertoire of concepts expressing group identity, "Europe" had a relatively minor place'.²⁸ But as Christianity engulfed the continent, it became Europe's label. The Christian conquest was not directed only toward the Muslim East. The thousand-year process of Christianizing pagan Europe meant that Europe ceased to be only a geographical idea, and Christianity began to coincide with the borders of the continent. It is important to stress the point made by Norman Davies, that 'the modern descendants of pagan, barbarian invaders like the English and the Magyars who had destroyed the Christian civilization of the countries they invaded,

²² Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 39.

²³ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 12.

²⁴ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 12.

²⁵ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 40.

²⁶ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 41.

²⁷ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 45.

²⁸ Burke, 'Europe before 1700', p. 23.

nonetheless appropriated the Romano-Christian tradition as their own'.²⁹ As northern tribes accepted Christianity, Europe left the Mediterranean Sea and moved toward the Baltic.³⁰ The Christian world became the Occident, and the battle of Tours in 732 was a symbolic turn, denoting Christian, European powers winning against Muslims. This battle symbolized the birth of Europe as a proto-cultural idea, and it had a major impact on the formation of europeocentric worldviews.³¹ And though, as Le Goff states, the battle in historiography is portrayed between 'mere skirmish' and 'hugely important event' it was a European event nonetheless, and a victory of the West against the East.³²

Christianity not only adopted classical knowledge about divisions of the world into three continents. It also ascribed new meanings to it, mainly the idea that Europe, Asia and Africa were inhabited by the descendants of the three sons of Noah: Japheth as a forefather of pagan and Christian Greeks, Shem as a forefather of Semitic people (Jews and Arabs), and Ham as forefather of hamitic Africa.³³ The three sons were attributed to three continents and Japheth became the father of Europeans. Famous medieval T and O maps show this division of the world and Christian iconography attributed the names of the sons of Noah to the names of the continents. Christian mythology went further, emphasizing the superiority of the descendants of Japheth, relating it to the book of Genesis, which states that 'he [Japheth] will dwell in the tents of Shem'.³⁴ This idea reached the modern times as a conceptual tool of europeocentric stories, which divided nations into races.³⁵ Inheriting the civilized-barbaric division from the Classical period, Christianity became civilized and culturally superior, while the non-Christian world became uncivilized and barbaric. Delanty stresses that the Christian Church took the Roman idea of Universal Empire and transformed it into the Universal Church; the cult of the emperor became the cult of the pope.³⁶ The reach for a Universal Empire became one of the main elements of European identity.

However, it was not only the Muslim *Other*, which tied European identity with Christianity. Muslims represented the *Orient*, the other continent, but pagans were inside the continent. It was the western and southern part of Europe, which was Christian, but pagan tribes inhabited lands in the north and east. The Christianization drive north to east ended in

²⁹ Davies *Europe East and West*, p. 34.

³⁰ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 45.

³¹ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 42.

³² Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, pp. 26-27.

³³ Denys, Hay, *Europe: The emergence of an idea*, 2nd. eds. Edinburgh: University Press, 1968 (hereafter Hay, *Europe*), pp. 1-15.

³⁴ Gen 9:27

³⁵ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 46.

³⁶ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 47.

the early fifteenth century when the last pagan stronghold, Samogitia (part of Lithuanian Grand Duchy), was Christianized. By the time the Lithuanian Grand Duchy was accepting Christianity, it chose not only abolition of local pagan traditions, but also one branch of Christianity over the other. It was either Orthodox Christianity or Latin (the important choice after 1054).

The Great Schism then showed that European Christendom was never fully united.³⁷ After the fourth Crusade this schism was accentuated and the Greek Church was distanced from the Latin West.³⁸ The cultural *Other*, forming Europe, was the Muslim *Orient*, but Greek Christianity constituted another division, which although in Europe, was different from the West as well. It was another cultural *Other* inside Europe.

The dispute between Latin and Orthodox Christianity had a particular importance during the Frankish rule led by Charlemagne. Charlemagne, referred to as 'The Father of Europe' in historiography, managed to unite a considerable part of European lands to receive his title. The East-West schism of the Christian Church was a useful tool for his consolidation of power. He supported western Latin Christianity, accepting its stance during the iconoclastic wars, which shook the Byzantine world. After a second council of Nicaea in 787, Charlemagne ordered the composition of his *Libri Carolini*. In these he condemned the destruction and rejection of images and iconoclasm worship. Thus, western Christendom revered images, not making them objects of the cult. Le Goff regards such a decision as 'a path that was to prove richly rewarding for European art'.³⁹ But the most important was Charlemagne's alliance with the pope of Rome.

When Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Frankish emperor, he sought to strengthen Latin Christendom's independency from the Byzantine Empire and Greek Orthodoxy. Papacy's will was to 'restore the extreme Christian West as an empire centred on Franks'.⁴⁰ The creation of a Carolingian Empire and its alliance with the western branch of Christianity of course distanced it from Byzantium in the East, promoting the Occidental image of Europe. But from the territorial perspective, Charlemagne's dominion could hardly be described as Europe, as it left huge territories out of its rule. However, Le Goff suggests that the importance of Charlemagne's Frankish empire lies not in its unifying attempts inside Europe, but in its 'failed attempts to construct a Europe dominated by one people or one

³⁷ Davies, *Europe East and West*, p. 35.

³⁸ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 48.

³⁹ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p.p. 26.

⁴⁰ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 32.

empire',⁴¹ which was the first of such attempts, but not the last in history. It should be regarded more as an attempt to resurrect the Roman Empire than to project 'Europe'.

Charlemagne's failure to unify the Carolingian empire as a major European power is easily observed when one examines pagan Norman Viking lands in the North or the Iberian Peninsula ruled by Muslims. What is more, the Carolingian Empire did not succeed in conquering most of the German or Slavic lands. Its hereditary achievement for future generations was support for the Western-Latin branch of Christianity, which became identified with the Occident, and Occident's self-identification in opposition to Muslim power in the East. Muslims played an important role as a counter-civilization. After all, Professor Norman Davies, quoting Henri Pirenne, asserts that 'Charlemagne without Muhammad would have been inconceivable'.⁴²

Latin Christianity wanted to equate the Christian world with the territory of Europe, and employed offensive strategies against its *Other*, non-Christians and pagans, in order to consolidate the powers inside the European continent. The Crusades and Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula are the most prominent examples of such thinking and behaviours. European identity was based on violence against the non-Christian *Other*, which according to Le Goff, was a result of the evolution of the pacifist Christian faith into warfare.⁴³ This was the theory of just war, which in theory was supposed not to be aggressive and justified when waged against pagans and 'infidels' such as Muslims.⁴⁴

The Crusading Europe was a way of achieving power for Latin Christendom with papacy at its head and the entanglement of religious and political powers, which could belong to the supreme religious leader, whom the pope wished to become.⁴⁵ The biggest achievement of the Crusades was a Christian unity, which also meant unity of the European continent. Though the eastern Crusades into the Holy Land were not successful, the northern and western lands were still turned to the Christian faith. The reclaiming of Spain and Christianization of the last pagan lands of Lithuania turned Europe into bastion of Christianity. However, Le Goff argues that the overall result was negative because it widened the gap between western and eastern Christian churches and sharpened the rivalry between Christian states in Europe.⁴⁶ But the crusades succeeded in making Christianity the label of Europe as Byzantium saw them not as a Christian counterbalance to Islam, but a threat to

⁴¹ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 29.

⁴² Davies, *Europe East and West*, p. 10.

⁴³ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 93.

⁴⁴ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 94.

⁴⁵ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 95.

⁴⁶ Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, p. 97.

their existence.⁴⁷ The widening of the gap between Eastern and Western branches of Christianity reached its peak during the fourth crusade in 1204, when crusaders destroyed Constantinople. It was an important gesture of European association with the Occident, and it was a western branch of Christianity, which became a denominator of Europe, and Europe became Occident.

However, Occident was not able to conquer the *Orient*. The Muslim power later supplanted by Ottoman Turks was more advanced and steadily threatened the European powers. It was a threat for the entire continent. Delanty claims this threat and all losses suffered by western power formed European identity. This was the result of a need to unite against the common enemy coming from the East.⁴⁸ When Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453, Pope Pius II remarked: 'now we have really been struck in Europe, that is, at home'.⁴⁹ As a result of this comment, he would come to be recognized as one of the first real Europeans.

The fifteenth century can be regarded as the turning point in 'European Consciousness'. There are several important characteristics, which are worth mentioning in order to understand change in the conception of Europe. First, by the beginning of the fifteenth century the whole European continent was baptized, therefore the pagan as the *Other*, disappeared. Second, it was the Ottoman Turkish forces advancing into the continent, which made Europeans 'more conscious of their collective identity'.⁵⁰ The third important change is the discovery of the New World by the end of the century. Europe was unable to stop the Ottoman threat and turned its gaze to the West, starting the new distinction between Europe as civilized and the *Other* as aboriginal. In Burke's words, 'Columbus and Vasco da Gama helped the Grand Turk to create European self-consciousness'.⁵¹

When Constantinople fell to Turkish hands in 1453, this marked the shift of European identity from the idea of faith to culture. As Denys Hay remarks, the Turks confused the situation in Europe, and by the time conventional Europe (the lands bounded by the Don and the Mediterranean) became all Christian, Turkish powers established themselves in the East and started to conquer more of the Christian European lands. He suggests that by this time the confusion was resolved by abandoning the synthesis of Europe with Christendom.⁵² When the

⁴⁷ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 57.

⁴⁸ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 58.

⁴⁹ Burke, 'Europe before 1700', p. 23.

⁵⁰ Burke, 'Europe before 1700', p. 23.

⁵¹ Burke, 'Europe before 1700', p. 25.

⁵² Denys Hay, 'Europe Revisited: 1979' (hereafter, Hay, 'Europe Revisited'), *History of European Ideas*, 1, 1980, pp. 1-6, (p. 2).

idea of Europe started to change from Christendom to the creation of new forms of identification, Europe ceased to be a geographical definition and became a system of values.⁵³ At this time Europe received its cultural meaning, becoming a certain way of life. Of course a major aspect of it was still Christianity, but faith was accompanied by an ideology about unification against the Ottoman enemy. It can be said that the war with a Turk was not only against an infidel, but also against a different way of life, creating an ideological enemy. It was a war not only between two competing military powers, but also between two conflicting ideologies and competing social, economic, and political systems.⁵⁴ The Turk received an image as a 'pernicious force sent by God to scourge Christendom of its sins'.⁵⁵ The proper answer of true Christians was to unite and defend their faith against this evil.

However, Europe was not united against the Turk. The religious east-west schism persisted. In the year 1458, metropolitan Jonas from Moscow attributed the fall of Constantinople to the punishment of God for Greek betrayal of true faith and alliance with Latin Christendom.⁵⁶ The Orthodox Christian Other moved north, and under the rule of Ivan the Terrible, Russians overthrew Mongols and started building a modern state.⁵⁷ Moscow attributed to itself the tradition and seat of Orthodox Christianity and took the offensive stance. The rest of Europe became increasingly aware of Russia's presence in Europe. However, with Orthodox Christianity and oriental despotism Russia was more excluded from Europe than it indicated.⁵⁸ But as faith gradually lost its major role and a European way of life took its place, it was easier to acknowledge the lands that were formerly regarded as Asian as now European. Anthony Pagden summarizes this Russia as somewhere between true Muslim *Orient* and Eastern Europe, sometimes friendly and more frequently a foe, and as having many features of European society that were undeniably Christian.⁵⁹ With or without Russia, Europe's *Other* was the Grand Turk, and though Europe was never entirely united against it, it became the enemy, which increased solidarity.

While the south-eastern border of the European continent was encircled by Ottoman Turkey, the eastern part of Europe was identified with resistance to Turkish power and their

⁵³ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 59.

⁵⁴ Iver B. Neumann and Jennifer M. Welsh, 'The Other in European Self-Definition: an Addendum to the Literature on International Society' (hereafter, Iver B. Neumann, 'The Other in European Self-Definition'), *Review of International Studies*, 17, 1991, 4, pp. 327-348, (p. 335).

⁵⁵ Iver B. Neumann, 'The Other in European Self-Definition', p. 336.

⁵⁶ Dimitri Stremoukhoff, 'Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine', *Speculum*, 28, 1953, 1, pp. 84-101, (p. 88).

⁵⁷ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 68.

⁵⁸ Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent', p. 46.

⁵⁹ Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent', p. 46.

advancement deeper into European lands. The eastern border was the border of containment; while western one became expansive. The discovery of the Americas gradually turned the identification of Europe from resistance against Islam to extensive expansion in a western direction.⁶⁰ The discoveries of the new world and European triumph in sea navigation changed the European mindset. It also added to the belief that Europe had a scientific capacity to dominate the world.⁶¹ As Burke suggests, in the sixteenth century, Europeans' reflections about themselves were most frequently expressed by the situation in Turkish and American lands.⁶² It became possible to divide Europe according to ideology and occupation. The Western part was associated with its colonies overseas while the Central and Eastern part was a bulwark against Muslim *Orient*.⁶³

The Grand discoveries also changed the European way of life, creating a mercantilist society in Western Europe and societies became commercialized. With a growing sense of European superiority, this commercial society gradually introduced transactions, not only of goods, but also of ideas, beliefs and habits. The people of commercial society became not just mere conquerors, but 'civilizers' and moral liberators.⁶⁴ While encountering other civilizations, other lands and continents, the people of Europe became increasingly aware of their own European culture. Their awareness, of course was not based on external discoveries, these were changes inside Europe. The Renaissance and humanism brought to light the philosophical and scientific side of Europe. Man was no longer seen as an obedient, anonymous member of God's mass, he became unique, full of creative and rational capacities, an individual.⁶⁵ This individual was considered sovereign in the world, gifted with reason and creative powers, and able to penetrate secrets, creating and inventing things.⁶⁶ It was not the abandonment of religion (God still remained the central figure of the world⁶⁷); it was the questioning of the human world order, the work and art of questioning itself, which changed the spirit of Europe. As Denys Hay notes, the first uses of the word 'Europe' were in a humanist context, such as in the Latin works 'de Sarmatia Asiatica et Europe, 1518' by Polish annalist Matthias a Michalov.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 69.

⁶¹ Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent', p. 50.

⁶² Burke, 'Europe before 1700', p. 25.

⁶³ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 71.

⁶⁴ Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent', pp. 51-52.

⁶⁵ Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural history*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998 (hereafter, Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*), p. 167.

⁶⁶ Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, p. 172.

⁶⁷ Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, p. 181.

⁶⁸ Hay, *Europe*, p. 106.

The new spirit of Renaissance and Humanism, and the individuality and questioning of the world order gave the European continent the upheavals of uttermost importance. The Reformation and religious wars changed the European identity gradually stripping it of religious spirit and secularizing the concept. Delanty notes that reformation discarded the idea of universal Christian order and opened a space for secular ideas about Europe.⁶⁹ Reformation, however, abandoned the vision of Christian unification because Christianity lost its territorial identification with Europe and became a religious set of values in rationalized form.⁷⁰ The friction between Humanism and Christianity created the European identity; it was based on the 'Christian humanist myth of man, the vision of a redemptive philosophy of history, and the civilizing nature of the new bourgeois value system', which reconciled itself with Christian heritage.⁷¹

Though tensions divided Europe as never before, the concept of Europeaness was slow to change the old notion of Europe as Christendom. As Burke affirms, the term was frequently used in contexts, which had nothing to do with religion. Accordingly, it was often used in political contexts until the year 1700, and later the term Europe advanced, but the consciousness of being European was rather weak.⁷² Despite its slow character, it was an important change in the European mindset. After several centuries of Christianity's attempt to unite Europe under one banner, it was finally shattered by Humanism and Reformation, opening the space for the creation of Europe, which meant something more than geography or Christian faith, something that can be identified with, having a strong meaning by itself. In Hay's words, during the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries 'Christendom slowly entered the limbo of archaic words and Europe emerged for its peoples as the unchallenged symbol of the longest human loyalty'.⁷³

The periods of Renaissance, Humanism, Reformation and its Counter-Reformation, opened a space for differentiation inside the continent. As Christian identity faded, the advance of the Turk, as the *Other*, was stopped. And though the Ottoman threat remained, the Muslim-Christian opposition gradually lost its significance, as did the uncivilized, non-cultured, and aboriginal. This European was coming from Europe's west, creating a superior, conquering image of Europe, capable of ruling the whole world. This identity shift, however gradual, could create differences in Europe, despite the formerly important factor of all

⁶⁹ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 96.

⁷⁰ Delanty, *Europos Išradimas*, p. 97.

⁷¹ Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*, New York, N. Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1995, p. 68.

⁷² Burke, 'Europe before 1700', p. 27.

⁷³ Hay, *Europe*, p. 116.

encompassing Christian faith. The concept of Europeaness was (and still is) broad enough to encompass classic antique and Christian heritage, while at the same time creating cultural, political and economic signifiers. It became possible to differentiate the world on several levels and this culminated with the age of Enlightenment.

The achievements of the Enlightenment are summarized in terms of the triumph of reason over superstition, custom, and despotism. This is depicted in Kant's attainment of Enlightenment with maturity, saving critical and transcendental powers of reason.⁷⁴ This more empirical, secular and individual reasoning, which started with the Renaissance, reached 'provisional completion'⁷⁵ as the light of reason illuminated the world and man. Louis Dupré argues that on a practical level it became the tool of instrumental reason, which led to the technical superiority of the West, allowing it to impose its views and politics on most of the world, using the powers of colonization and technical and economic advancement.⁷⁶

This also led to a European sense of superiority, making it Europe's denominating factor for years to come. The ever-expanding European dominion overseas and technical advancement portrayed the lands outside Western Europe as backward and uncivilized. The *Orient*, besides being Europe's *Other*, also received labels as an alien, uncivilized and backward area, alongside fictional imagery of luxury, sensuality and lust. It was portrayed as inferior to Europe, in need of civilization and conquest. Edward Said attached this Western view toward the East to the term *Orientalism*, describing it as 'a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the *Orient's* difference with its weakness'.⁷⁷

The description, however, was not applied only to lands outside Europe. In a sense *Orientalism* was used to discern between the East and the West inside Europe. It was the Age of Enlightenment, which embedded the sense of Western Europe's superiority over its Eastern part. Professor Larry Wolff in his profound study of the mind of Enlightenment claims that 'Eastern Europe could be something fantastic, as well as humorous, and above all something "invented", invented by Western Europe'.⁷⁸ Enlightenment introduced the division of Europe according to 'level of civilization', which was based on the Western worldview. The

⁷⁴ Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, 'What is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on "What is Enlightenment?"' in David Couzens Hoy (ed.), *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991, pp. 109- 121, (pp. 109-110).

⁷⁵ Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, p. 293.

⁷⁶ Louis Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004, p. 337.

⁷⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London: Penguin, 2003, p. 204.

⁷⁸ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994 (hereafter, Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*), p. 38.

importance of this action relies on a completely new concept of Europe. It was not Christianity or Humanism, it was the political, economic power, employing cultural tools, which decided what European was and what was not, and that power was vested in the West of Europe. To be European meant to be like the West or to align with it and imitate it. As political and economic power started to influence the concept, it was power, which decided Europe's divisions and lines.

The picture, however, is not one-sided. Though Eastern Europe became the lesser part, it did not cease to be European. What is more, even the notion of *Orientalism* is highly contested. Western Europe was not merely attaching labels, it was searching for its own understanding. Montesquieu's 'Persian Letters' had most of the labels of *Orientalism*,⁷⁹ but it was the comparative element of East and West, which was crucial in showing that there are other histories and cultures. It was Montesquieu, who also argued that 'nations, governments, and peoples were the product of their environment'.⁸⁰ And fictional Persian travellers were the ones who, having the opportunity to compare East and West, claimed that 'the best government is that which fulfils its purpose at the lowest cost, and therefore, that the government which controls men in the manner most appropriate to their proclivities and desires is the most perfect'.⁸¹ In his 'The Government of Poland', Rousseau repeated this idea, stating: 'that Poles should [...] seek only what suits them'.⁸² Eastern Europe served as the area suitable for the ideas of Enlightenment, the arena where they could be tested. There was no unifying sense about the region as the disagreements of Voltaire and Rousseau show.

The ideas of Enlightenment were adopted by the political powers, which became powerful instruments to implement imperialistic policies. The best examples of such political thinking occurred when absolutist monarchies re-proportioned the Commonwealth during the partitions of Poland. The European card was also used by Napoleon. He created a vision of Europe modelled after the French and based on the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the ideals of the French Revolution.⁸³ It was also this European card, which was used to create the anti-French, anti-Napoleonic and also anti-Western coalition of the Holy Alliance.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ In Montesquieu's 'Persian Letters' the travelers from Persia are constantly getting letters from home, which are mainly associated with females, harem, thus supporting West's imagery about the East.

⁸⁰ Andrew Kahn 'Introduction' in Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, trans. Margaret Mauldon, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. xxi.

⁸¹ Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, trans. Margaret Mauldon, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 110.

⁸² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*, trans. Willmoore Kendall, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985 (hereafter, Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*), p. 82.

⁸³ Davies, *Europe*, p. 23.

⁸⁴ Delanty, 'Europos Išradimas', p. 105.

The French Revolution was an important factor in changing the pattern of Europe. The spread of revolutionary ideas freed the spirits of territorial nationalisms, creating republics across Europe.⁸⁵ But it was also one particular French national model with which Napoleon aligned himself, transforming it into an imperialistic programme for Europe. Although the revolutions and republics were crushed, the nationalistic spirit of revolution was entering Europe. So when the Vienna congress system attached the notion of power balance to the idea of Europe, the nationalistic interests became the biggest threat to this balance.⁸⁶ The concert of Europe, sustaining the old system and keeping the powers restrained, was the initiator of 'European unity'. Though as Delanty stresses, this unity was negative, it was a balance between states, but not unity.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, it was during the nineteenth century that the political ideal of European unity was finally formed. The modern concept of Europe thus had its political and cultural dimensions. The cultural portion relied on belief in a universal system of values, while the political relied on unity of the power system.⁸⁸

The power balance was an important aspect of power and wealth accumulation inside the empires. The age of industrialization and imperialism was the age of large-scale socioeconomic modernization all across Europe. It encouraged the prejudices of European advancement and superiority coming from the age of Enlightenment not only against European colonies overseas, but also inside the continent. Europe's Northern and Western countries were ahead in the process of economic development, while the East lagged behind. Davies expresses the dismissal of Eastern Europe as backward because it was based only on economics as the main criterion of civilized life.⁸⁹ Gollwitzer stated that imperialism can have two sides: on the one hand it can be associated with increased participation and the growing strength of public opinion; while on the other hand, it presents itself as the coalescence of state and economy, as an alliance of power politics with the gains of the industrial revolution.⁹⁰

The expansionist policies of larger European countries trying to keep their power statuses fostered increases in armies and navies, which at the core remained narrowly national.⁹¹ The age of European domination brought doom upon itself, as the balance of power could not contain a balance anymore. Imperialistic Europe ended with the First World

⁸⁵ Delanty, 'Europos Išradimas', p. 104-105.

⁸⁶ Delanty, 'Europos Išradimas', p. 105-108.

⁸⁷ Delanty, 'Europos Išradimas', p. 108-110.

⁸⁸ Delanty, 'Europos Išradimas', p. 107.

⁸⁹ Davies, *Europe East and West*, p. 37.

⁹⁰ Heinz Gollwitzer, *Europe in the Age of Imperialism 1880-1914*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1969 (hereafter, Gollwitzer, *Imperialism*), p. 194.

⁹¹ Gollwitzer, *Imperialism*, pp. 9-18.

War, after which Europe did not regain its power. Though the prejudices of European superiority did not disappear, they were adopted a racial concepts, which accompanied later reasons for war.

The end of the First World War was the end of the old European idea of civilization. Delanty argues that between two major wars it was replaced by the notion of cultural pessimism and decadence. Avant-garde and modernism in art and literature were also helping to create this identity, which was not associated with nations at war, but with city culture.⁹² However, the major aspect of European identity after 1918 was its split; Europe was divided into two confronting parts: the capitalist West with liberal democracy, against Soviet communism. It was also the age of fascist Europe. For example, all fascist leaders starting with Mosley and ending with Hitler were willing to create an above-national European civilization.⁹³ The Nazi myth, fuelled by the historical spirit of crusades and the Holy Roman Empire, was the catalyst forcing fascists to march against bolshevism and against the East.⁹⁴

The War, which followed the destructive constellation of powers and ideologies, ended the system of interwar Europe relying on the principle of national determination. The end of the war brought the division of Europe, which was imbedded not only in political, economic and ideological opposition between the West and the East, but also the material wall built to separate these two worlds. Europe was associated only with the western part. Luigi Barzini writing in 1983 complained that:

This tranquil (and unfounded) certainty of many Europeans that their continent is already One [...] may also be seen in the fact that people unquestionably call "Europe" what is officially and cautiously known only as European Economic Community, little more at the present time than a fragile customs union, a mosaic of myopic, national, sacred egotisms badly harmonized, that any robust historical breeze or a serious economic crisis could easily overwhelm.⁹⁵

Europe in an alliance with America signified the Western value system as opposed to the Soviet system in the East. However, as Barzini concludes, it was far away from the unity some imagined, this unity would be decided by the future.

⁹² Delanty, 'Europos Išradimas', p.153.

⁹³ Delanty, 'Europos Išradimas', p. 154.

⁹⁴ Delanty, 'Europos Išradimas', pp.154-157.

⁹⁵ Luigi Barzini, The Europeans, Middlesex and New York: Penguin, 1984 (hereafter, Barzini, Europeans), p. 30.

Barzini encouraged a future that eventually came in the early 1990's after a string of events, including the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the unification of East and West Germany and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the re-emergence of a number of independent states. Katzenstein and Checkel argue that the eastern enlargements of the EU in 2004 and 2007 disintegrated the politically cohesive Western Union based on the EU. At this time Europe became more diverse and more encompassing. Proclaiming the Europe of the Cold War era as anti-communist, this new Europe sought 'both a place of return and inescapable destination'.⁹⁶ This identity, however, does not encompass the continent. Nonetheless, the modern European Union changed European identity from a cultural space where frequent political unions happen to a political union of peoples sharing a common culture.⁹⁷

Europe, however, is not and should not become only about the European Union. It looks like history is trying to repeat itself, bringing the same problems of exclusion and inclusion and narratives about the other and the East and West. However, the idea of Europe has changed dramatically. From its geographical determinations, Christian notions, and discourse of superiority and racial prejudices and eurocentrism, it tries to incorporate elements from the past and look into the future. It is, perhaps, as Bauman expresses: 'an unfinished adventure', the project of 'utopian spirit endemic to its identity, a forever not-yet-attained identity, vexingly elusive and always at odds with the realities of the day'.⁹⁸

III. Geographical limits and divisions of Europe

No matter how many mythical, historical, cultural, economical or political meanings Europe might have, the easiest way to trace the root of these meanings is to leave the continent. None of the elements mentioned above, can truly be ushered aside when a person from Europe travels abroad, except the physicality of Europe itself. To leave the continent, to move away in a geographical sense, brings to light Europe's primary spatial meaning. In

⁹⁶ Peter J. Katzenstein and Jeffrey T. Checkel, 'European Identity in a Context' (hereafter, Katzenstein, 'European Identity') in a Peter J. Katzenstein and Jeffrey T. Checkel (eds), European Identity, Cambridge: University Press, 2009, pp. 212-227, (p. 213).

⁹⁷ Pagden, 'Conceptualizing a Continent', p. 54.

⁹⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, Europe: An Unfinished Adventure, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004 (hereafter, Bauman, Europe), p. 36.

America for example, a person from Poland, France or Italy, when asked where he or she is from, will most likely first mention his or her European home country, and if asked where it is, he or she will provide its spatial denomination - Europe.

Europe, as a continent, is not easy to conceptualize. It is even more difficult if one tries to trace and define its borders over time because these are shaped by the frontiers, lines, walls, and divisions, which divide and demarcate the boundaries from what they once were and what it is meant to be today. What is more, the borders show what was or is Europe's constitutive *Other*, or that which lies on the other side of those borders.

At first glance, geographical conceptions such as Western Europe, Eastern Europe, East-Central, Central, Central Eastern, Northern or Southern Europe are clear divisions of European landmass. However, they have never been simply geographical divisions, and they have never been fixed. It can happen that a city, which is more geographically in the West, can end up being in the East, while one more to the East might be on the western part of the continent (as happened with Prague and Vienna during Cold War divisions).⁹⁹ Because bodies of water surround the western, southern and northern shores, three clear borders of the continent exist. It is, however, more problematic to see the eastern shore of the land as a demarcation line because it ends up in the Far East, not far from Japan. As G. Delanty observes, the Eastern border was never fixed, thus its Northern point was between the White and Baltic seas and the Southern one varied between the Ural mountains, the Don river, the Caspian, the Aegean and the Black sea.¹⁰⁰ In addition, Europe can be perceived as simply the peninsula of enormous Eurasian continent, leaving its eastern border open, not only for political, cultural or historical, but also geographical ones.

Through the ages Europe has been divided into East, West, North, and south geographically, following the political, economic and cultural developments there. Even without a physical map it has always had a mental one. On top of physical geography, imagined geographies are often placed. Geographies, which were described by J. Hagen as 'referring to ways of perceiving spaces and places, and the relationships between them as complex sets of cultural and political practices and ideas defined spatially, rather than regarding them as static discrete territorial units'.¹⁰¹ Europe's inseparability from imagined lines and borders evokes a sense of its structural uniqueness. In other words, one can draw

⁹⁹ Milan Kundera in his article 'The tragedy of Central Europe', published in *New York Review of Books* on 26 April, 1984, described the situation in terms of 'Kidnapped West'; the region, which geographically lies in the centre and culturally belongs to the West of Europe, politically was under Soviet domination, thus in the Eastern part of Europe.

¹⁰⁰ Delanty, '*Europos Išradimas*', p. 75.

¹⁰¹ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 490.

and redraw its lines and formations, resulting in the construction of new meanings and identities. This is, as Sebastian Munster's 'Europa Regina', shows: geographical understanding is also a constructed one, and imagination can turn Europe into something beautiful (and powerful) not unlike a queen.

3.1. Europe: borders physical

The geographic understanding of Europe begins with ancient Greece. For Greeks this understanding meant the physical division of the world into three parts, including Europe. The other divisions consisted of Asia and Africa, the two other known continents at the time. As Mark Bassin asserts, it was easy to separate Europe from Africa because it was divided by the Mediterranean Sea, and Asia was separated from Africa by the Nile River.¹⁰² The European-Asian border, however, was not clear. Greeks knew about the waterway provided by the Aegean-Black Sea, but the lands in the North of the Azov Sea were 'terrae incognitae'.¹⁰³ This three-fold continental division of the world was also facilitated by medieval scholars and remained an important geographical representation until the late Middle Ages. Medieval T and O maps illustrate this division perfectly, which has even lead to such artistic works as Bunting's (1545-1606) clover-leaf map of the world. Though Bunting already knew of the Americas and created 'proper' maps, his creativity reminds one of the importance imagination plays in the construction of the world. This is use of imagination was also employed in constructing the eastern border, which divided Europe from Asia.

The Greeks had already ascribed the Tanais (Don) River as the border of Eastern European, but its sources and exact flow were a matter of fantasy, sometimes making Russia a mere isthmus and the Don comparable to the Nile.¹⁰⁴ But Greeks understood Europe in geographical terms, they rarely identified themselves with Europe, leaving Europe as a geographical concept and imposing the distinction between *Us* and *Them* as between themselves (Greeks) and the rest.¹⁰⁵ Medieval geographers retained the same European continental borderline as well. This was an important division, fixing eastern limits of the continent for a thousand years at the frontier of Don. But, as occurred in the late Middle Ages,

¹⁰² Mark Bassin, 'Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space' (hereafter, Bassin, 'Russia between Europe and Asia'), *Slavic Review*, 50, 1991, 1, pp. 1-17 (p. 2).

¹⁰³ Bassin, 'Russia between Europe and Asia', p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ W. H. Parker, 'Europe: how far?' (hereafter, Parker, 'Europe: how far?'), *The Geographical Journal*, 126, 1960, 3, pp. 278-297 (p. 278).

¹⁰⁵ Burke, 'Europe before 1700', p. 22.

the conception of Europe moved from being geographical, dependent upon the physical continent towards the ideological and cultural idea of Christianity.

The eastern border began to divide, not only the continents, but also civilizations, lifestyles and religions, making everything in the East: non-European, alien, and oppositional. The border gained its new distinction, however, as powers from the East frequently had parts of the geographic European continent under their rule. It became more mental than geographical. For some, as the division between western and eastern branches of Christianity intensified, Europe was only encapsulated by the lands under the western part of the religion, leaving Orthodox Christianity on the other side of the border. This had little geographical reasoning. The invasion of Tartars and their subjugation of Muscovy, as well as the advancement of the Turks from the South-East reinforced this tendency.¹⁰⁶

In the medieval ages these considerations formed the question of Russia's inclusiveness or exclusiveness within Europe. The Muscovite State, which emerged after the end of the Tartar subjugation was considered barbarous and backward, thus placing it along the same lines as Turkey, and ultimately denying Russia's Europeaness.¹⁰⁷ And 'for centuries, at least from the western point of view, the frontiers between Sweden, Poland and Austria on the one hand, and Russia and Turkey on the other, formed the eastern boundary of the European community'.¹⁰⁸

Muscovites, themselves, did not have much interest in recognition of their Europeaness. Ideologically they ascribed themselves to Orthodox Christianity, following the doctrine of Moscow as the 'Third Rome' and they imagined themselves as the exclusive bearers of true Christianity. Europe, for Muscovites, carried a classical meaning pertaining to physical divisions between the continents. The first geographic works followed this division, accepting Tanais (Don) as the boundary between two continents. Pre-Petrine Russia, deriving its scholastic tradition from classical teaching, ignored the fact that Tanais (Don) divided Muscovite State into two parts, which spatially ended up on two different continents.¹⁰⁹

During the sixteenth century Western European geographical knowledge of Russia increased, and what was previously considered a narrow isthmus was actually a wide broadening from Europe into Asia. The Don was then found to be too small to be a boundary between the two continents. However, an agreement for placing a better border between the continents was never achieved. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several lines

¹⁰⁶ Parker, 'Europe: how far?', p. 280.

¹⁰⁷ Parker, 'Europe: how far?', pp. 280-281.

¹⁰⁸ Parker, 'Europe: how far? ', p. 281.

¹⁰⁹ Bassin, 'Russia between Europe and Asia', pp. 4-5.

were proposed as the boundary¹¹⁰; Ob line won a wide acceptance. The rapid Muscovite expansion elevated questions concerning boundaries to the political level. Taking into account that the border of Muscovite Russia changed too fast to be represented properly on western maps, Russia became the border country, sometimes included and sometimes not in the maps of Europe. Of course this also had to deal with the changing prescription of Europeaness, which moved from religious to cultural grounds. In the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries western knowledge was too scarce to make a strong decision regarding the inclusion of Russia in Europe, accordingly when 'they embrace at least part of Russia, there is notable difference between the detail of the maps on either side of the Russo-Polish frontier. To the west the maps, the maps there filled with minute detail; eastwards their nature changes abruptly; there is little detail and most of the space is filled with symbolic forests'.¹¹¹

The situation changed when Peter the Great came into power and declared European ideology within Russia. Russia became an empire, which like all European empires could be divided into two parts: (1) homeland or metropolis (located inside European civilization) and (2) colonial periphery (located outside).¹¹² Oscar Halecki suggests that it was at this point that the imperialistic and conquering nature of the new Russian State forced its way into Europe through annexation of more western lands. Peter the Great annexed the Baltic territories, emperors Catherine II and Alexander I connected the Russian empire with Europe through purely European territories- the bulk of Poland and what was formerly Swedish Finland. From a political perspective the 'Empire was now definitely a part of the European state system, and it was obvious that from the eighteenth century European history cannot be written without including the whole foreign policy of Russia'.¹¹³ However, Russian imperial conquests were the most rapid away from Europe- deep into the Asian continent. As Russia became part of Europe, largely associated with the new imperial European order, the border, which could divide the continents, was questioned because it became the line that divided Russia into two parts. Russia's eastern frontier was not suitable, as it was in F. J. Turner's words a 'Moving Frontier'.¹¹⁴ The main distinction regarding Russia's moving frontier, however, was that it did not have any attraction and 'often transplanted, the different groups

¹¹⁰ Parker, 'Europe: how far?', p. 281-284.

¹¹¹ Parker, 'Europe: how far?', p. 284.

¹¹² Bassin, 'Russia between Europe and Asia', p. 5.

¹¹³ Oscar Halecki, The Limits and Divisions of European History, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952 (hereafter, Halecki, Limits and Divisions), p. 98.

¹¹⁴ Dietrich Gerhard, 'The Frontier in Comparative View' (hereafter, Gerhard, 'The Frontier'), Comparative Studies in Society and History, 1, 1959, 3, pp. 205-229, (pp. 224-2290).

of Russian society were less rooted in a specific region or locality than the various orders of minutely articulated old European society'.¹¹⁵

State-encouraged migration and political deportations into Siberia caused no spatial attachment, making the eastern lands superficially settled and requiring emancipation from the European centre, leaving them eastern and non-European. The common acceptance that Russia had its two parts, European and Asiatic, was meaningless as long as there was no acknowledged boundary between these two parts. During the rule of Peter the Great, the prominent spokesman and ethnographer V. Tatishchev proposed the Ural Mountains should be the boundary between Europe and Asia.¹¹⁶ Similarly, the Ural Mountains were suggested by Swedish officer P. J. Strahlenberg, who was taken as a war prisoner during the battle of Poltava¹¹⁷ and had to spend the Great Northern War in Siberia. By the end of the eighteenth century, Strahlenberg's Ural boundary was confirmed in Russia, especially after it was supported in 1771 by another scientist, Peter Pallas, who was invited to Russia by Catherine the Great. In the early nineteenth century the Ural boundary was introduced in France and Germany,¹¹⁸ and as it was emphasized by N. Davies,¹¹⁹ this 'conventional and quite arbitrary boundary' became the frontier of Europe for more than 200 years. But as professor Davies also argues, 'there is no reason to think it is eternal'.

Even though the physical frontier of Europe was established, it never solved the problems associated with Russia's non-European character. There were several boundaries proposed, which were largely connected to ideological and political estimations. Russia had its own ideological currents of westerners, slavophiles and eurasians, who continued to argue for the exclusion or inclusion of Russia in Europe. In addition, the post-revolutionary Russia and the Cold War system brought new considerations about Russia's political exclusion from the European state system. However, these images are more connected to political and ideological patterns of European history and the division between Europe's East and West, therefore they must be considered in a more general context of mental boundaries inside the European continent.

¹¹⁵ Gerhard, 'The Frontier' p. 228.

¹¹⁶ Gerhard, 'The Frontier' p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Parker, 'Europe: how far?', p. 285.

¹¹⁸ Parker, 'Europe: how far?', p. 286.

¹¹⁹ Davies, Europe East and West, p. 7.

3.2. Europe: divisions mental, walls material

The year 2009 is remembered in Europe for several reasons. Probably the biggest issue was the economic downturn, though the European Parliamentary elections and the 20th anniversary of the fall of Berlin Wall should also be mentioned, as they had coverage around the world and had special meaning for all European countries. The Berlin Wall, the product of human construction, was one of the most important divisions inside Europe, partitioning it into the East and the West. Although the wall was a physical construction, it was a political result of the human mind, becoming an impenetrable division. However, the Berlin Wall was not the first or the last division of Europe. Historically, divisions have been mentally constructed and cultural and political backgrounds were connected with geographical maps, ascribing to cognitive borders the geographical terms of: East, West, and the Centre.

The first of these dividing lines come from when the concept of Europe was established as a geographical continental division in Ancient Greece. At this time, the Greek frontier was based on civilization's opposition to the barbarian *Other*. Greeks discerned themselves from the *Other*, whom they could not understand. This division also retained its importance during the years of the Roman Empire. The line was physically embedded in a stone wall named Limes Romanus. In his geo-ethnic model Stein Rokkan suggests that this was an important point of further centre-building and peripheralization on the European continent expressed by the Empire's movement westward and north, conquering lands until the Rhine and Danube were reached. The same can be said about later invasions of Germanic tribes during the fourth and fifth centuries, Arab conquest into Iberia, Viking raids in the tenth to eleventh centuries, movement of Slavs and Finno-Ugric peoples into German lands, and eastward expansion of Germans from the twelfth century.¹²⁰ According to S. Rokkan, these movements and waves of conquest, formed four sets of ethnic groupings along a west-east gradient: the Atlantic periphery (Celtic and Basque lands), Western coastal plains (heartland of early seaward kingdoms - Danish, Anglo-Saxon, Frankish), Central Plains (heartland of German-Roman Empire) and landward periphery (the Slavs, Magyars and Finns caught in cross-pressure between German and Swedish Empire-building forces). These west-east slices were divided by Rokkan into three distinct layers from north to south: (1) lands beyond the

¹²⁰ Stein Rokkan, 'Territories, Centers, and Peripheries: Toward a Geoethnic-Geo-economics-Geopolitical Model of Differentiation Within Western Europe' (hereafter, Rokkan, 'Territories, Centers, and Peripheries') in John Agnew (ed.), Political Geography. A Reader, London: Hodder Headline Group: 1997, pp. 41-42.

reach of the Roman Empire (such as Ireland and Poland), (2) imperial lands north of the Alps (such as England, France and Hungary), and (3) Mediterranean lands, most heavily affected by Latin institutions and least affected by Germanic invaders.¹²¹ Rokkan's Central Plain and landward periphery distinction, recognizing Roman influenced Germany and Part of Germany outside the Limes, became an important division for centuries to come. Although the divisions never exactly coincided with the Limes, especially during the Cold War, Germany's division into two parts was accepted as the frontier between the East and the West in Europe.¹²² The Napoleonic frontier alongside the Rhine was one of such repeated Roman frontiers throughout European history.¹²³ However, Limes Romanus were not the main driver of European divisions, the German eastern conquest and the formation of new centers and peripheries after the collapse of the Roman Empire caused fiercer and more salient divisions. According to Rokkan, the lands, which were under Roman rule developed a 'city belt', which created many centres and there were difficulties in establishing one that was superior to all the others. It became easier to establish such core-areas at the edges of the 'city-belt'. The first wave of such centre-creation was on the 'coastal Plains to the West and the North' (France, England, Scandinavia, Spain), the second wave took place on the landward side (Habsburgs, Eastern March of the German Empire and later Prussia).¹²⁴ 'The fragmented middle belt of cities and petty states were the scene of endless onslaughts, countermoves, and efforts to reorganize during the long centuries from Charlemagne to Bismarck'.¹²⁵ The Frankish Carolingian Empire was an attempt to unify this middle territory re-establishing the Roman Empire. However, the division of empire in 843 was of major importance, as the middle part (Lotharingia) became the ground of quarrel and conquest between the empire's former western Frank and Eastern parts, which formed the Holy Roman Empire. The two core-centres during their state building processes made a 'loose middle part' as their clashing point and marginalized it at the same time.¹²⁶ Stein Rokkan calls these lands 'interface peripheries', as 'they were caught in the cross-fire between dominant centers and were never fully integrated into either of the blocs'¹²⁷ One of such periphery was the extensive German-Czech

¹²¹ Rokkan, 'Territories, Centers, and Peripheries', pp. 42-44.

¹²² Werner J. Cahnman, 'Frontiers between East and West in Europe' (hereafter, Cahnman, 'Frontiers in Europe') *Geographical Review*, 39, 1949, 4, pp. 605-624, (p. 605).

¹²³ Cahnman, 'Frontiers in Europe', p. 608.

¹²⁴ Rokkan, 'Territories, Centers, and Peripheries', pp. 44-47.

¹²⁵ Rokkan, 'Territories, Centers, and Peripheries', p. 46.

¹²⁶ Rokkan, 'Territories, Centers, and Peripheries', pp. 48-50.

¹²⁷ Rokkan, 'Territories, Centers, and Peripheries', p. 49.

interface in the Sudetenland and the German-Polish interface, which pushed as far as the Lithuanian border.¹²⁸

Rokkan's interface conception is important in the context of the formation of the Central European region. On a larger scale the historic lands of Bohemia, Poland-Lithuania and Hungary were captured between major cores of German and Russian origin, resulting in several divisions during the history. The Prussian, Austrian, and Russian powers managed to incorporate these lands into their empires during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, forming the imperial system of Europe, which culminated in the Congress of Vienna. These developments also formed the Habsburg-Hohenzollern frontier,¹²⁹ and later the German-Russian frontier, resulting in the two bloodiest European wars. These divisions show the importance of the lands lying at the centre of the continent.

Sir Halford Mackinder runs his dividing line of Eastern and Western Europe, much like the Roman Limes line, from the Adriatic to the North Sea, leaving the Netherlands and Venice on the western part and Berlin and Vienna on the eastern, 'Prussia and Austria are countries which German has conquered and more or less forcible Teutonised'.¹³⁰ He attributes the key element of Eastern Europe to German aspirations of dominance over Slavs. Mackinder's division of Eastern and Western Europe receives its importance because it coincides with his strategic division of Heartland and Coastland.¹³¹ Thus Eastern Europe is part of the Heartland, and gains power from access to the Heartland and opposition to sea-power (controlled by Western Europe). Mackinder also describes the strategic importance of not allowing any power to conquer Eastern Europe, showing that this was the goal of the Russian and German powers.¹³² All of these divisions show that besides several divisional aspects, be it the Greek and Roman civilizational-barbaric frontier, the political and economic frontier between Eastern and Western powers or the Periphery-Centre distinction, the centre was never united for a long time (although there were several attempts throughout history) and rather served as the area of Europe's inside divisions and frontiers.

Geographically the external limits of the European continent rely on agreement and their physical frontier is not a natural division of the continent. As M. Lewis and K. Wigen contend, 'viewing Europe and Asia as parts of a single continent would have been far more geographically accurate, but it would also have failed to grant Europe the priority that

¹²⁸ Rokkan, 'Territories, Centers, and Peripheries', p. 49.

¹²⁹ Cahnman, 'Frontiers in Europe', pp. 614-616.

¹³⁰ Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality. A study in the Politics of Reconstruction*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1996 (hereafter, Mackinder, 'Democratic Ideals'), p. 86.

¹³¹ Mackinder, 'Democratic Ideals', p. 90.

¹³² Mackinder, 'Democratic Ideals', pp. 91-99.

Europeans and their descendants overseas believed it deserved'.¹³³ The internal divisions and frontiers in Europe formed several regions inside Europe itself. These historical regions have formed areas of Western Europe, Eastern Europe and lands in-between them. This central territory, which was never united under one banner for a substantially important time, with its own divisions and non-homogeneity, led Oscar Halecki to divide Europe not into two parts, but into four: Western, Eastern, West-Central and East-Central Europe.¹³⁴ All of these partly physical, partly imagined geographical spaces were interconnected during European history, leading to the (trans)formational nature of the concept of 'Eastern Europe'.

The situation changed then Peter the Great came into power and declared European ideology for Russia. Russia became empire, which as all European empires could be divided into two parts: homeland or metropolis, located inside European civilization, and colonial periphery, which was outside it.¹³⁵ As Oscar Halecki suggests, it was at this point that imperialistic and conquering nature of the new Russian State forced its way into Europe through annexation of more western lands: Peter the Great annexed Baltic territories, emperors Catherine the Great and Alexander I connected Russian empire with Europe through purely European territories - the bulk of Poland and what was formerly Swedish Finland. 'Politically that Empire was now definitely a part of European state system, and it was obvious that from the eighteenth century European history cannot be written without including the whole foreign policy of Russia'.¹³⁶ However, Russian imperial conquest was the most rapid towards the opposite direction of Europe - deep into Asian continent. As Russia became part of Europe, largely associated with the new imperial European order, the border, which could divide the continents started to be questioned, because it became the line, which divided Russia into two parts. Russia's eastern frontier was not suitable, as it was in F. J. Turner's words 'Moving Frontier'.¹³⁷ However, the main distinctiveness of Russia's moving frontier was that it did not have the attraction: 'often transplanted the different groups of Russian society were less rooted in a specific region or locality than the various orders of minutely articulated old European society'.¹³⁸ The state-encouraged migration and political deportations into Siberia caused no spatial attachment, making the eastern lands superficially settled and requiring emancipation from the European centre, leaving them eastern and non-

¹³³ Martin W. Lewis and Karen E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents. A Critique of Metageography*, London: University of California Press, 1997, p. 36.

¹³⁴ Halecki, *Limits and Divisions*, pp. 125-141.

¹³⁵ Bassin, 'Russia between Europe and Asia', p. 5.

¹³⁶ Halecki, *Limits and Divisions*, p. 98.

¹³⁷ Gerhard, 'The Frontier', pp. 224-229.

¹³⁸ Gerhard, 'The Frontier' p. 228.

European. The common acceptance that Russia had its two parts - European and Asiatic - was meaningless as long as there was no acknowledged boundary between these two parts. Already during the rule of Peter the Great the prominent spokesman and ethnographer V. Tatishchev proposed Ural Mountains as the boundary between Europe and Asia.¹³⁹ Similarly Ural Mountains were presented by Swedish officer P. J. Strahlenberg, who was taken as a war prisoner during the battle of Poltava¹⁴⁰ and had to spend the Great Northern War in Siberia. By the end of the eighteenth century Strahlenberg's Ural boundary was highly confirmed in Russia, especially after it was supported in 1771 by another scientist, Peter Pallas, who was invited by Catherine II. In the early nineteenth century the Ural boundary was introduced in France and Germany¹⁴¹ and, as it was emphasized by N. Davies¹⁴², this 'conventional and quite arbitrary boundary' became the frontier of Europe for more than 200 years by now. But as professor Davies also notices, 'there is no reason to think it is eternal'.

IV. Divisions Cultural: Eastern Europe as (un)Civilized

Nearby, Saint Ann's church In Vilnius, which is built in gothic style of architecture, one will find the Orthodox Cathedral of Theotokos, built before Christianization of Lithuania. The division of two cultures, based on religion would run so easily in this place. One standing between St Anne's and the Cathedral of Theotokos could chose one instead of the other, pointing to gothic style naming its similarity with gothic style across Europe (so, Western Europe), or pointing to cathedral showing its similarity with the Greek Orthodox style (so, Eastern Europe). However, Vilnius never was the city of grand culture of Europe, it never had enough power. And it is the power which matters, it can make city more eastern or more western and churches would stand beside each other ignored by the division or will confirm it.

Cultural aspect of Eastern Europe is of crucial importance, as it employs human senses. But culture itself is rather complicated concept. It is more complicated to deal with it in the case of Europe, as Europe itself plays a cultural role. What is more, Europe, as Z. Bauman points out, not only discovered/invented culture, but also invented the task of

¹³⁹ Bassin, 'Russia between Europe and Asia', p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ Parker, 'Europe: how far?', p. 285.

¹⁴¹ Parker, 'Europe: how far?', p. 286.

¹⁴² Davies Europe East and West, p. 7.

culturing culture.¹⁴³ The culturing culture, of course, goes with a mission of civilizing. It finds the subject which needs to be cultured and during the implementation of the mission cultures itself. As Z. Bauman stresses 'in its European rendition, "civilization" (or "culture", a concept difficult to separate from that of "civilization" despite the philosophers' subtle arguments and less subtle efforts of nationalists politicians) is a continuous process – forever imperfect yet obstinately struggling for perfection – of remaking the world'.¹⁴⁴ This civilizing perspective bears another crucial argument made by Z. Bauman: it is simply 'allergic to borders'¹⁴⁵; Europe is a civilization of transgression.

This 'heroic deed' of civilizing was as much internally directed as externally. It was about Europe's cultural other - Barbarian, Muslim, Aborigine, Indian - needed to be cultured. But also it included the dimension inside, the important one, helping to address the questions of Enlightenment to physical space - Eastern Europe. As L. Wolff stresses, for the rise of civilizational discourse Eastern Europe served as a ground for identification and affirmation for Western Europe during the age of Enlightenment.¹⁴⁶ By inventing Eastern Europe, Western part invented itself. The Enlightenment 'put all its most important concerns on the line to deploy and develop them in Construction of Eastern Europe: the nature of the man, the relation of manners and civilization, the aspiration of philosophy to political powers'.¹⁴⁷ In other words, the mind of Enlightenment invented Eastern Europe, which had to be everything what Western Europe was not.

However, cultural history of Europe (East or West) neither started nor ended with Enlightenment. Byzantine world and its successor Muscovite state was the cultural other inside Europe from the Great schism onwards. Nonetheless, it was always culture of Christian, meaning European. Pope Pius II, writing in the fifteenth century regarded Russians as Europeans, as they were bearers of Christianity.¹⁴⁸ But this view was not universal. Russia's contested space in Europe or outside it complicated the situation (as it was mentioned, Don river as the boundary between Asia and Europe divided Russia, complicating the situation till the ages of Catherine the Great). Rebelais in 1500 held Russians as unbelievers, lining them with Persians, Indians and Troglodytes.¹⁴⁹ The travelers' tales regarded Russians as barbarous and fit for slavery. The discourse usually employed the term

¹⁴³ Bauman, *Europe*, p. 111.

¹⁴⁴ Bauman, *Europe*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁵ Bauman, *Europe*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁶ Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, p. 360.

¹⁴⁷ Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, p. 361.

¹⁴⁸ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991 (hereafter, Neumann, *Uses of Other*), p. 67.

¹⁴⁹ Neumann, *Uses of Other*, p. 67.

Scythians, referring to the Ancient Greece, where Scythians meant barbarians, as it is known from Herodotus. Such travelers as Captain John Smith (crossing the continent from England to Ottoman Europe and taken prisoner by the Crimean Tartars in 1603) and Adam Olearius (traveling in 1630 with German commercial mission from the Court of Holstein) described their experience of meeting the locals as most barbarous people.¹⁵⁰ Olearius described Russians as lacking 'good manners', and 'fit for slavery', they 'lusts of the flesh and fornication' were accompanied by 'the vile depravity we call sodomy'.¹⁵¹ The description of Russia was similar to that of Muslims. What is more the issue of Russia was even more complicated, because it's permanent contact with non-Christians.¹⁵²

Russia's contested place in Europe represented the larger debate of Eastern Europe's *Otherness*, emphasized and formed during the Enlightenment. The right to decide about inclusion or exclusion, however, was left to those travelers, geographers or philosophers themselves.¹⁵³ It was the discourse, which was important, the *Otherness*, which was crucial, but the decision was never clear and Eastern Europe never became Europe's *Other*. It was rather a space for Enlightenment projects. It was the space, where ideas of Enlightenment could be tested, clashed one against the *Other*, praised and denounced at the same time. That is why Jean-Jacques Rousseau could address Polish on a political matter of the state formation as a people able to form the enlightened state and society: 'Without being an expert on Polish affairs I should bet anything that your Diet is the place to look for enlightenment, and your dietines the place to look for virtue'.¹⁵⁴ Voltaire, who engaged in a correspondence with Russian Empress Catherine the Great, and praised her civilizing mission towards conquered non-enlightened nations, during the French-Russian conflict, could declare that 'it is the Tartars who are polite, and the French who became Scythians'.¹⁵⁵ He praised empress as 'the first person of the Universe' able to 'humiliate Ottoman pride with one hand, and pacify Poland with the *Other*'.¹⁵⁶ Earlier defined as a land of 'barbarians, lacking good manners', Russia was able to become the land of Enlightenment. Eastern Europe was a land of possibilities, the land capable of civilization, the land for and of Enlightenment.

However, the question of culture, although applied on the East-West axis, was an invention of Enlightenment. Before Peter the Great, one would hesitate on inclusion of Russia

¹⁵⁰ Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*. pp. 10-11.

¹⁵¹ Quoted from Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*. p. 11.

¹⁵² Neumann, *Uses of Other*, p. 68.

¹⁵³ Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*. p. 364.

¹⁵⁴ Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*. pp. 35-36.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted from Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*. pp. 218-219.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted from Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*. p. 218.

into Europe. It was Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on the Eastern borders of Europe, and the lands of Central and Eastern Europe were not the lands of the cultural East. Renaissance and Reformation moved not East, it moved from South to North.

Professor Denys Hay asserts that it was North-South cultural contacts in late Middle Ages, which turned Italian Renaissance into European Renaissance through the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.¹⁵⁷ He stresses the astonishing homogeneity, which was reached in European art of the fourteenth and the fifteenth century, represented by 'international Gothic'.¹⁵⁸ That is the reason of similarity, of spires reaching for the sky across Europe. While the eastern rim of the continent was identified with Ottoman rule in Balkans or Tartar yoke in Russia, these lands did not belong to European cultural movements. Renaissance, humanism, reformation were the upheavals of Latin Christianity, despite the East or West spatiality.

J. P. Arnason comments that with the coming of international Luxemburg dynasty into Bohemia and making it the basis of Imperial authority, it brought one of the most significant 'cultural upgrading in the region'.¹⁵⁹ Prague of Charles IV is a splendid city, one of the European centers of humanism and Renaissance. Its peak, according to J. P. Arnason, is the Husite movement, which 'can be seen as a forerunner of later upheavals in the West, beginning with the Reformation'.¹⁶⁰ He stresses that the influence of Renaissance and humanism brought East Central European regional centers closest 'to being on equal footing with the West'.¹⁶¹ While the Western part of the continent was devastated after the Hundred Years' War and Great Plague of 1348, most of the Poland was unaffected enjoying splendor of Renaissance and cultural uplift.¹⁶² During the reign of Kazimierz the Great (1333-1370), the university of Krakow was founded (1364) following the Charles University established in Prague (1348) and preceding the University of Vienna (1365), the influx of refugees from Western Europe (including fleeing Jews) brought merchants, bankers and artisans, rebuilding the cities and placing Poland on Renaissance and European cultural maps. The Polish cultural life prospered not only on regional level. The late Renaissance was a tremendous peak of the Polish and European mind, science, and cultural connection. As A. Zamoyski notices, it was 'Kingdom of Erasmus', referring to the letter of Leonard Coxe who, after teaching at

¹⁵⁷ Denys Hay, Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, London: Longman, 1976 (hereafter, Hay, Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries), p. 354.

¹⁵⁸ Hay, Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, p. 354.

¹⁵⁹ Johann P. Arnason, 'Demarcating East Central Europe' (hereafter, Arnason, 'East Central Europe'), European Journal of Social Theory, 8, 2005, 4, pp. 387-400, (p. 392).

¹⁶⁰ Arnason, 'East Central Europe', p. 292.

¹⁶¹ Arnason, 'East Central Europe', p. 292.

¹⁶² Adam Zamoyski, The Polish Way: a Thousand-Year History of the Poles and Their Culture, New York, NY: Franklin Watts, 1988, pp. 36-40.

Cambridge and Sorbonne, came to Jagiellon University, and wrote to his friend that 'Poles walked, talked, ate and slept, Erasmus, beginning with the King, who wrote to him in a familiar style'.¹⁶³ It was such works as Copernicus's 'De Revolutionibus Erbiium Coelestium' or Jan Kochanowski's 'The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys' and J. Zamoyski's Platonic city - New Zamosc¹⁶⁴ which made Poland the land of culture.

However, the cultural advance of Polish Kingdom and later Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth evolved into Sarmatism and closer contact with Oriental style, which in the eighteenth century looked so alien for Western Europeans. It was economic and political constellation, the second serfdom and szlachta Republic, with its Sarmatian ideology and way of life which changed country picture. Sarmatism was the ideology and culture of the nobility from the end of the sixteenth century until twilight of the eighteenth century deriving from the myth that Slavs originated from Sarmatians, who lived in the early Eastern and Central Europe.¹⁶⁵ The Sarmatian way of life was accompanied by exaggerated gestures, attire and rituals, clothing, which included a lot of eastern elements and theatrical ceremonies.¹⁶⁶ The lesser nobility had their own distinctive costume, culminating with Turkish-style outer cloak; and mustache was as necessary as much as shaven head.¹⁶⁷ Although enormously rich upper nobility (magnateria) was highly educated, followed Frenchified fashions and participated in cultural life of Europe, it was a general picture of the country, which, with the coming of Enlightenment, labeled it backward and uncivilized.

4.1. Eastern Europe in the mirror of the Enlightenment

That is why Louis-Phillipe de Segur traveling through Eastern Europe when entering Poland exclaimed that, 'one believes oneself to be leaving Europe completely; everything might give the impression of retreating ten centuries in time'.¹⁶⁸ His notices on szlachta's living conditions were no better: 'a great number of horses, and almost no furniture; an oriental luxury and none of the amenities of life'.¹⁶⁹ This picture, however, is one-sided. To

¹⁶³ Adam Zamoyski, *Poland: A History*, London: Harper Press, 2009 (hereafter, Zamoyski, *Poland*), pp. 92-105.

¹⁶⁴ Zamoyski, *Poland*, pp.97-98.

¹⁶⁵ Krzysztof Mrowcewicz, 'Europeans and Sarmatians - Polish Baroque' (hereafter, Mrowcewicz, 'Polish Baroque') in *Ten Centuries of Polish Literature*, trans. Daniel Sax, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, Stowarzyszenie "Pro Cultura Litteraria", Fundacja "Akademia Humanistyczna", 2004, p. 77

¹⁶⁶ Mrowcewicz, 'Polish Baroque', p. 79.

¹⁶⁷ Jerzy T. Lukowski, *Liberty's folly: the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in the eighteenth century, 1697-1795*, London and New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 1991, p. 18.

¹⁶⁸ Davies, *Europe*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁹ Quoted from Adam Zamoyski, *The Last King of Poland*, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1997, p. 9.

exclude Poland from the processes of Enlightenment would be lack of insight. Polish 'oswiecenie' (Enlightenment in Polish) as R. Butterwick notices 'was a religious metaphor already deeply rooted in Polish culture. Between 1760 and 1790 the word was largely, but not entirely secularized, and it continued to be used mainly in that secular sense for the next two or three decades'¹⁷⁰. Enlightenment in Poland is highly associated with the last king - Stanislaw Augustus Poniatowski - reigning from 1764 till 1795. His active personal involvement and employment of 'all the means in his disposal'¹⁷¹ to spread the Enlightenment was crowned by creation of Commission of National Education in 1773. The major trends of Polish enlightenment were vested in fight against superstition propagating learning, which by 'combination of reflection, observation and meditation led to discovery of truth'.¹⁷² In a few cases, 'oswiecenie' acquired a status comparable to Aufklärung, as an autonomous force acting within history in opposition to the forces of ignorance, superstition and fanaticism.¹⁷³ Mme Geoffrin, who ran the most famous Enlightenment salon in Paris, visited Stanislaw Augustus in 1766. This event received a wave of fascination and mockery, but was the most important encounter of Enlightenment 'proper' with Eastern Europe till Rousseau wrote his 'Government of Poland', where addressing Polish people he declared: 'Your Frenchman, your Englishman, your Spaniard, your Italian, your Russian, are all pretty much the same man <...> when the Pole reaches the age of twenty, he must be a Pole, not some other kind of man'.¹⁷⁴ Poland's difference and exceptionality could be as much the object of praise and fascination as of ridicule and comedy. Nonetheless, it was part of European cultural picture of the time.

Economically, of course, Eastern Europe was backward, Poland with its vast lands, bad roads, forests and marches, was a land of barbarians compared to lively and booming Paris. Eastern Europe was a society of decline, scanty population and bad living conditions. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writing in 1717 depicted that 'nothing can be more melancholy than to travel through Hungary, reflecting on the former flourishing state of that kingdom, and to see such a noble spot of earth almost uninhabited'.¹⁷⁵ And it was economic picture with meant so much on distributing the labels of civilization and culture. However, Eastern Europe changed its character, when Poland ceased to exist by the end of the eighteenth century. The

¹⁷⁰ Richard Butterwick, 'What is Enlightenment (Oswiecenie)? Some Polish Answers, 1765-1820' (hereafter, Butterwick, 'Enlightenment'), *Central Europe*, 3, 2005, 1, pp. 19-37, (p. 36)

¹⁷¹ Butterwick, 'Enlightenment', p. 31.

¹⁷² Butterwick, 'Enlightenment', p. 24.

¹⁷³ Butterwick, 'Enlightenment', p. 36.

¹⁷⁴ Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁷⁵ Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740-1985*, 2nd eds, London and New York: Routledge, 1991 (hereafter, Okey, *Eastern Europe*), p. 21.

political power distribution in Europe, which after Napoleonic wars culminated in Vienna peace system, emphasized the power axis, which ignored East-West divisions. As Robin Okey notices, it was Saint Petersburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Berlin, 'with Warsaw in uneasy limbo', which were regarded as 'northern courts', and Tsar's victory against Napoleon, liberating Europe was coming from the North.¹⁷⁶ Even the travelogs depicting the backwardness were concerned with 'improvement of manners', emphasizing the advance towards common European civilization: 'titles reflected patrimonial assumptions or a sense of shared urbanity rather than cultural polarities of east-west or other regional divides'¹⁷⁷. The political power concentrated in Vienna, Berlin or St. Petersburg contested the East-West axis forming the system based on military and political influence disregarding regional divides and putting reliance on a center's control over periphery. The eighteenth-nineteenth centuries saw the rise of Absolutist systems, and these had their own Enlightenment programs. At the begging of the eighteenth century the Habsburg Austria, Hohenzollern Prussia and Romanov Austria were societies and states lagging behind industrialized West. Their choice was 'Enlightenment from above' turning to secularization and centralization of the state.¹⁷⁸ L. R. Johnson noted that it was not the 'homegrown philosophers', but monarchs, who were the best representatives of Enlightenment in Central and Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century, turning towards France for example and inspiration.¹⁷⁹

In the eighteenth century Habsburg Enlightenment denounced its former pompous baroque cultural structures indulged in a French ideas and fashions, loosening the Jesuit control over the education and importing new ideas of natural law, dismantling baroque's formalism and engaging in academic pursuits.¹⁸⁰ The revitalization of society brought the rise of bureaucracy, army, trade and industry, turning the state towards the path of industrialization and economic catch-up program with more advanced Western societies. Nevertheless, the Absolutist Enlightenment had different dynamics than the West influenced by philosophers. It did not create the liberal democratic 'revolution from below', which happened in Western societies and dismantled old feudal systems, increasing middle class, seeking for their political and economic freedom.¹⁸¹ However, the Enlightenment discourse

¹⁷⁶ Robin Okey, 'Central Europe/Eastern Europe: behind the Definitions' (hereafter, Okey, 'Cetral/Eastern Europe') *Past and Present*, 137, 1992, 1, pp. 102-133, (p. 110).

¹⁷⁷ Okey, 'Cetral/Eastern Europe', pp. 110-111.

¹⁷⁸ Lonnie R. Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996 (hereafter, Johnson, *Central Europe*), pp. 104-105.

¹⁷⁹ Johnson, *Central Europe*, p. 103.

¹⁸⁰ R. J. W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Essays on Central Europe c. 1683-1867*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 59-61.

¹⁸¹ Johnson, *Central Europe*, p. 104.

itself suggests the grand stories of improvement, civilization and world-changing ideas. But if one turns the gaze towards the lands possessed by imperial powers, the particular micro-history suggests of local scale Enlightenment, as T. S. Brnardic suggests with an example of Bohemian capital.¹⁸² It was not only the Enlightenment 'from above', but also individual projects on the local scale, which, according to T.S. Brnardic, could be simply the 'quest for improvement'.¹⁸³ Despite the fact that the status of Prague was reduced to provincial city, its own infrastructure of theaters, libraries, academic institutions, book and printing shops provided the conditions for local philosophers, who can be described as enlightened patriots working for 'improvement of Bohemia and the happiness of its people'. Their actions and discourse were based on the local level, differing from the grand narrative of Enlightenment. Nonetheless, they show that Enlightenment does not have to be exceptional prerogative of major countries as France, Great Britain and Germany.¹⁸⁴

Enlightenment was crucial with bringing up label of backwardness for Eastern Europe. The vocabulary it used forming East-West antithesis of barbarism and civilization, wildness and urbanization, bad and good manners, associating it with fantasies, lust, slavery and possession as well as possibility of cultivation. As Larry Wolff concluded, it created the cultural division preceding the Cold War, introducing the cultural artifice, which is still salient today supporting the culturally constructed division.¹⁸⁵ Though Central and Eastern European monarchies took from the Enlightenment ideas, which gradually became the engine of their centralization and development, it was the cultural backwardness, highly based on economic underdevelopment of the region, which in a combination with the mind of Enlightenment formed their policy of possessing the region. Ideas of the Enlightenment provided the ideologically useful discourse of the 'civilizing mission', which central monarchies undertook.

4.2. Complexity of cultural environments

The civilizational narrative of Enlightenment received a blast from romanticism. Its major concern was the sphere of spiritual human experience, shifting human mind and experience, which ignored Enlightenment's method of reason. According to N. Davies, the

¹⁸² Teodora Shek Brnardic, 'The Enlightenment in Eastern Europe: Between Regional Typology and Particular Micro-History' (hereafter, Brnardic, 'Enlightenment in Eastern Europe'), *European Review of History*, 13, 2006, 3, pp. 411-435.

¹⁸³ Brnardic, 'Enlightenment in Eastern Europe', pp. 419-427.

¹⁸⁴ Brnardic, 'Enlightenment in Eastern Europe', pp. 426-427.

¹⁸⁵ Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, pp. 370-373.

movement's beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, even received labels of Anti-Enlightenment and Pre-Romanticism.¹⁸⁶ The new movement shifted the cultural life in Europe towards individual's senses and suffering with Goethe's literary masterpiece 'The Sorrows of Young Werther'.¹⁸⁷ Romantics and the following age of nationalisms brought the concern about particular nation and its advancement ignoring regional divisions, however, not forgetting the power relations and oppressors. It was Eastern Europe, which was under the rule of Imperial powers, where nations found themselves oppressed and waves of revolutionary strives took place. The people living in this region found themselves under the plethora of identities. Larry Wolff, commenting on Leoš Janáček and modern opera in central Europe, stressed that overlapping traditions made it possible to identify Janáček's work with 'Moravian, Czech, Slavic, Habsburg, East-European or Central operatic modernism'.¹⁸⁸ Though modernism usually is associated with urban metropolises, Janáček found its inspiration and worked in provincial town of Brno, he worked in a cultural context of local, municipal, regional, provincial and imperial identity formations making his work transnational and overcoming the boundaries, signifying the complex range of cultural environments which embraced Europe before the First World War.¹⁸⁹

The complexity of cultural environments mirrored the complex political situation in Europe, where the concepts of Mitteleuropa, Pan-Slavism, Imperialism together with national movements were present. The nineteenth century Europe's Imperialistic aspirations, the narrative of the leading role in the world (sometimes pushing for white master race domination) formed the relations of power and influence, which did not have borders. It was the historic time of national glories for powers or national upheavals for oppressed ones. The Russian case had its specificity as emerging movement of Slavophilism. It argued against Russia following the western patterns of development, while Westernisers advocated the political and cultural models of Europe.¹⁹⁰ However, as O. Halecki¹⁹¹ stresses, it is important to discern the third cultural-political mind of Eurasist's, which emerged in the nineteenth century. The vast Russian empire, stretching from Europe to Asia, had a mixture of cultural trends of Slav-fraternity and Asiatic mission.¹⁹² The invention of Eurasian continent and trends of Russian exceptionalism again raised the questions of Russia's inclusion or exclusion

¹⁸⁶ Davies, *Europe*, pp. 611-614.

¹⁸⁷ Quoted from Davies, *Europe*, p. 613.

¹⁸⁸ Larry Wolff, 'Commentary: The Operatic Tragedy of Central Europe' (hereafter, Wolff, 'Operatic Tragedy'), *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 26, 2006, 4, pp. 683-695, (p. 686).

¹⁸⁹ Wolff, 'Operatic Tragedy', pp. 688-695.

¹⁹⁰ Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the idea of Europe*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 39.

¹⁹¹ Halecki, *Limits and Divisions*, pp. 88-90.

¹⁹² Gollwitzer, *Imperialism*, p. 48.

from Europe. Dostoyevski wrote that for Russia it is necessary to annex Asia: 'It is necessary because Russia is not merely a part of Europe but also of Asia, because Russian is not merely a European but also an Asian, because our hopes, perhaps, are centered more In Asia than in Europe. Nor is that all: Asia will prove the outlet for our future destiny'.¹⁹³

The whole twentieth century saw several modes of cultural change. Europe, shattered by the First World War, became weaker on a global scale, and though it saw the rise of the free nations and states, it remained divided on the line of democracy and totalitarian regimes. The belief that Europe is based on certain norms and values like democracy or tolerance was opposed towards disastrous culture denying the value of an individual.¹⁹⁴ The states of East-Central Europe, backed by the policy of protectionism, turned inside national cultures and sentiments, resulting to nationalistic and authoritarian policies. With and exception of Czechoslovakia, authoritarian regimes arose in East-Central Europe; the hard-to-cope modernity brought the transformative totalitarian powers escalating resentment and flaws of democracy. The socialist revolution, which transformed Tsarist Russia into Soviet power, meant its 'moral and spiritual withdrawal'¹⁹⁵ from Europe. The whole Europe, engulfed by cultural pessimism, economic crisis and outcomes of war was experiencing the same devastating upheavals and unable to unite, fell into disastrous tendencies of non-democratic solutions in order to seek for revenge or implement the one vision of Europe. Culturally the whole continent was experiencing the same traumatic post-war experience: the line between East or West could be drawn on borders of Soviet Union as well as the borders of authoritarian states, which would encompass the large portion of European centre. Another great war of the century ended dividing Europe clearly into two halves of East and West. However, it has to be noted that the first post-war-year intelligentsia did not exclude communism- it was 'exotic in locale and heroic in scale'.¹⁹⁶ Besides the political Iron Curtain the cultural life in Europe was split into Communist and their friends and anti-communists. However, in Western Europe Soviets were rapidly losing ground and after the 1956 revolution in Hungary most European intellectuals turned away from Soviet model.¹⁹⁷

The major cultural difference in East and West of Europe was based on intelligentsia's role. Zygmunt Bauman argues that in the Eastern half revolutionary intelligentsia was inseparable from the state, linking power and economic leadership trough spiritual leadership

¹⁹³ Gollwitzer, *Imperialism*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁴ Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, p. 392.

¹⁹⁵ Hay, 'Europe Revisited', p. 5.

¹⁹⁶ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (hereafter, Judt, *Postwar*). New York: Penguin, 2006, p. 216.

¹⁹⁷ Judt, *Postwar*, p. 225.

of intelligentsia to the domination of communist party.¹⁹⁸ It led to the party-controlled civil society, meaning that intelligentsia was denied the authority in realm of civil society.¹⁹⁹ It was either the state controlled culture or conflict with the state. Eastern Europe did not have the public sphere, which could belong to civil society, thus experiencing the pressure to incorporate and assimilate the intellectual practices into the officialdom of the state.²⁰⁰ The absence of free culture may be marked as the line between East and West of Europe. Nonetheless, the 1960's brought the two halves of Europe close enough on the mass culture of consumption.²⁰¹ The intellectuals in the East and West of Europe saw the modernity based consumerism as mass cultural power embracing the continent with its devilish consequences.

It is culture, which created Eastern Europe during the Enlightenment, which probably is the first to abandon the distinction. The today's global, modern world unified the cultural life across the continent. Tony Judt argues for the unprecedented 'Europe as a way of life', where audiences from Barcelona to Budapest as well as the material on offer are strikingly uniform.²⁰² The cultural uniformity started by the turn of the twentieth century, when cultural life was dominated by urban, industrial culture and all-pervading presence of the technology.²⁰³ It let A. J. P. Taylor describe it as the age of the town hall, railway station and opera house, the age when traveling across Europe was easy, opera theaters had the same repertoire and people were wearing similar clothes.²⁰⁴ The situation, which after the two major wars and major political and economic opposition of the Cold War and decades of traumatic exclusions, can be seen again. Except that opera theatre must be changed to cinema, railway station to the airport and clothing style must be similar as never before, based on labels and brands. How much of this cultural pattern is European in this global world is not easy to say, though one thing is certain - Europe lost its privileged position of cultural superiority, which was created during the early modern period. It is no more about the East or West of Europe, but more and more frequently about all-encompassing European culture.

¹⁹⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, 'Intellectuals in East-central Europe: Continuity and Change' (hereafter, Bauman, 'Intellectuals'), East European Politics and Societies, 162, 1987, 1, pp. 162-186, (pp. 175-178)

¹⁹⁹ Bauman, 'Intellectuals', pp. 184-185.

²⁰⁰ Bauman, 'Intellectuals', p. 162.

²⁰¹ Katzenstein, 'European Identity', p. 128.

²⁰² Judt, Postwar, p. 780.

²⁰³ Rietbergen, Europe: A Cultural History, p. 396.

²⁰⁴ A. J. P. Taylor, Nuo Sarajevo iki Potsdamo, Vilnius: Baltos Lances, 1994 (hereafter, Taylor, Nuo Sarajevo iki Potsdamo), p. 9.

V. Eastern Europe: Political Formation(s)

In 2009, the Latvian ambassador to Denmark made a remark on the 'EurActiv' blog concerning an article about political instability in Eastern Europe caused by financial downfall in Europe. However, his remark was not about the economic situation in Latvia, but about the regional orientation of the country. He wrote, 'I think that it is not very precise to describe my country as a part of Eastern Europe. Latvia, like Finland and Sweden, is part of Northern Europe. Besides, she is a member of the EU and NATO'. He continued that there is a 'fundamental difference' between Latvia and countries like Ukraine or Georgia and 'to disregard these fundamental differences is simply an illustration of old, Cold War-style thinking'.²⁰⁵ From these beliefs, represented by the ambassador as the official representative of the country, one can state several important points, and though the main message states that Latvia is not in Eastern Europe, the other part of the message is more worrying. It is this 'fundamental difference' between East and North (or the rest), which is most unpromising, that is precisely part of the Cold-War style thinking, which the ambassador encourages others to avoid.

It is true that the Cold-War system clearly divided Europe into Eastern and Western parts. Therefore, one may have believed that there is, or should be, fundamental differences between these two parts. These had to be found in political, economic, and ideological systems clearly separated by the Iron Curtain. However, the Curtain is no more, and one would like to believe that, maybe, there is no fundamental difference anymore as well. But it is not easy to avoid using the vocabulary attributed to and by the countries in (or out) of the Eastern European region. The narrative about the East is still influenced not only by Cold-War style thinking, but also by thinking from the ages of Enlightenment and Imperialism, bearing the remaining message of backwardness, geographical borderland, periphery and 'lesser civilization'. It is not the fault of the Latvian ambassador that he has to deal with a situation and wording provided by the narrative itself, so the decision to exclude Latvia from the region seems like a best solution. The decision made exactly by the same means - the politics - which made Latvia part of Eastern Europe not so long ago. The political decision to be in the European Union and NATO is presented as a safeguard against its past inclusion former in the 'East'. Political projects of inclusion and exclusion are the ongoing experience of the whole of Europe. There was never a line drawn to divide Europe, be it cultural,

²⁰⁵ <http://euractiv.blogactiv.eu/2009/02/17/ambassador-andris-razans/> [accessed 10 May 2010].

geographical or economic, which did not have a certain political message. And the Cold-War line is neither the first nor the last, but it is the most recent.

5.1. Early formations

It is hard to speak about European political divisions, since Europe itself was not a political concept until the eighteenth century, but the regional developments, which could emphasize the differences between one part and the other, can be retraced from the beginning of state-formations. Oscar Halecki, presenting the history of East-Central Europe, discerned that from the very beginning, the moving Slavic tribes formed three distinct groups, which had different historical destinies. The eastern branch, later known as 'Rus', was exposed to relations with Asiatic invaders, while the western and southern Slavs were barely affected by them during the prehistoric period. The western and southern branches of Slavic tribes, however, were affected by the Germanic tribe movement. It was this movement, which was directed westwards towards re-conquering the lands taken by Slavic tribes during their migration.

The Germanic movement became too aggressive and powerful for Slavs living near the western borders of their homeland to resist bringing them into close contact with the Roman tradition and the Catholic Church.²⁰⁶ So it was, according to Halecki, that:

In a contradistinction to the Eastern Slavs who had to face semi-barbarian Asiatic invaders, mostly pagan, the Western Slavs had to realize that they could not resist their opponents without themselves entering the realm of the Roman culture which was the main factor of German superiority, and most important, without becoming Christians like their neighbors.²⁰⁷

It was Europe of Charlemagne and Carolingian Empire, which through consolidation fused barbarian and Roman legacies and formed the distinction between the domains of the former Roman Empire and newly added lands as the first possible distinction between Western and Central Europe.²⁰⁸ From this point, the distinctive region that found itself 'within

²⁰⁶ Halecki, *Borderlands*, p. 26.

²⁰⁷ Halecki, *Borderlands*, p. 28.

²⁰⁸ Arnason, 'East Central Europe', p. 389.

civilizational orbit but beyond imperial borders of the emerging West',²⁰⁹ became neither east nor west and received the name of East-Central Europe. As J. P. Arnason suggests, it was a time when the Eastern name was reserved for more far-away powers such as Kievan Rus.²¹⁰

The early Kievan state was also trying to fuse the Antiquity of Byzantines and Barbarism of Russians.²¹¹ However, this process was stopped by Europe's west, alienating itself from the Byzantium and Mongol invasions, which divided and subdued Kievan Rus.²¹² Jenó Szűcs argues that one can talk about the regions of Europe after the turn of the millennium, when Occidents transformed Western Europe and Byzantium abandoned 'defensive rigidity'.²¹³ The two powers turned north absorbing the intermediate, heterogeneous region. As the division between these two powers became the one splitting Europe (especially after the great Schism), it separated East Slavs from West Slavs by the line running through the lower Danube and Eastern Carpathian regions, reaching the Baltic area in thirteenth century.²¹⁴ Europe and at this time Christendom, was split into two parts based on the influences of Rome and Byzantium. This split is visible by the Romanesque and Gothic architecture, the phenomena of Renaissance and Reformation, and the border of the historic Kingdoms of Poland and Hungary.²¹⁵ The patterns of region formation on the East-West axis started with these differences during the Middle Ages. The Tartar conquests sealed Russia from Europe, thus leaving the area in part of Christian Europe under alien rule.

In the Balkan area, according to Denys Hay, the disrupted unity provided by emperors is comparable to the fall of the German Empire in 1250.²¹⁶ It was the preservation of a common language and loyalty to the emperor in the nineteenth century, which inspired the unification of Germany. In the Balkans, however, linguistic differences accompanied national sentiments and encouraged the Greek kingdom to separate into the separate states of Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania.²¹⁷ But this disruptive unity in South-Eastern Europe was crucial for the Ottoman advancement, which was stopped in the Hungarian kingdom. Political differences during the Middle Ages left Eastern Europe under foreign suppressive absolutist rule and the West experienced the rise of corpus politicum from the long lasting crisis of

²⁰⁹ Arnason, 'East Central Europe', p. 389.

²¹⁰ Arnason, 'East Central Europe', p. 389-390.

²¹¹ Jenó Szűcs, 'The three historical regions of Europe' (hereafter, Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions'), *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 29, 983, pp. 131-184, (p.152)

²¹² Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 152.

²¹³ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 132.

²¹⁴ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 132.

²¹⁵ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', pp. 232-233.

²¹⁶ Hay, *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, pp. 243-244.

²¹⁷ Hay, *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, pp. 243-244.

diverse feudal self-interests.²¹⁸ The situation in the West formed a relationship between rulers and the political sector of society, which was institutionalized in the order of estates around 1300.²¹⁹ The difference, which Oscar Halecki defines as catastrophic for Europe, was the Turkish conquest of the Balkans and the Tartar invasion, completely alien in cultural terms; the Asiatic domination in the region 'left an indelible imprint on the Russian character'.²²⁰

The time of region formations also left the lands in between the historic kingdoms of Bohemia, Poland (later Poland-Lithuania), and Hungary, which were under western influence. Though Western structures could be detected, they were incomplete (towns) or overgrown (nobility).²²¹ It was these structures, which made the region of East Central Europe recognizable during the Middle Ages. There, 'modifications to the structure of the Western type of models and norms could be detected in almost everything'.²²² It was the 'disproportionately wide stratum' of nobility in East-Central Europe, which soon gained political influence and became aware of its power that blocked 'ascending themes of local legality'.²²³ J. P. Arnason asserts that during the medieval and early modern periods the three historical states were closest to creating a pure form of estate order.²²⁴ However, nobility did not want central power to gain influence, as it did in the West. According to Jenő Szűcs, the West was exhausted by civil wars and nobility expected the state to provide military and safeguard their privileges.²²⁵ Thus it led to the formation of great estates in East-Central Europe and economic arrangement of providers for the West - the second serfdom. The region together with Eastern Europe tied the burden on peasantry.²²⁶ This later led to economic backwardness in the whole region, where the peasantry and the free towns withered.

When Europe was surrounded by Turkish power from the South-East, and Eastern Europe was under the lordship of Tartars, European civilization ended with the Polish-Lithuanian border. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Kingdom later joined in the Commonwealth, forming one of the largest territorial entities in Europe at the time. Their territorial gains served as important factors in Polish and Lithuanian European conscience formation, and they were seen as the European frontier of western values and Christendom. Because it was such a huge territory, it was very geographically near to non-European powers

²¹⁸ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 150.

²¹⁹ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 147.

²²⁰ Halecki, *Limits and Divisions*, pp. 93-94.

²²¹ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', pp. 154 - 155.

²²² Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 156.

²²³ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 154.

²²⁴ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 393.

²²⁵ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 158.

²²⁶ Szűcs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 160.

or Europe's *Other* - the powers coming from the East, alien to European-Christian civilisation. As P. S. Wandycz argues, 'no wonder that historic...Poland, bordering on Muscovy and the Ottoman lands, regarded themselves and were regarded by others, as the bulwark of Christendom (*antemurale christianitatis*). Their eastern frontiers marked the frontiers of Europe'.²²⁷ The best representation of these ideals is the incredible relief of Vienna from the Turks, led by king Jan Sobieski in 1683. But by the time Sobieski led the battle against the Turks, Eastern Europe was rising in power alongside Muscovite Russia. The growing power, which loosened itself from the rule of the declined Golden Horde, turned to the West and marched into Europe, conquering Polish-Lithuanian lands.

The Russian rise led to Norman Davies symbolic claim that 'the Muscovite army marched for the West in May 1500, and in a sense, did not stop marching until 1945'.²²⁸ It became the power, which could not be excluded from Europe. With Peter the Great and his 'window into Europe', the Russian power became indiscernible from the European power balance. The power of Russia and its revisionist attitude toward the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was based on the doctrine of the Third Rome, sketched by Abbot Filofei of Pskov in 1510, where he described Moscow as the follower of Rome and Constantinople and the only remaining sanctuary of Orthodox Christianity.²²⁹ The theory justified both the government's creation of a strong centralised state in the autocratic hands of the tsar and the creation of an empire led by Moscow, in order to protect Eastern Christians and colonise and Christianise the territories in the East.²³⁰

5.2. Political oppositions of the twentieth century

The growing imperial powers in the West had a lot in common in the sense of state centralisation, growth of the army and bureaucracy and protectionism in the economy.²³¹ However, the absolutist state in the West 'was a compensation for the disappearance of serfdom'; while in the East 'it was a device for the consolidation of serfdom'.²³² It was the political order of empires in Europe, based on centre-periphery relations, which politically

²²⁷ Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*. 2nd Ed. London: Routledge, 2001, p. 3.

²²⁸ Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland's Present*. Oxford: University Press, 2001, p. 258.

²²⁹ Hay, *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, p. 266.

²³⁰ Dimitri Stremoukhoff, 'Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine', *Speculum*, 28, 1953, 1, pp. 99-100.

²³¹ Szücs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 162.

²³² P. Anderson quoted from Szücs, 'Three Historical Regions', p. 161.

ignored the East-West axis until the early nineteenth century, when masses claimed the voice of public life and nationalism turned to cultural differences.²³³ The growth of centralised imperial powers in the West and East of Europe was decisive for the region of East-Central Europe. With the last partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, the whole area was won by imperial powers. As Oscar Halecki clarifies, the western German section of Central Europe came into direct contact with Russian Eastern Europe for the first time in European history.²³⁴

The new situation affected the whole continent, and the former power-balance was disrupted, moving the two powers toward the centre- Russia from the East and France from the West. It was the Austrian chancellor, Metternich, who proposed the idea of 'Mitteleuropa' as a counterweight to Russia and France.²³⁵ *Mitteleuropa*, however, was received negatively by East Central Europe, as the German-Austrian alliance meant German rule over the nations and states of Central Europe.²³⁶ However, in the late nineteenth century, most educated Germans believed *Mitteleuropa* was economic and not a political concept, even adopting this view toward the neighbouring Slavs and portraying them as economically backward. This also justified the potential for domination, though being of questionable worth to bother about.²³⁷

New national movements created tension between German ruling ideas and national interests. The beginning of the twentieth century saw regional economic modernisation and co-operation, by which Friedrich Naumann sought to elevate *Mitteleuropa* as a central European world power.²³⁸ The whole of the nineteenth century can be marked in Robin Okey's words as the age of 'sacred egoism', when none of the cross-regional tendencies (be it economic *Mitteleuropa*, the pan-Slavic movement or the Polish looking beyond Central Europe towards France and advocating an Europe of the people) prevailed. The East Central European states struggled for their national independence alongside problematic state creation processes. It was the First World War, which changed the situation.

In 1915, the future president of Czechoslovakia declared that the goal of the war was to 'regenerate Europe'.²³⁹ According to him, after the war the new order in Europe would be created, which would employ the principle of self determination and could finally correct the

²³³ Okey, 'Central/Eastern Europe', pp. 110-111.

²³⁴ Halecki, *Borderlands*, p. 289.

²³⁵ Okey, 'Central/Eastern Europe', p. 113.

²³⁶ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 494.

²³⁷ Okey, 'Central/Eastern Europe', pp. 114-116.

²³⁸ Okey, 'Central/Eastern Europe', pp. 110-111.

²³⁹ Quoted from Katzenstein, 'European Identity', p. 121.

injustices of the imperial period, which created the 'prison of nations'.²⁴⁰ However, the post-war era was marked by ideological divisions in Europe and with the exception of Czechoslovakia, democracy did not root itself in all of East Central Europe, causing authoritarian regimes to spring out. The two major ideological opponents, Germany and Russia, found the Successions states to be 'buffers erected against them on its behalf'.²⁴¹ Soviet Russia in the East was regarded as European, but it was a 'somewhat errant' part of Europe.²⁴² However, it must be noted that though Russia was perceived as a threat, the real opposition came with Cold War discourse, and the pre-war belief of threat from Russia is often contested.²⁴³

In the case of Central Europe, Weimar Germany first directed the revisionist policy against Poland, while Hitler pursued the whole of East-Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, Austria and Czechoslovakia became his initial targets.²⁴⁴ In 1939, German unity in Central Europe and its influence in East Central Europe repeated its hegemony, and the line separating western and eastern zones of occupation in Germany and Austria resembled the German-Slavic frontier of the early Middle Ages.²⁴⁵ The interwar Europe, that of the Versailles system, though based on the defensive alliance of France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania against Germany and Hungary, was not united enough and too fragile. Germany, and later Russia, used ideological and psychological manipulation, as well as profound politico-demographic and socioeconomic weaknesses and conflicts within East-Central Europe to regain the control²⁴⁶ over the area. The outcome of World War II was exactly the one Halford J. Mackinder warned against. He proclaimed that the power trying to organize the resources of East Europe and the Heartland²⁴⁷ was neglected by the Soviet power, which had all of East Central Europe under its sway.

When Churchill called for European unity, he meant the unity of the West, Europe was worn out and ready to forget not only its previous grievances, but to acknowledge the division, thus putting the Iron Curtain between Europe's East and West.²⁴⁸ Norman Davies argues that the period was the most influential in reinforcing the negative image of Eastern

²⁴⁰ Katzenstein, 'European Identity', p. 121.

²⁴¹ Okey, 'Central/Eastern Europe', p. 120.

²⁴² Neumann, *Uses of Other*, p. 101.

²⁴³ Neumann, *Uses of Other*, pp. 101-102.

²⁴⁴ Joseph Rothschild and Nancy M. Wingfield, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*, 3rd eds. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 (hereafter, Rotchild, *Return to Diversity*), pp. 2-3.

²⁴⁵ Cahnman, 'Frontiers in Europe', p. 620.

²⁴⁶ Rotchild, *Return to Diversity*, p. 5.

²⁴⁷ Mackinder, 'Democratic Ideals', pp. 98-99.

²⁴⁸ Katzenstein, 'European Identity', pp. 124-125.

Europe. It was the confrontation of the 'Western World' with the United States of America and ahead of it with the Soviet Bloc, which separated two parts letting people live in those two parts with 'little direct contact'.²⁴⁹

Europe represented only the western part, associated with European Economic Community or the European Union, and the social sciences reaffirmed this division, suggesting its permanence.²⁵⁰ It was against this policy of ignorance and forgetting, that intellectuals coming from the Eastern Part launched their criticism. Their major argument was against the division of Europe into two parts, through reviving the notion of the centre of Europe. This, according to J. Hagen, 'served as a direct challenge to the Soviet, or Eastern, system of cultural and political suppression'.²⁵¹

Kundera argued for the cultural legacy of the Habsburgs and moral and cultural aspects of Central Europe, rather than geographical ones. However, in his version of Central Europe, Kundera did not include Germany (East or West) and denied the Soviet Union as part of the European region.²⁵² His vision of Europe had the centre, but did not have the East. The concept of Mitteleuropa also saw attempts at renewal, serving as a geopolitical tool to challenge Soviet hegemony and the West's apathy.²⁵³ Mitteleuropa, advocated for German reunification and was skeptically received in the region because of its association with German expansionism and economic imperialism.

By the end of the 1980's, a distinction between Mitteleuropa and Central Europe was made. As Hungarian writer Gyorgy Konrad explained, Central Europe was 'made up of small nations between two large ones: Germany and Russia'.²⁵⁴ However, the collapse of the Soviet system changed the policies of centre revival into policies about the 'return to Europe'. The central spaces were seen as 'intermediate stages in an effort to deconstruct the East and return to Europe'. There was a will to name the country 'Central European' in order to give it 'Western credentials' and differentiate it from the East or Balkan.²⁵⁵ As J. Hagen argues 'it was the rhetorical device helping Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians redefine themselves as Western and therefore the leading candidates for membership in the EU and other Western institutions'.²⁵⁶

²⁴⁹ Davies *Europe East and West*, p. 39

²⁵⁰ Davies *Europe East and West*, p. 40

²⁵¹ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 497.

²⁵² Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', pp. 496-497.

²⁵³ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 500

²⁵⁴ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 502.

²⁵⁵ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 508.

²⁵⁶ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 508.

5.3. Not yet fully European

Does the change of political systems in Europe's East after the collapse of the Cold War system and Eastern EU accession mean that Eastern Europe moved further East? The viable Visegrad Group is one of the political and economic concepts uniting states in East Central Europe, challenging their former label of the East. However, the most important political goal, at least in East Central European states, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, was the return to the West. In other words, the integration to capitalist systems and the creation of western-style democratic institutions, which would be followed by integration into the EU and NATO were the most significant.

But the whole process of integration, as Merje Kuus contends, had a double framing. The politically incorrect discourse of opposition by Europe to Eastern Europe was changed by EU enlargement discourse, stemming from changes to the term 'Europeaness' and differentiation between fully European 'Europe' and not-yet-fully European 'Eastern Europe'.²⁵⁷ The EU and NATO enlargements, which collapsed much of the former Cold War division, introduced a new division: the European core and Central European applicants that are not yet fully European.²⁵⁸ This framework does not challenge the East-West dichotomy, but advocates alignment with the right side, while at the same time feeding into Eurocentrism and perpetuating the dichotomy of Europe and Russia.²⁵⁹

The newest political developments on the European continent have changed the patterns of being Eastern and Western, though the distinction did not disappear because concepts about the post-communist area are still widely used, it is now mostly based on economic differentiation, not politics. It is the association of Europe with the European Union or European Economic area, which now creates more problems and divides Europe into two zones. Eastern Europe could become the Eastern rim of the EU, while Russia could be excluded from the continent entirely, or Eastern Europe could be made up of all countries outside the European Economic area (excluding EFTA). With the Cold War division now fading, Europe has a new opportunity to unite itself, leaving the labels of East and West only to spatial determination.

²⁵⁷ Merje Kuus, 'Europe's Eastern Expansion and the Reinscription of Otherness in East-Central Europe' (hereafter, Kuus, 'Europe's Eastern Expansion'), *Progress in Human Geography*, 28, 2004, 4, pp. 472-489, (p. 484).

²⁵⁸ Kuus, 'Europe's Eastern Expansion', p. 475.

²⁵⁹ Kuus, 'Europe's Eastern Expansion', p. 484.

VI. The Socio-Economic Development: the Periphery of the West

The division of Europe between East and West when turned into economic terms usually shows the apparent differences: wages, GDP numbers, living conditions are speaking against Eastern Europe in comparison with patterns in the West. This situation can be retraced from the sixteenth century till the economies based on socialist or capitalist systems. Eastern Europe in economic terms was always a lesser, backward, peripheral part. It is tempting to put the whole development of the area into Wallerstein's theoretical framework of capitalist-world economy. His division of the world economic system in core, periphery and semi-periphery, based on the degree of the profitability of the production processes²⁶⁰ fits the division between Western Europe as a core and Eastern as a periphery. Wallerstein's division is associated with the new division of labor, which started in the sixteenth century. In the core area, towns, merchants, industries flourished, moving towards variety of specialization; while the periphery was a producer of primary products for exchange for the manufactured ones, the towns were weak and agricultural pattern of economy prevailed moving towards monocultural trend²⁶¹. However, Daniel Chirot stresses that it is important to make a distinction between the causes of East European backwardness, which theory could put into the world economic system, and the influence of the system itself. Eastern Europe did not become backward because its peripheral role in Western Europe's development, but it became dependent on the West²⁶². Wandycz presents views that it was not the agrarian capitalism, which caused regions backwardness, but the backward structure, like weak domestic market. It is also incompatible with empirical evidence (for example England did not import any grain and occasionally exported itself)²⁶³. What is more, Eastern Europe was not economically homogenous area. The differentiation between Center and East can be made. Bohemia, for example, was indistinguishable from neighboring Bavaria and Austria and despite its political

²⁶⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, World-Systems Analysis. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004, p. 28.

²⁶¹ Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century. New York: Academic Press, 1974 (hereafter, Wallerstein, Modern World System). pp. 96-102.

²⁶² Daniel Chirot, 'Causes and Consequences of Backwardness' (hereafter, Chirot, 'Backwardness') in Daniel Chirot (ed.) The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: economics and politics from the Middle Ages until twentieth century, London: California University Press, 2001, p. 5.

²⁶³ Piotr S. Wandycz, The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present. 2nd Ed. London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 50-51.

subjugation never became the state of dependent backwardness.²⁶⁴ Also western Poland and Hungary, because of the close contact with the West, was economically more advanced than more backward agricultural economy of Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine or Moldavia prevailing into the twentieth century.²⁶⁵

Ivan T. Berend attributed certain socio-economic characteristics to the region. Its distinctiveness is the historical trajectory as a constant, repeated attempt to catch up with Western Europe (especially from the nineteenth century).²⁶⁶ This tendency comes from the Middle Ages. As Robin Okey suggests, despite the lower density of population in the Eastern part of the European continent the steady demand for skilled labor from the West shows the economic and cultural lag with a desire to catch up.²⁶⁷ Although the rapid town-building in the late medieval ages shows the growth, these towns never turned into 'money-makers' in Western sense. The feudal forces did not let to strengthen the economic power of bourgeoisie. The nobility, which owned large estates primarily used for grain export, used their noble privileges and powers to reduce the influence of towns. Nobility usurped the regulation of market prices and objected the bourgeois representation in the diets, thus stopping the process of town-growth, which by that time was in the West²⁶⁸. Okey argues that 'deprived of trade with the West and a peasant market, the East European town withered - in one Polish town only 28 per cent of the houses that had existed in the mid sixteenth century remained in 1811 - and noble dominion triumphed over stagnant society'.²⁶⁹ The situation led to the so called 'second serfdom', which was consolidated by the seventeenth century.²⁷⁰ Wallerstein explains it as different consequences of the recession, which encompassed Europe in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. In the West the outcome was the crisis of feudal system, while in the East it led to 'manorial reaction' culminating in second serfdom²⁷¹, the process also highly emphasized by Jenő Szűcs. The whole region became provider of the raw materials (mainly grain) to the West, which was profitable for nobility, willing to maintain system unchanged. However as François Crouzet notices, exports of the grain to the West were instrumental in

²⁶⁴ Chirot, 'Backwardness', pp. 5-6.

²⁶⁵ Chirot, 'Backwardness', pp. 5-6.

²⁶⁶ Ivan T. Berend, 'What is Central and Eastern Europe?', (hereafter, Berend, 'What is Central and Eastern Europe?'), *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2005, 8, 2005, 4, p. 401.

²⁶⁷ Okey, *Eastern Europe*, p. 17.

²⁶⁸ Okey, *Eastern Europe*, pp. 19-20.

²⁶⁹ Okey, *Eastern Europe*, p. 20.

²⁷⁰ Okey, *Eastern Europe*, p. 19.

²⁷¹ Wallerstein, *Modern World System*, p. 95.

the rise of the second serfdom.²⁷² The dependency of East on the West, may not be the main cause of second serfdom, but it certainly was profitable for the landowners.²⁷³

The sixteenth-seventeenth century economic initiatives were scarce, relying on force majeure and trying to preserve the position rather than trying to develop the economy.²⁷⁴ Although François Crouzet stresses that before the industrial revolution differences in per capita incomes between European countries were not large²⁷⁵, the major failure of the region's socio-economic system was its inability to adapt the modern changes. Ivan T. Berend's stresses that, 'between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the region could not follow the rise of the modern, merchant, industrializing Western capitalistic core, with its homogenizing absolute states. Instead it became the raw material and food-supplying periphery, re-feudalized in the capitalist world system. Until the mid-twentieth century, this region remained agricultural Europe'.²⁷⁶ Differently to the West, where bourgeois society started to dominate, numbers of peasants started to decline and working class to grow, in Eastern Europe a 'dual society' dominated. The old noble elites and middle class gentry with immense number of oppressed peasants lived alongside relatively small number of modern, mostly non-indigenous, German and Jewish elite and a small working class, which learned to co-exist in this non-adaptive and backward society.²⁷⁷

The rise of centralized imperial powers and their conquest of the region were, paradoxically, beneficial in economic terms. Western Poland benefited from the market of Germany, as well as Bohemia from industrial investment coming from Austrian Empire.²⁷⁸ The Russian part of Poland was favored by opened Russian market, which brought cheap raw materials and was a huge consumer of Polish-Lithuanian production. The modernization programs brought by enlightened absolutisms were vehicle for economic development in the politically oppressed region. For example, compared to slow modernization of Russia, Polish, Baltic and Finish parts of the empire, were examples of progress; because of their highly developed social-educational environments and better entrepreneur traditions these lands profited from Russian modernization more than Russia itself. The common market and abolition of internal tariffs in 1851 opened marked for exports, letting the Polish Kingdom to rise as the third largest industrial centre of empire. Per capita industrial production was twice

²⁷² François Crouzet, *A History of the European Economy, 1000–2000*, Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001 (hereafter, Crouzet, *European Economy*), p. 78.

²⁷³ Chirot, 'Backwardness', p. 7.

²⁷⁴ Okey, *Eastern Europe*, p. 27.

²⁷⁵ Crouzet, *European Economy*, p. 78.

²⁷⁶ Berend, 'What is Central and Eastern Europe?', p. 402.

²⁷⁷ Berend, 'What is Central and Eastern Europe?', p. 402.

²⁷⁸ Chirot, 'Backwardness', pp. 8-9.

that in Russia.²⁷⁹ The level of industrialization in former Poland-Lithuania was much higher than in empire as a whole. Of course, the major engine of this growth was consuming Russian market.

Despite modernization programs region still preserved agricultural character and still had relatively undeveloped domestic markets. Berend evaluated the structural changes only reaching the medium level.²⁸⁰ The gap between the West was narrowed, but Eastern Europe was still far away from catching up.

6.1. Protected nationalistic markets between the wars

The war undoubtedly brought destruction and ruined the pre-war economic achievements in the region. But war also brought the independence; braking from the empires newly emerged states identified their national independence with self-sufficiency. Their economies for the following decades were marked by constant struggle to overcome war devastations, economic nationalism, high tariff walls and replacement of imported goods with domestic production.²⁸¹

The economic exhaustion, shortages and chaos brought by the First Word War haunted the region for several years.²⁸² Berend notices that it was not only high rates of inflation, ceased exports and economic chaos which faced new countries, but also structural economic crisis – ‘the demanding requirements of long-term adjustment to an age of new technology’,²⁸³. The states were trying to cope with short term economic troubles, but the long term adaptiveness mattered more and had the greatest impact in the future.

East-Central European countries employed national economic policies, which turned from the path of free trade. Their national economies were highly connected to nationalistic ideas and attempt to create economic independence. The major tool to achieve these national-economic goals was protectionism.²⁸⁴ The protectionist policies also embodied an effort to change traditional European division of labour - East Central European countries refused to be exporters of food and raw materials.²⁸⁵ However, these states remained the importers of manufactured products from industrialized West. In order to overcome this situation they

²⁷⁹ Ivan T. Berend, Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe Before World War II. London: University of California Press, 1998 (hereafter, Berend, Decades of Crisis), p. 18.

²⁸⁰ Berend, Decades of Crisis, p. 19.

²⁸¹ Berend, ‘What is Central and Eastern Europe?’, p. 407.

²⁸² Berend, Decades of Crisis, p. 225.

²⁸³ Berend, Decades of Crisis, p. 231.

²⁸⁴ Berend, Decades of Crisis, pp. 234-235.

²⁸⁵ Berend, Decades of Crisis, p. 236.

employed import-substituting industrialization, which was enhanced by the security of protected domestic market, the backwardness of the region was used to stabilize the economic situation by inner-consumerism and substitute of imports by rapidly growing industry. The protectionist policies in the region and the whole continent worsened the economic situation as East-Central European states lost their major imperial economic markets.²⁸⁶

Another outcome of the First World War - the revolution in Russia and creation of Soviet Union saw a rise of the socialist economic system. Soviet Union first employing the New Economic Policy, which was mixed, later turned to planned command economy. Its major features - industrialization and collectivization made Soviet Russia the third industrial power in the World.²⁸⁷ It, however, was isolated from capitalist Western Europe, remaining non-important in Europe's foreign trade performance.²⁸⁸ The costs and measures of Soviet economic policy, causing massive migrations, famine, creation labour-camps and deaths of millions were of course based on totalitarian system, nevertheless, economically state advanced, as numbers show the GDP from 1928 till 1940 almost doubled.²⁸⁹

Although the industrialization in East-central Europe promoted light industries and countries recovered from war devastation and even reached short term economic success, the promoted industries of East-Central Europe already started to decline in the West. As Berend names it, the 'fourth industrial revolution', based on innovative sectors with new branches of engineering and electrical industry were absent from the economies of Central and Eastern Europe. This lack of technological-structural adjustment left countries in the peripheral position in the international economic system (with an exception of Czechoslovakia).²⁹⁰ Although nonagricultural share of labour grew fast, countries could not liberate themselves from agricultural character.

After temporary boom came another devastating blow to the economies of East-Central Europe - the Great Depression. Because of their agricultural character countries in the region had relatively undisturbed development of consumer-goods, which helped to counterbalance the crisis. It was not the industrial decline, relatively mild in the region, which caused the economic destruction. Their agricultural character caused them to suffer even more than the West. Berend distinguished three major characteristics of the Great Depression: 'the unusual depth of the agricultural crisis and its consequences for the balance of trade and

²⁸⁶ Berend, *Decades of Crisis*, pp. 238-239.

²⁸⁷ Crouzet, *European Economy*, pp. 192-194.

²⁸⁸ Crouzet, *European Economy*, pp. 195.

²⁸⁹ Crouzet, *European Economy*, p. 193.

²⁹⁰ Berend, *Decades of Crisis*, p. 244.

payments; the devastating debt crisis, insolvency, and impact on trade; and the lack of ability to adjust to the technological-structural challenges of the crisis'.²⁹¹ The price decline of agricultural products and burden of the debt sank the region into economic turmoil. Their inability to respond adequately to the challenges brought by technological transformation 'determined the long-term destiny of the area by conserving its peripheral status in Europe'.²⁹²

The relative success reached during the first decade after the war in East-Central Europe was destroyed by the Great Depression. Countries turned to revolutionary means bringing fear and turmoil. Ever contrasting political groups employed revolutionary political struggle marking the beginnings of future war. The unsuccessful attempt of protectionist policies ended up with Nazi occupation and terror in the region. The devastations of the war could not be countable. War and political disorder combined with internal social upheavals and Soviet force marching from the East to the West shifted the profiles of governments in the region from the extreme right to the extreme left.

6.2. The Soviet economic model

The Second World War turned into ruins the achievements of economy reached after the First World War. From the ruins of economy the soviet model of industrialization was risen, promising better life and so desired catch-up with the West. Countries of East Central Europe launched the program of enforced industrialization in the framework of Stalin's socialism and dictatorship. 'The Soviet bloc, its institutions, ideology, and cultural politics hermetically sealed off from the West, thus used a state socialist, anti-humanist model to combat its historical backwardness. It withdrew from Europe in order to catch up with and surpass it'.²⁹³

The cornerstone of the soviet economy - central planning, was accompanied by strict control and harsh punishments. The economy was over-bureaucratized, regulations were introduced constantly to overcome the undesired effects of central planning.²⁹⁴ Foreign trade with capitalist countries, both ideologically and politically, was undesired, thus promoting the new regional framework - Council of Mutual Aid, which fulfilled the requirements of centrally planned economies. Fixed prices, which were so advantageous for planning,

²⁹¹ Berend, *Decades of Crisis*, pp. 254 -255.

²⁹² Berend, *Decades of Crisis*, p. 265.

²⁹³ Ivan T. Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993: Detour From the Periphery to the Periphery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 (hereafter, Berend, *Detour from Periphery to the Periphery*), p. 1.

²⁹⁴ Berend, *Detour from Periphery to the Periphery*, p. 76.

introduced after Korean War and a planning mechanism let the East Central European countries 'to concentrate resources and development on centrally chosen projects, to an extent unknown before. Thus it seemed to be a promising system for rapid industrialization, with a uniquely high rate of industrial investment and growth'.²⁹⁵ This brought so desired industrialization to the backward European East.

The post-Stalin era brought development of welfare institutions and created modest consumer societies.²⁹⁶ The slowdown of industrialization turned investments towards agriculture increasing its productivity, also contribution in services and infrastructure had risen from one-third to half of all investments²⁹⁷. This meant better housing, transportation and communications. The distinctive feature of post-Stalinist socio-economic development was relatively high level of social services²⁹⁸: healthcare, pensions and social assistance encouraged the consumption creating the image of prosperity. It created the same consumer society, which according to East-Central European intellectuals like Czesław Miłosz and Václav Havel brought East and West closer (though in a disguise of was felt brought East and West closer 'into a modern malaise of consumerism and the lies it concealed'.²⁹⁹

The reached goals of modernization transformed the former backward society. The most rapid growth in the history of the region led to a breakthrough.³⁰⁰ Berend uses Bairoch's calculations pointing that 'for the first time in its modern nineteenth-and twentieth-century history, [Central and Eastern Europe] was able to halt its relative stagnation or decline compared with the other European countries, and narrow the gap between them and the *Others*'.³⁰¹ However, as the time passed the soviet regime found it more and more difficult to catch up with 'modern modernization', which emerged during the second half of the twentieth century in the advanced world. After breakthrough in 1970's, the region gradually turned from catching-up to lagging behind performance.³⁰² New competitive and modern branches of economy based on high technology industries did not emerge in the region. The story of non-adjustment to new structural challenges brought by the world market repeated itself. The non-flexible soviet economy sank into stagnation and gradual depression. The economy and politics collapsed bringing the great transformation and dissolution of the Soviet Union. With the end of communism independent democratic governments emerged. They found

²⁹⁵ Berend, Detour from Periphery to the Periphery, p. 78.

²⁹⁶ Berend, Detour from Periphery to the Periphery, p. 153.

²⁹⁷ Berend, Detour from Periphery to the Periphery, p. 162.

²⁹⁸ Berend, Detour from Periphery to the Periphery, p. 168.

²⁹⁹ Katzenstein, 'European Identity', p. 128.

³⁰⁰ Berend, Detour from Periphery to the Periphery, p. 187.

³⁰¹ Berend, Detour from Periphery to the Periphery, p. 187.

³⁰² Berend, Detour from Periphery to the Periphery, p. 182.

themselves in a declining, bankrupt economy: 'the situation was characterized by stagnation spanning a decade and a half, a decline in GNP and deterioration in the standard of living, inflation, indebtedness, and insolvency, and most of all, a hopeless structural crisis and lack of adjustment'.³⁰³ The countries again found themselves on a periphery of the modernized West. The situation received a name of 'detour from periphery to periphery' by Berend, evaluating the economic performance of Eastern Central Europe during the second half of the twentieth century.

6.3. The economic transformation and European integration

The political transformation in the East Central Europe and chosen democratic path was accompanied by the economic transition. New governments had to take the road of privatization, marketization and up-to-date modernization. The move towards laissez faire economic re-structurisation was followed by closure of obsolete uncompetitive sectors resulting in decline of production, increase of unemployment and deterioration of living conditions.³⁰⁴

Reforms triggered structural adjustments. The basic private initiatives were major movers of economic growth together with the rise in previously neglected and underdeveloped service sectors³⁰⁵. The foreign direct investments started to play the important role in region's economic development. Foreign investors were the major creators of modern industrial branches in Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia and the Baltics.³⁰⁶ Although the differences in the region are visible, the western rim of the East Central Europe managed to integrate their markets into system of the world market.

In 2004 East-Central European countries (also Malta and Cyprus from the South) joined the European Union, having reached 45 percent of Union's income level.³⁰⁷ The genuine modernizing changes transformed their economies: developed services, decline of agricultural workforce, enhanced communications, opened the floodgate to the West.³⁰⁸ In 2005 Berend predicted that 'in 20 to 30 years, successful economic development at one and a

³⁰³ Berend, *Detour from Periphery to the Periphery*, p. 327.

³⁰⁴ Berend, *Detour from Periphery to the Periphery*, p. 341.

³⁰⁵ Ivan T. Berend, 'Changes in Central and Eastern Europe in the Last Quarter of the 20th Century' (hereafter, Berend, 'Changes in Central and Eastern Europe') paper for the Session on Historical Views on the Recent Changes in the World Economy, 1980-2000, XIII. International Congress of Economic History, Buenos Aires, 1999, p. 13.

³⁰⁶ Berend, 'Changes in Central and Eastern Europe', p. 15.

³⁰⁷ Berend, 'What is Central and Eastern Europe?', p. 415.

³⁰⁸ Berend, 'What is Central and Eastern Europe?', p. 415.

half or two times the speed of the West, may finally lead these countries to catch up – a process which has been attempted many times in modern history and has repeatedly failed'.³⁰⁹ Does that mean that the region finally escaped from “vicious cycle of economic backwardness”? The answer tends to be positive, as the structural change is obvious, the recent financial crisis showed the region’s economy is highly integrated into the world market and that is its main achievement, which must be its major advantage in the future.

However, only the western rim of Eastern Europe managed to integrate their politics and economy into the West. Ukraine’s more oligarchic politics and economy are highly influenced by Russian factor and Belorussia is in backward half-soviet, half-market economy, with discernible authoritarian character. It must be said that economically the region is highly diverse and there is no common area, which economically could be assembled under one cohesive label of Eastern Europe.

VII. Eastern Europe and Historiography

Writing history is never as innocent as it might look from the first sight. Historian rarely gives just a bare fact, but describes the event or action, which happened in a past. No matter how truthful might be the fact, the historical interpretation is always the work of the human historian. What is more, history can cover a particular aspect: it can be economic history, political history, cultural history, history of arts, and history of a person or a tiny aspect of one’s life. It also can be wide in scope or tiny, tracing the detailed - history of one thing or action. As Norman Davies suggests, in these modern times the specialization gives a bottomless possibility to know more and more about less and less³¹⁰. However, as one gets in touch with a history it usually covers a particular area and time period. Concerning the area one can write history of the state or nation. National history is one of the most important aspects of one’s identity. Even though regional histories can be devoted to specific areas, despite their national or political dependency, regions themselves usually remain slippery in their definition. At last, historian can write a history of the world. All these histories can constitute an essay or multi-volumed editions. The time scope is theoretically as wide as one

³⁰⁹ Berend, ‘What is Central and Eastern Europe?’, p. 415.

³¹⁰ Davies, Europe, p 1.

can begin tracing the history and it can end, theoretically, with the end of time, when there is nothing for anyone to recall.

Probably the least problematic in an areal scope is the history of the world, as it constitutes the well ordered area - the World itself. National histories tend to concentrate on the area the nation is or was living. It is problematic with the stateless nations, but for national histories it is not the land, but the people are the cornerstone. The regional histories, however, might be really clearly embedded on certain territory, but some of the regions are more than territories, besides their spatial connotation.

This is the situation in the case of European history. As one tries to trace the history of Europe, one must begin with questions such as what and when is Europe? In other words, the history of the concept plays an important role in the writing. What is more, Europe itself has as much internal divisions as there can be approaches to treat its history. But the most important aspect is that all these divisions are constructions of human mind. They have to deal with 'imagined geography - ways of perceiving spaces and places, and the relationships between them, as complex sets of cultural and political practices and ideas defined spatially, rather than regarding them as static, discrete territorial units'.³¹¹ The important aspect of Hagen's definition is the 'complex set'; in other words, it is not only about the territory, but about the ideas attributed to it. Regional constructs are 'discursive formations, tense constellations of power, knowledge and spatiality'.³¹² It depends on who and when is writing and what knowledge is possessed.

Trying to retrace history of Eastern Europe brings historian first of all to the definition of the concept. How, when and what influenced, changed and shaped it? The formation of the concept becomes a subject of history, but as one cannot exclude it from the general history of the area it is its resource at the same time. In other words, every resource about the area history tells something about the concept itself. And what is meant by the concept depends on those power and knowledge constellations, which are subject of history. It depends on the particular time of writing, the view-point of writing and area one is writing from.

Eastern Europe for every historian can start with very different countries. It can start in Hungary, or Poland, Lithuania or Ukraine depending where historian "stands" and which directions he looks to. Generally the sources about Eastern Europe are dependent on the power constellation on the whole continent. During the period of imperial power politics before the First World War, when the continent was divided between empires, the history of

³¹¹ Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 490.

³¹² Hagen, 'Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe', p. 490.

Eastern Europe as the history of the distinct region was not apparent. It was the age of Europe formed by power relations and the rise of nationalisms, which shaped the aspirations of several future countries, the phenomenon which took place on a scale of the whole continent. However, it was Empires and their glory which were matter of historical importance. After the First World War, when old European concert system collapsed and the belt of the newly independent states was created, the rise of national histories of the countries can be observed. What is more, these histories tend to form a unified claim for the reincorporation of forgotten into general European history and claim for the distinct history of their own region. That is why Oscar Halecki distinguished not two Europes, but four. It is the knowledge formed through national histories, which led to the claim of the regional differences, and rather exclusiveness not inclusiveness from specific (Eastern) region.

Historians from East Central Europe in this case can be better prepared. As they start with their own national histories and the search of their placements in Europe, they learn both, the European history (or mainly history of the West) and regional history. Western historians, blinded by former power constellations, which ignored large areas of Europe, as obscure “nothing important, undeveloped” East might fall into the trap of not-knowing and relying too much on the political picture of the day. Norman Davies provided at least eleven variants of the history of Western civilization which were associated with European history³¹³ (such as Roman Empire, French variant or American variant). Every variant had an important core and less important periphery, letting the great powers to receive all attention and leave lesser states, weak economies or minor cultures unconsidered, although they occupy a large part of overall scene.³¹⁴ The most classic example of such thinking is the Cold War era. With the Iron Curtain deep in mind of the historian, it becomes a line, of major importance. It becomes a subject of imagined geography, attributing cultural and political practices, which “formed” the line through time. The same line becomes an important division between civilized Romans and barbarians; natural German space, touched by Roman civilization, and one conquered from Slavs; the space attributed to Carolingian and Holy Roman Empires and so on. In none of these cases the border is exact, but the line usually runs “almost through the same area”. One cannot deny the situation, the constellation of power and their enforced lines and do not compare it with the past. It is hard to write about Europe and its unity, when the division looks persisting.

³¹³ Davies, *Europe*, pp. 22-25.

³¹⁴ Davies, *Europe*, p. 25.

7.1. The particular moment of history

During the Cold War era it was easy to say, what was East and What was West simply pointing to the political division of the continent and attributing Europe only to the West, and look for the facts, which fall into the general division. When Oscar Halecki was writing the history of East Central Europe in the 1950's, he tried to show that influence of Western civilization reached further when many scholarly works portrayed in his times. He wrote the history of East Central Europe - of the lands in between - arguing that Europe should be divided not into two, but into four parts. He wanted to show that between Germany and Russia lays the lands with rich history and culture, arguing against the neglect of the region in writing and teaching of European history.³¹⁵ He stressed that disappearance of the whole region 'created a dangerous tension' and history has to be portrayed in different light even though countries of East Central Europe lost their freedom again.³¹⁶

Analyzing Europe during and between the wars in his brilliant book 'From Sarajevo to Potsdam' published in 1966, Taylor described the age of Europe before the First World War in nostalgic way. It was Europe where trains could cross the continent, stopping just briefly on the borders, where even non-standard railways of Russia and Spain were not an obstacle.³¹⁷ It was the World, which faded after the first war and which was shattered after the second. Did Taylor imagined in the 1960's that one day in most of Europe - in the Shengen area - one will travel even without stopping at the border, and borders of Russia will not be the political and ideological obstacle. He could imagine that this could happen in the future, but he could not remove it at the time of writing. He could not escape the time and those constellations of power and knowledge - the world around him was the scene and he had to deal with it.

Historians writing in the particular time are subjects of their time. That is why Denys Hay, writing in the 1980's sees the division of Europe in 'renewed moral and spiritual withdrawal of Russia'³¹⁸; the self-imposed isolation, which makes it hard to talk about history of the region of Central or Eastern Europe. European history then tends to become the history of European West, and not so of European East, which is hard to know anything about, when Iron Curtain is separating two parts. That is why Luigi Barzini in the 1980's, when talking

³¹⁵ Halecki, *Borderlands*, p. 4.

³¹⁶ Halecki, *Borderlands*, p. 5.

³¹⁷ Taylor, *Nuo Sarajevo iki Potsdamo*, p. 9.

³¹⁸ Hay, 'Europe Revisited', p 5.

about Europeans, talked about Western European-American alliance, and the ethnic and national differences of their 'sacred egoisms', which obstruct the formation of united Europe³¹⁹. Nothing is said about the Eastern half of the continent in his considerations, except very important decision: that as long as the line runs, there cannot be united Europe. However, he did not expect that to end anytime soon. For historian the world around him can look firmly embedded as for any other person until it suddenly changes. As Denys Hay puts it, 'a historian tends to reflect the mood of the moment'.³²⁰

The mood of the moment of every historical work becomes part of the history itself. When writing about Eastern Europe every resource provides a history for understanding and is a subject of history by itself. Writings from the pre-War era have their own idea of Eastern Europe and one during the Cold War can be imagined somehow differently and by the end, the collapse of Cold War system, brings a fierce desire to deconstruct the Wall, and introduce other distinctions. Every resource is written in the mood of the moment, and each of them reflects the historical interpretation of the particular time: it is history and subject of historiography at the same time. The concept of Eastern Europe is shaped and formed not only by historical flow of time, but also by the historian, who reflects and analyzes this time flow and who depicts the moment and portrays its problematic in the light of his world. Eastern Europe is an object and a subject of historiography, it is shaped by the writings and the ideas presented in them.

VIII. Conclusions

Conceptualizations of Eastern Europe have taken place throughout European history. To understand the process and deconstruct it, one has to analyse events and their consequences, taking into account history and other mitigating factors. Additionally, European identity has also shaped the concept of Eastern Europe, thus this must also be analysed and assessed.

Any analysis of concept formation has to be done in parallel with analyses of Europeaness. In other words, Eastern Europe is only 'eastern' because it is not western. Its relationship with the West is thus an important part of conceptualizing Eastern Europe as a

³¹⁹ Barzini, *Europeans*, pp. 260-267.

³²⁰ Hay, 'Europe Revisited', p. 1.

whole. These differences between east and west, however, were only depicted when the idea of Europe transformed from a geographical one to a cultural notion, suggesting a certain way of life. Before it was cultural, the concept of what was 'eastern' was much different.

When Europe was associated with Christianity, the division of the East and West was based on the branches of Orthodox and Latin Christianity and the lands encompassed there. It is important to stress, that after the Great Schism the idea of Europe was increasingly associated with Europe's West, the Occident, sometimes even dismissing Orthodox lands as European. This view was also encouraged by the advance and conquests of Ottoman Turks and Tartars, which left parts of Europe under foreign and alien rule, constituting Europe's *Other* - the *Orient*. The lands in contact with these powers received their 'eastern' label not only because of their border status, but also because they held similar 'orient' manners taken from their neighbours in the East. During the Enlightenment, backwardness was attributed Eastern areas because of this and was encouraged by a lack in economic development.

The age of Imperialism transformed Europe into a ruling power, which brought politics to the forefront of Europe. At this time, Europe became a political project and space for unification programs. Though Imperialism ignored the East-West axis (as power relations were the ones that mattered), centre-periphery relations ascribed certain lands to East Central Europe, which were divided between the imperial powers of Germany, Austria and Russia. Centre-periphery relations marginalized Eastern Europe in an economic and cultural sense, emphasizing their underdevelopment.

In the twentieth century, European divisions were based on political ideologies. Eastern Europe was controlled by mainly authoritarian regimes and later Communist ones, which created new politically formed conceptions of the area. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the region was marked by diversity and independent states. Trying to overcome the old Cold War division, these states pursued democratic ideals and market economies. And today, many have noted the rise of the centre, which marginalizes the opposition between East and West.

From a historical perspective several aspects of Eastern Europe can be discerned. Whenever the term Eastern Europe is used it signifies not one, but several patterns:

Geographical Eastern Europe is associated with the eastern border of the continent. However, this border is problematic because it shifts throughout history. It also signifies close contact with powers, which historically served as the European *Other* in a formation of European identity. Another aspect is the complicated situation of Russia's inclusion and

exclusion from the continent. Russia being at the same time in Europe and in Asia, received its ambiguous status of being not 'entirely European'. The other lines and divisions, constructing the geographical space of Eastern Europe were of political and economical character, signifying an area of lesser economic development (second serfdom) or political opposition (Communism), but they were based not on geographical parameters, but on the differences between Europe's East and West.

Cultural Eastern Europe bears the distinction of being less civilized than the West. The cultural aspect of Eastern Europe was mostly constructed by the discourse of the Enlightenment, which attributed backwardness and barbarism to it. Eastern Europe thus became a place, which could be cultured and possessed by the stronger 'more civilized' powers. Cultural differences between the eastern and western halves of Europe were employed to depict the 'lesser' status of the region. After the collapse of the Cold War system, culture is losing its significance. The modern world makes culture the most penetrable and border-less phenomenon.

Political Eastern Europe is associated either with political doctrine (Communism) or with the political constellation of the continent. It was either the area occupied and divided by stronger imperial powers or it served as a 'buffer zone' between them. Historically, Eastern Europe also means the area, which copied the political institutions of the West and was on the borderland of Western influence. Politically, however, the area was not coherent. The important concepts of Mitteleuropa and Central Europe are also significant regional developments, making only Russia, or the lands outside the European Union, Eastern European.

Economic Eastern Europe is marked by a constant push to catch-up with western economic development. Economically, the region of Eastern Europe was a provider of raw materials for the West, engaging in mostly agricultural practices. It served as the economic periphery of the Western core. Industrialization and modernization in the area was scarce (with the relative exception of Bohemia), and on a large scale was implemented only during Soviet rule. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the economic situation became too diverse to put the previously coherent region under one economic banner. Parts of the region are catching-up with the West, while the other parts still lack economic efficiency. Economically, Eastern European also tends to mean 'not in the EU'.

Historiographical Eastern Europe is the outcome of historical writing. It is based on the 'mood of time' and the situation in which a historian finds him or herself. Sometimes writings try to confirm these divisions, searching for arguments in history (inventing

tradition) and sometimes trying to argue against these divisions by showing that the history of the region followed a different or distinct path of its own.

Eastern Europe was and is still being constructed by the flow of time. Historically, it received labels, which are all awoken, when the concept is used. Conceptualization was a long process, and it will proceed as long as Europe exists because the concept of Eastern Europe is the construction of the West. Eastern Europe is a shifting concept, and at any particular time it can represent the ever-changing mindset of the European people.

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