

Centre of the History of the Imaginary
New Europe College
Goethe Institute of Bucharest

THE BORDERS OF EUROPE

An International Symposium

New Europe College, Bucharest
24-25 November 2006

Edited by
Lucian Boia
Anca Oroveanu



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North and South, East and West: One Europe or Several?

As the European construction advances, the idea of a common, unitary history of the European continent is also taking shape. It is a process somewhat similar to what took place in the age of nation building. The process of national unification – principally during the nineteenth century and at the start of the twentieth – meant also the re-elaboration of history in a national sense. According to the conceptions of the time, a unitary nation could not but be the culmination of a unitary history. Likewise, European unification seems hard to conceive in the absence of a European consciousness, which to a large extent presupposes a European *historical* consciousness. Looking at things from an ideological perspective, therefore, a history of Europe seems desirable. For the time being, however, such a history is much less structured than national histories, for the simple reason that Europe too is much less structured than the national states of which it is made up. It is still, before anything else, a collection of nations, i.e., from a historiographic point of view, a “collection” of national histories. In any case, however much European unity may advance, it may be supposed that history will no longer play the *legitimizing* role for Europe that it had to the highest degree when the nations were taking shape. We are much less attached to

the past today than were the Europeans of the nineteenth century. All the same, we cannot completely break with history. It is thus only fitting that Europe should think of its own history. Moreover a unitary history does not mean a single history: national histories too are very diverse, and even more the history of Europe, seen from such different national and regional perspectives, cannot but be multiple.

The question remains, however, whether Europe, historically speaking, really exists. Concepts are not the same as reality: they simplify and generalize. Do continents actually exist? What do we understand by Asia? Is there anything in particular that links Arabia and Japan, India and Siberia? Africa, likewise, is clearly divided into Black Africa south of the Sahara and Mediterranean Africa to the north, which has been closely connected throughout its history to Southern Europe and the Middle East. Of course Europe is rather more coherent than the other continents, both in its environmental conditions – a temperate climate almost everywhere – and in its cultural and religious foundations – the Greco-Roman inheritance and Christianity. However the unifying factors cannot mask the evident differences between different parts of Europe, its internal borders, meaning not just political borders, but more broadly, the civilizational borders – variable, indeed, from one period to another – that have divided the continent over the centuries.¹

Moreover, even the geographical structures and environmental data are different. The Mediterranean South presents an array of peninsulas and islands, with a specific climate and landscape. The West, or more precisely the North-west, is fragmented, with a varied relief, and enjoys, thanks to

¹ I am here substantially repeating arguments that I have developed more fully in my book *L'Occident. Une interprétation historique*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres. 2007.

the Ocean, a more humid climate, softened by the Gulf Stream. From west to east, the continent gradually widens, so that its eastern half, especially the Russian (ex-Soviet) space, becomes a massive expanse, low in altitude and almost uniform, relatively distant from the Ocean and its adjacent seas: a disadvantage that explains Russia's obsessive maritime policy, from the time of Peter the Great onwards, of attempting to force a way out into the Baltic, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The climatic data conform to the same typology: a pronouncedly continental climate, in contrast to the mild climate of the oceanic West and the Mediterranean South, approaching Siberian climatic conditions the further east one goes. The Urals, the conventional border separating Europe from Asia, seem of little significance compared to the continuity between the Russian plain and the Siberian plain.

Of course the heyday of geographical determinism has long passed – but nor does a minimalization of environmental factors correspond to contemporary sensibilities any more, in a world so worried by ecological instability and disturbing climatic changes. Ultimately it is just as exaggerated to ignore as to absolutize geographical and climatic data; they have their incontestable place in the complex mix of factors that make up history (factors which moreover combine and operate differently from one period to another). In general, Europe has been favoured in comparison with many other regions of the globe, both in its diversity and in the “moderation” of its environmental conditions; it does not have extreme zones, too hot or too cold, too humid or too arid. Consequently the European continent has been populated more evenly than the other continents; even today large regions of the United States (not to mention Canada or Australia) are almost uninhabited, a phenomenon that cannot be encountered in Europe, except in its northern extremities. Both the climate and the variety of relief (the latter contributing

to economic diversification and exchange), together with the proximity of sea routes, gave important advantages in an initial phase to Mediterranean Europe, and later to North-western Europe, compared with Central and Eastern Europe.

In Antiquity, the principal fracture line was that separating and setting in opposition Southern and Northern Europe. The common space of ancient civilization was not Europe, but the Mediterranean, which united segments of Europe, Asia and Africa in a single whole. Greece and Rome were closer, much closer, to Syria, Egypt and Tunisia than to the Celtic, Germanic, Scythian and Slav tribes who inhabited the northern regions of Europe. The historical mission of the Roman Empire was precisely that of binding more tightly, in a unitary political construction, territories and cultures that, without being identical, were evolving in a similar ambience. Seen from the South, the North was perceived as a world of savagery, with its extreme limits in Scythia (today's Russia and Ukraine) and the British Isles.

As well as the fundamental *South-North* distinction, another line, less pronounced but nevertheless significant, can also be traced, separating the *East* from the *West*. It was along this line that the Roman Empire split in 395. The East had a denser population, was more urbanized, had more industrial and commercial activity, and was thus richer than the West. Consequently it stood up better to the crisis that marked the end of Antiquity. While the Western Roman Empire broke up, the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire survived for another thousand years. In the early centuries of the Middle Ages, up to around the year 1000, the West continued to contrast markedly and unfavourably with both the Byzantine and the Islamic East. The Western space experienced demographic regress, the decline of urban life, and thus a process of ruralization, repeated invasions, and political anarchy. No one then would have placed

a bet on the chances of the West. And yet it was the West that won the race of civilizations, and won it splendidly.

The process was a complex one, involving a great many factors.² It may be presumed that the breakdown of the Western Roman Empire and the long period of anarchy in the West actually helped prepare the ground for the elaboration of a new synthesis of civilization—in contrast to Byzantium, or to China, which became immobilized in the “perfection” of their civilizations. As a result of the collapse of the Roman frontier, a fusion was achieved in the West between the Roman South and the Germanic North, which led to a system of diet and an agrarian economy more complex than anywhere else in the world: the bread and wine characteristic of the predominantly vegetarian South (and adopted symbolically by Christian ritual) were combined with the animal products (meat, milk) of a markedly carnivorous North. The expanding cultivation of wheat and other cereals was combined, through the necessary rotation of field use and the need for manure and traction, with the raising of animals. On the other hand, the demographic decline, and consequent scarcity of people, together with the political anarchy, encouraged an increased measure of individual liberty. The feudal system that crystallized in the end presents, alongside its dimension of inequality and domination, also an extremely significant *contractual* side, which reflects precisely this progress in individual liberties and responsibilities: all the members of society, from the sovereign to the meanest peasant, have rights and obligations; this is, seen from a certain angle, the

² For the socio-economic characteristics of the Western world, I particularly recommend out of a vast bibliography the following major works of synthesis: Fernand Braudel. *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme*. 3 vols. Paris: Armand Colin, 1979; and David S. Landes. *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations. Why Some are so Rich and Some are so Poor*. New York: Norton, 1998.

starting point of modern political culture. The collapse of political authority created a privileged position for the Church, the only institution that survived the breakdown of Antique structures. In the West, a Church closely involved in the life of the community would stand face to face with political authority on a basis of equality, in contrast to Byzantium, and Orthodox Europe in general, where the pre-eminence of the state is evident, with the Church being limited to a strictly spiritual role. In this way, a balance of powers was sketched out, with two competing institutions, not one – a first step towards what was to become modern political pluralism. Another aspect that should be pointed out, applying to the entire Christian space, but with major effects in the West, is the general sense of Christian theology, which is universalist and highly future-oriented. For ancient people, the future did not mean very much; history, which was often conceived as cyclic, practically did not lead anywhere. In contrast, Christianity promoted a linear and ascendant history, with a precise finality: the end of time and the Last Judgement. The future became determined. The spiritual perfection of man and his ascension towards the “city of God” expressed, for the time being in strictly religious terms, the idea of *progress*, which would be reformulated in secular terms in the modern period. On the other hand, the universalist sense of the doctrine, the necessary triumph of the Christian religion throughout the world, served to stimulate and to justify Western expansionism, starting with the Crusades.

The causes – as with any historical process – are many, difficult to place in a hierarchy, and always open to discussion. The fact remains that the West “took off” around the year 1000, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries its progress was already becoming visible. It was a new type of civilization, characterized by dynamism and change, and by expansion in every sense: religious, scientific and technological, economic

and commercial, political and military. By around 1500, it may be considered that the West had overtaken all other regions of the world in terms of economic development and material prosperity.³

However within the West itself, a shifting of the centre of gravity was taking place. At first, the South was more developed than the North. Starting with the sixteenth century, the North gradually overtook the South. The discovery and taking possession of the world started with the Portuguese and Spanish; the Renaissance was an Italian phenomenon, subsequently adopted in the remainder of the West; however the Industrial Revolution was a British "invention". By around 1800, the North-west was already far ahead of the South-west, from all points of view: science, technology, economic development, standard of living, literacy, political liberty ...⁴

Once again, we look for the causes. The most well-known theory – though this does not mean that it is also the truest, or indeed completely true at all – is that launched in 1904 by Max Weber, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. According to the German sociologist, Protestantism, and especially Calvinism (centred on the concept of "predestination", which proved the uselessness of "magical" procedures for salvation, and encouraged success in life, the sign of the elect), was better suited than Catholicism to the new industrial, commercial and financial developments. Fernand Braudel argued

³ According to the statistical reconstructions of Angus Maddison in *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*. OECD, 2003, per capita GDP expressed in 1990 Geary-Khamis dollars was (of course very approximately) as follows around 1500: Western Europe–771, Eastern Europe–496, China–600, India–550, Japan–500, Africa–414.

⁴ Angus Maddison also proposes the following figures for per capita GDP: in 1500, Italy–1,100 dollars, Great Britain–700; by 1800, Italy was stagnating, still at 1,100 dollars, while Great Britain had risen to 1,700.

for a purely economic interpretation. The North was poorer, so its production costs were lower; thus it was able to gain at the expense of the South (just as today China is successfully competing with the West). However the causes of this divergent history are surely more numerous and more complicated. What counted more than “predestination” was probably the Protestant’s direct, personal relation with the Bible (while the Catholic’s relation was mediated by the priest); it was thus possible to claim greater freedom of judgement, and above all, the necessity of Bible reading accelerated the expansion of literacy in Protestant countries. However Catholicism did not impede either the prosperity of the Italian cities or the brilliance of the Renaissance. Italy was affected in the first place by the decline of Mediterranean trade at the expense of Atlantic trade; the small Italian states were similarly at a disadvantage in competition with larger states; wars and foreign occupation in the peninsula accentuated the difficulties. As for Spain, it became, paradoxically, the victim of the influx of precious metals from America, which quite simply suffocated the Iberian economy, as the easy accumulation of riches undermined any interest in production. The North-west also had a climatic advantage over the South-west: a more humid climate, more favourable to agriculture. There are writers who consider that already in the Middle Ages the North-west experienced a more pronounced rhythm of development; in an initial phase it wrote off its handicap, and then it overtook the rest. Beyond the dispute over causes, what remains certain is the supremacy that the North-west won at a certain point. Until not so long ago, the South-west was to figure as the underdeveloped region of the West; only with the economic ascent of Italy after the Second World War, followed more recently by that of Spain, is the end of this dichotomy in sight.

The East of Europe presents many differences compared with the evolution of the West. From a religious point of view,

but also in a broader cultural sense, this is Orthodox Europe, “another Europe” in relation to Catholic and Protestant Europe. It is a Europe that did not experience Latin culture in the Middle Ages, had only sporadic contacts with the Renaissance and, to a limited extent, the Enlightenment, and entered the Industrial Revolution phase belatedly and incompletely. A rigid application of the Weberian system would lead to the conclusion that Protestantism is best suited to the developments of the modern world, Catholicism less well suited, and Orthodoxy even less well suited. However such a model is too perfect to be completely true! The Orthodox Church cultivated traditionalism and respect for political authority, which certainly did not encourage free initiative and social dynamism. The manner in which it conformed under atheistic communist regimes, in contrast to the intransigence and militancy of the Catholic Church in Poland, is characteristic of its political and social attitude. But in the case of Eastern Europe too it would be simplistic to ignore the variety of factors at play. The historical belatedness of the European East is largely the result of a troubled medieval history, with invasions prolonged over many centuries (the Mongol conquest of Russia in the thirteenth century, the Ottoman expansion in South-east Europe between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries), together with an eccentric position in relation to the great commercial axes: the Mediterranean and the Baltic, later the Atlantic. More recently came the serious upsets caused by communism; but these were also made possible by an insufficient socio-economic and political maturity; backwardness made the communist mission easier (as a “miracle solution” of modernization and social justice), while the application of communism accentuated backwardness.

Between West and East there is a Central Europe, whose geometry varies from one interpretation to another.⁵ Especially at the beginning of the twentieth century, *Mitteleuropa* defined the German attempt to structure a space dominated ethnically, politically and culturally by the German element, between a Western Europe dominated by Britain and France and an Eastern Europe dominated by Russia. In a more adequate historical sense, however, the concept of Central Europe is best fitted to the zone of transition between West and East, Catholic (later also Protestant) in religion and Latin in culture in the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the modern period, which also in general adopted institutions of Western type, but which, on the other hand, presents similarities with the Eastern part of the continent from the point of view of its socio-economic evolution: a predominantly agrarian economy, a more modest development of towns, the continuation into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of peasant serfdom, a belated industrial revolution ... Poland and Hungary, together with the eastern margins of the German Empire (Prussia, Brandenburg, Austria) occupied this intermediary zone.

Eastern and Central Europe present another difference from the West. As the result of a troubled history and of domination by the great empires (at the start of the modern period almost the entire region was divided between Russia, the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire), together with the attraction exerted by territories with a potential waiting to be

⁵ For Central Europe see: Jacques Droz. *L'Europe Centrale. Evolution historique de l'idée de "Mitteleuropa"*. Paris, 1960; Timothy Garton Ash. "Does Central Europe Exist?" in his volume of articles *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*. New York, 1989. Jenő Szűcs argues for the theory of the "three Europes" in "The Three Historical Regions of Europe", in *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*. Ed. John Keane. London, New York, 1988.

fully exploited, they ended up with a great mixture of populations. While in the West, ethnic and linguistic boundaries can be traced fairly clearly, in Central and Eastern exactly the opposite is the case. When the empires collapsed and national states came into being, the division of territory could only be approximate. In other words, the “national” states too were actually “multinational”: this was especially the case of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, and, to a lesser but nevertheless significant extent, of Romania.⁶ This created an acute problem of minorities, endless tensions and conflicts, and inevitably, the temptation of ethnic purification, which was partly carried out by genocide in the case of the Jews, by emigration or exchanges of population, or by expulsion: this was the case of the Greeks in Turkey and the Turks in Greece, and of the Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia at the end of the Second World War... Thus the states of Central and Eastern Europe are today more homogenous than they were initially.

The historical distinctions mentioned above still count in the present, being reflected in different levels of socio-economic development—higher in Western Europe than in Central Europe, and in Central Europe than in Eastern Europe – and, in a broader sense, of cultural and political development. In a united Europe, these differences will lessen with time. But the very rhythm of the European construction has illustrated the differences between the zones. The European Union was originally a purely Western creation; then the countries of Central Europe joined it,

⁶ Of the provinces of Greater Romania, Transylvania in 1930 (within the borders of the former principality) had a population of 57.6% Romanians, 29.1% Hungarians and 7.9% Germans; in the same year in Bessarabia there were 56.2% Romanians, 12.3% Russians, 11% Ukrainians, 7.2% Jews, 5.7% Bulgarians... Also in 1930, in what is now the Czech Republic, Germans made up 29.5% of the population (compared with 35% in 1910), and in Slovakia Hungarians were 17.6% (compared with 30.6% in 1910).

with their specific difficulties, and already with much ground to make up in relation to the West; finally, Romania and Bulgaria, two Eastern countries, with even more specific problems and even more ground to make up; the greater part of Eastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine, a part of the Balkans, and also Turkey, a country that is to a considerable extent non-European, remain, if not outside Europe, in any case outside the European Union.

As we can see, Europe is not *one*. But nor is the future condemned to follow in the steps of the past. The aspiration towards unity may ultimately prove more powerful than the inertia of history.

Comment penser les différences territoriales et les frontières culturelles en Europe? Premiers éléments d'une analyse critique

Lucian Boia, dans son appel à réfléchir sur la nature des frontières de l'Europe nous invite à nous intéresser aux frontières « issues de siècles d'histoires » : « frontières linguistiques, ethniques, religieuses, nationales, ou celles qui séparent les régions historiques, les aires de développement économique ». Il retient l'acception large du terme de frontière qui désigne les lignes majeures de discontinuité spatiale, les lignes de rupture entre des aires géographiques identifiées comme différentes de leurs voisines et qui tantôt suivent tantôt transgressent les frontières politiques. Ces frontières culturelles (puisque c'est d'elles qu'il s'agit principalement) ont fait le retour sur la scène de débats scientifique depuis 1990. La guerre froide, en durcissant les frontières politiques, en avait marginalisé les enjeux ; la chute du mur, en réveillant les revendications indéniables leur a conféré une soudaine actualité parfois sur un mode tragique comme au moment des guerres de Yougoslavie. Le fait est que « l'Europe de l'entre-deux » (REY, 1996) située entre Baltique et mer noire est sillonnée de lignes de discontinuité culturelles multiples avec une densité exceptionnelle, dessinant des « territorialités enchevêtrées »

(REY, 1998) à l'entrecroisement des avancés et reculs des aires d'influence des grands foyers politiques et culturel qui ont structuré le continent depuis l'antiquité et le haut moyen âge (SZUCS, 1985 ; RUGG, 1985; FOUCHER, 1991 ; REY, 1992,)

Lucian Boia fait observer que ces « lignes qui traversent en tous sens le continent européen » sont « dans une large mesure imaginaires », « susceptibles d'interprétations multiples et ajustées à différents projets d'unification » du continent. Il désigne ainsi la double dimension géographique et idéologique de la question des frontières culturelles en Europe. Cette double dimension noue les limites observables empiriquement sur les cartes (par exemple la limite entre chrétientés d'occident et d'orient) à la signification qui peut leur être conférée. Certaines lignes peuvent être tenues pour déterminantes, en raison du potentiel descriptif des différences européennes qu'on leur prête ; d'autres sont tenues pour mineures et négligées. Leur identification est pour une large part dépendante des imaginaires européens, *elle met en cause ce que l'on identifie comme « commun » ou comme « différent »* à la fois au sein du continent et au regard de l'extérieur. Michel Foucher faisait ainsi observer en 1991 que les limites de l'Europe centrale sont à géométrie variable et qu'elles « renseignent plus sur celui qui parle que sur l'espace [qu'elles délimitent] » (FOUCHER, 1991, 519)

C'est à cette problématique des différences géographiques que je propose ici de réfléchir en revisitant les manières dont elles sont généralement envisagées dans les sciences sociales. La critique des représentations implicites qui habitent les interprétations des différences entre les aires culturelles et des limites de discontinuité qui les séparent doit nous conduire à ébaucher de nouvelles pistes réflexions sur ce que pourrait être une pensée de la différence dans sa « géographicité »

1. La prégnance de deux schémas. Le schéma « exceptionnaliste » et le schéma « typologique »

Pour penser les différences entre les lieux, les sciences humaines et sociales mobilisent fréquemment et plus ou moins implicitement deux schémas principaux.

Un premier schéma est de type « *exceptionnaliste* » : chaque territoire est campé dans sa singularité en ignorant les singularités de ses voisins ou en s'y opposant en termes contrastifs. Il est mobilisé à des échelles variables pour décrire les différences entre des aires culturelles, entre des Etats-nations ou à l'intérieur des Etats pour identifier des régions, des petits « pays », des *Kulturlandschaften*, des 'çari', etc. Selon ce schéma, la différence entre deux entités est posée *a priori* et elle sert de fil conducteur à l'analyse. Il s'agit de décrire une singularité. Les disciplines comme l'histoire (longtemps systématiquement menée dans un cadre national), la géographie vidalienne classiques ou l'ethnographie ont fonctionné le plus souvent selon ce schéma.

En dépit des critiques qu'il a subi, ce schéma est fréquemment mobilisé quand il faut trouver des limites à l'Europe : c'est ce schéma qui préside aux arguments culturalistes qui tendent à *essentialiser les différences* entre, par exemple chrétientés d'occident et chrétienté d'orient, entre latins et slaves, entre héritiers de l'Empire austro-hongrois et ceux de l'Empire turc, pour citer des césures qui intéressent la Roumanie. Ce schéma reste très actif même au cœur d'analyses élaborées, que l'on ne saurait soupçonner de simplisme ou de méconnaissance des sociétés concernées. Ainsi Michel Foucher posant la thèse que « la véritable frontière de l'Europe est socioculturelle et coïncide avec la limite religieuse la plus durable en Europe, celle qui sépare depuis le Grand Schisme de 1054 la chrétienté latine de celle de l'Orient » s'appuie sur

l'argument d'une « articulation spécifique du religieux au politique et au social dans la sphère culturelle orthodoxe » pour la différencier de l'aire dont la matrice fut catholique et protestante. ». Dans son analyse « c'est moins la frontières religieuse qui fait sens que la discontinuité entre deux systèmes sociopolitiques. » (Foucher, 1991, 514). Ma critique ne porte pas ici sur l'identification d'une limite parfaitement repérable sur une carte des pratiques religieuses, mais sur son emblématisation jusque dans des formes prédictives pour lesquelles l'Europe orthodoxe dessinerait un « orient de l'Europe où les réformes paraissent plus lentes, plus incertaines » (Foucher, 1991, 519).

A l'opposé, les sciences humaines et sociales ont également mis en place un second schéma que nous dirons typologique, fondé au contraire sur la *réductibilité des différences*. Contrairement au schéma précédant, on s'intéresse non pas à l'exceptionnalité des entités observées mais au contraire à leur *variabilité*, c'est à dire que l'on s'intéresse à la position des différents types identifiés à l'intérieur de coordonnées qui servent tout à la fois à *subsumer ces différences* sous un commun dénominateur et à les *étalonner*. Autrement dit, on cherche à ordonner les différences selon un ou plusieurs critères que l'on a identifiés en amont de l'analyse et on procède, pour cela, à une réduction du réel et de ses complexités en le ramenant à un certain nombre d'indicateurs qui permettent de décrire les différences par variations d'un curseur le long des axes des variables. Dans ce cas, les différences sont pensées en termes de variation, de variétés ; le passage d'un type à un autre est possible. Les limites entre les types perdent de leur netteté, elles apparaissent fluides au sein d'un continuum spatial, et sont susceptibles de s'effacer. Ce second schéma est à la base du raisonnement structuralisme et plus généralement du paradigme fonctionnaliste. C'est lui qui a permis d'outiller tout le travail

d'ordonnement des différences selon, le plus souvent, un présupposé évolutionniste.

On remarquera que cette partition entre deux grands schémas de pensée de la différence permet de décrire l'essentiel du débat actuel sur l'intégration européenne et sur les limites de l'Union. Ce débat se focalise le plus souvent soit sur un argumentaire de type exceptionnaliste (« la Turquie ne peut entrer dans l'Europe car elle n'est pas européenne » – l'argument se situe ici sur le terrain de l'essence – soit sur un argument typologique : « la Turquie ne peut pas entrer dans l'Europe pour le moment parce qu'elle ne remplit pas encore tout les critères d'intégration mais elle le pourra quand elle aura « avancé » et rempli toutes les conditions ». Dans ce second cas, la différence est ici pensée en terme de retard ou d'avance, de rattrapage, de vitesses d'évolution mais sans différence de nature.

D'emblée on peut percevoir l'indigence de ces deux schémas. Ils sont pauvres pour réfléchir aux différences territoriales et, de fait, ils ont fait l'objet de critiques nombreuses.

La critique du schéma exceptionnaliste est maintenant bien établie du moins pour ce qui est des études nationales. Cette critique est venue de deux cotés. Du côté de l'analyse des présupposés idéologique qui sous-tendent la démarche et de l'analyse de leur instrumentalisation, il a été montré – depuis les communautés imaginaires de Benedict Anderson jusqu'à Lucian Boia – ce qu'il pouvait avoir de construit et d'instrumentalisé par les idéologies nationales, participant à la consolidation des « imaginaires nationaux ». La critique est venue aussi du côté de l'analyse des transferts et de la circulation des hommes, des idées, des modèles qui ont mis l'accent sur les perméabilités transfrontalières. Elles ont fait ainsi la démonstration de l'impossibilité de figer la différence dans des singularités irréductible et ont au contraire montré les processus d'hybridation, de croisement, d'emprunts, d'interférences, d'interactions.

La critique du schéma typologique est plus récente et sans doute plus difficile. Elle passe en effet par la remise en cause des « grands récits » évolutionnistes qui ont guidé ces derniers siècles la lecture du monde moderne. On sait que ce paradigme a présidé à la naissance des sciences sociales. Or le mouvement contemporain de renoncement à l'idée d'un fil historique unique a renouvelé l'intérêt pour les exceptions, les effets de différenciation, d'écart à la norme, de marginalité, etc. Du coup la nature même de la différence s'en trouve mise en cause. Alors qu'elle apparaissait selon le schéma typologique comme une variation autour d'un motif unique piloté par une histoire unique, elle est soudain investie de capacités d'invention, de création de nouveau et d'inédit. Guy Jucquois (2000, p. 17) parle « d'un nouveau défi » dans lequel il s'agit de formuler en terme théorique « l'étonnante diversité du vivant » et en particulier des sociétés humaines alors que perd de son efficacité le système classique où « la distance mentale et morale [se mesuraient] avec le même étalon dans le domaine de la chronologie que dans celui de la géographie (...) ». La logique typologique qui consiste à subsumer les différences sous un dénominateur commun à partir de critère défini en amont perd son évidence et sa légitimité. Sa propension à négliger l'exception, son incapacité à faire place au surgissement de l'inattendu, la rend incapable de saisir les cheminements singuliers qui ont conduit à la construction des différences.

2. L'isolement des approches géographiques

La géographie, quant à elle, a bien évidemment mis en place tout un outillage théorique de la pensée des différences. C'est en effet son objet premier de recherche que de décrire, et comprendre les différences entre les territoires. Elle l'a fait

principalement selon deux logiques, conformément à un découpage de la géographie dite « humaine » (par opposition à la géographie physique) en deux branches : d'une part, la géographie générale cherche à mettre en lumière les mécanismes universels de production des différences géographiques, qui identifie des types de formes spatiales et s'attache à en dégager des lois selon un principe nomothétique. C'est le cas par exemple de la géographie urbaine qui s'attache à la compréhension du phénomène urbain sous toutes les latitudes. D'autre part la géographie régionale s'attache à étudier des territoires singuliers, à les délimiter, à les décrire et à les qualifier, selon une logique idiosyncrasique. C'est cette géographie régionale qui s'est attachée à identifier les frontières de l'Europe qui nous intéresse aujourd'hui. C'est elle d'ailleurs qui fut à l'occasion consultée pour dessiner des frontières politiques, au nom de son expertise sur les frontières géographiques. Nous pensons évidemment à la contribution d'Emmanuel de Martonne au dessin des frontières occidentales de la Roumanie en 1919 (BOULINEAU, 2001).

Il serait toutefois abusif de ramener la géographie générale au schéma typologique et la géographie régionale au schéma exceptionaliste. Certes, il est tout un pan de la géographie régionale, sous sa forme vidalienne qui s'est focalisée sur la description de territoires singuliers dans une logique exceptionaliste. Inversement, les géographies urbaines, rurales, industrielle ont investi l'identification de critères et la production de typologies (des typologies des formes et des fonctions pour l'essentiel). Mais cette discipline a également produit un effort théorique pour articuler contenu idiosyncrasique et démarche nomothétique¹. Ce faisant, elle a

¹ On se reportera notamment au projet de grande envergure que constitua la publication en 10 volumes entre 1988 et 1996 d'une nouvelle *Géographie universelle* aux éditions Belin entre 1990 et 1998 et notamment au premier volume BRUNET, DOLLFUS, 1990.

ouvert des pistes de compréhension des différences et des frontières géographique (ce qu'elle nomme « discontinuité spatiales ») selon des modalités souvent originales (BRUNET, 1968 ; HUBERT, 1993 ; FRANCOIS, 1998).

Avant d'aller au-delà, une remarque s'impose : l'analyse des géographes est demeurée longtemps marginale. Ils ont été peu lus, ils sont peu cités dans les travaux d'autres disciplines à l'exception sans doute de quelques historiens. Il y a à cela des causes institutionnelles que je ne développe pas ici. Mais il y a aussi des causes théoriques. La première me semble-t-il, tient au curieux déphasage qui a eu lieu dans les décennies cinquante, soixante et soixante-dix entre les questions géographiques et les questions posées par d'autres disciplines à cette époque : en pleine domination du paradigme structuraliste, les singularités locales étaient anecdotiques, la question des variations géographiques sans enjeux. Les différences étaient lues comme des types déclinant sur un mode spécifique des lois générales valables pour tous et partout. S'il y avait différence, elle était volontaire, reposant sur le choix entre les deux systèmes politiques en présence, indépendamment de différences géographiques. L'enjeu intellectuel portait donc sur la mise à jour de lois générales par-delà les différences et non sur l'étude de variations locales. Ces dernières avaient tout au plus une fonction heuristique permettant d'isoler des facteurs de l'analyse, dans une visée d'extrapolation. La seconde raison tient probablement à l'intérêt porté par la géographie à la sphère matérielle (les paysages urbains et ruraux, les infrastructures de transport et de production, la structure du bâti) à côté de sciences sociales focalisée sur la sphère immatérielle (dimensions symboliques, économiques et politique des rapports sociaux). Les deux sphères ont été fréquemment renvoyées dos à dos et les travaux qui ont cherché à articuler le matériel et l'idéal, ou l'espace et la culture, ont été finalement peu nombreux. Il me

semble que le contexte intellectuel présent, profondément modifié depuis une quinzaine d'année, offre peut-être la possibilité de penser les différences géographiques et les frontières culturelles dans leur double composante spatiale et culturelle, dans leur dimension multiscalaire à la fois localisé et globale. C'est dans cette perspective que je propose quelques pistes de réflexion à partir des travaux existants.

3. Le retour du singulier

Le rapport à la question des différences géographiques dans les sciences sociales s'est profondément renouvelé pour deux raisons.

Pour une raison pragmatique : il se produit une prise de conscience des différences. L'effondrement du communisme et l'élargissement de l'Union Européenne prend dans ce processus une place importante pour une raison simple : au fur et à mesure que l'Union s'élargit et occupe une aire plus étendue, son hétérogénéité augmente et les politiques comme les citoyens européens font l'expérience de la vigueur des différences géographiques. Autrefois masquées par le partage de la guerre froide et mis au compte des systèmes politiques, ces différences ont pris depuis quinze ans une épaisseur, sociales, historique et culturelle qu'elles n'avaient plus. L'ouvrage auquel cet article contribue et le succès des colloques portant sur la problématique des frontières en Europe ont sur point valeur de démonstration.

Le rapport aux différences géographique est également modifié pour une raison d'ordre épistémologique, avec le doute désormais installé vis à vis de la croyance dans la convergence des évolutions, en un fil historique unique et plus généralement au paradigme évolutionniste. On peut donner pour exemple de cette rupture de paradigme autour de la pensée des différences,

le débat entre historiens autour de la question de la *microstoria*. Cette dernière animée par la revue des *Quaderni storici* a en effet mis très profondément en cause les présupposés d'une « continuité du social » –fonctionnant du local au global– (REVEL, 1996) : c'est ce présupposé qui guidait les analyses classiques de l'Ecole des *Annales* ; c'est ce présupposé qui permettait d'appliquer à toutes les échelles les mêmes catégories d'analyses ; c'est ce même présupposé qui permet de construire des typologie. En proposant à l'inverse l'analyse « par le bas » des processus complexes la *microstoria* a prôné l'analyse des processus d'agrégation et de désagrégation des cellules sociales élémentaires Elle a mis l'accent sur ce que Gribaudi (1996) a appelé les « processus génératifs » en prenant appuis sur la « description dense » de Clifford Geertz. Ce faisant, cette posture de recherche a réintroduit l'idée de la pluralité des possibles, les notions d'échec, d'incertitude ou de rationalité limitée. Elle soulevé la question de l'articulation entre rationalités individuelles et logiques collectives, entre choix locaux et dynamiques globales. Les historiens proposent ainsi une redécouvert de la problématique des échelles de construction du social : Est-ce par le bas, par le local que se dessinent les devenirs ou par le haut des niveaux nationaux et internationaux ? Comment traiter de l'étude de cas non au titre de sa « représentativité » mais de ses écarts ? La relance des enquêtes qualitatives menées à une échelle micro, au delà des historiens dans toutes les discipline, permet de mettre à jour des enchaînements causaux à travers un mouvement général d'historicisation des analyses. Selon ce schéma : les différences observées sont le fruit de constructions historiques dont il convient de faire l'archéologie. La démarche régressive sert de référence. Les différences entre les cas étudiés apparaissent dès lors comme le fruit de la diversité des cheminements historiques

singulier. Le succès des théories de la *Path dependency* en économie et en sciences politiques pour interpréter les différences entre les trajectoires de sortie du communisme est à replacer dans ce contexte.

Le changement de paradigme provoque mécaniquement un changement du statut de la comparaison. Dans le schéma typologique fonctionnaliste, la comparaison s'impose naturellement comme un processus intellectuel de réduction à un dénominateur commun. En mettant l'accent sur l'exception, l'écart à la norme, le spécifique, les nouvelles approches doivent repenser les méthodes permettant de « monter » en généralité, et retrouver le moyen de lier les cheminements spécifiques au général.

Une des pistes possibles passe par une réflexion sur les articulations entre les échelles, entre les niveaux géographiques, en focalisant son attention sur les échelles intermédiaires, situées entre le niveau local des configurations sociales (« configurations » au sens défini par Elias) et le niveau plus global de construction des spécificités, des « différences » nationale. Cela suppose de reprendre et de prolonger l'apport de travaux géographiques, qui à leur manière ont réfléchi au singulier et à la récurrence, à la différence et à la répétition des faits sociaux dans leur articulation aux contextes d'échelles supérieures.

4. Les différences, l'histoire et les territoires

Revenons à notre question initiale : comment penser les différences territoriales et les frontières culturelles en évitant les deux écueils énoncés au départ : celui d'une lecture essentialiste qui les camperait en des termes fixistes et culturalistes et celui d'une lecture typologiques qui n'y verrait qu'une question de

degrés et de combinatoires de critères ? Autrement dit, existe-t-il une manière d'envisager les discontinuité culturelles en échappant à la fois à une forme d'emblématisation des différences qui les énonce comme premières, comme originaires et qui donc leur assujettit la description des faits sociaux et à une forme de négation des différences qui pose leur réductibilité et leur réversibilité ?

La réponse se cherche en premier lieu du côté de l'histoire, de la durée qui construit les différences et les réinterprète en permanence. C'est dans cette direction que s'élabore une pensée circulatoire des différences qui s'intéresse notamment aux passeurs, au réseaux d'acteurs, aux transferts de modèles et à leur réinterprétations dans le contexte de réception. Les histoires transnationales, les histoires croisées (WERNER et ZIMMERMAN, 2004) sont exemplaires de ces démarches. Elles examinent les différences soit à partir des foyers qui polarisent les différentes aires culturelles et par lesquels passent les échanges, les transferts d'innovation extérieures, soit, de plus en plus, sur leur marges, sur leurs aires de contact et d'interférences avec les aires voisines. L'intérêt renouvelé pour des régions interculturelles ou transculturelles telles, l'Alsace ou la Silésie en témoignent. La frontière est de moins en moins lue comme une barrière et de plus en plus comme une interface, comme un lieu de « percolation » pour reprendre l'image d'Octavian Groza. La différence n'est pas niée ; elle n'est pas non plus figée ; elle est réinscrite dans un jeu de fécondations croisées et d'hybridations des idées et des modèles de références. L'échelle d'analyse n'est pas celle d'entités culturelles envisagées en bloc comme homogènes mais celle de « lieux » particuliers où se jouent les interférences : régions frontalières, réseaux d'experts, de politiques ou d'intellectuels, congrès et

lieux de rencontres internationaux. L'accent est moins mis sur la diffusion de normes homogénéisantes que sur les écarts au modèle initial, sur les malentendus, sur les réinterprétations en fonction du contexte, au regard de logiques propres, situées et endogènes. De ces analyses, la perception des frontières sort à la fois, affaibli et valorisé : affaiblie par la mise en avant des liens transversaux transgressant et « sabotant » la frontière ; valorisée par l'analyse des circulations de part et d'autre et l'accent mis sur son rôle « diffractant » et sur le rôle médiateur des aires frontalières.

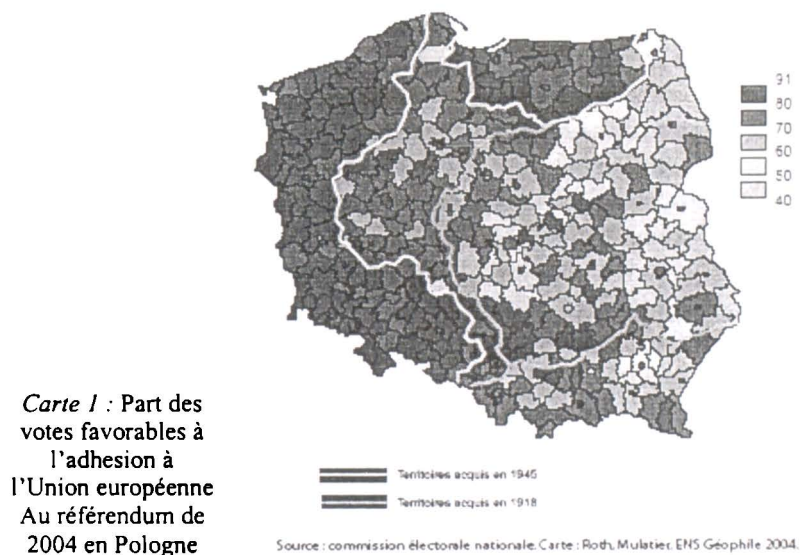
Toutefois, ces recherches, dont le champ s'est établi dans les historiographies européennes, adoptent des cadres de référence qui reste presque exclusivement nationaux et inter- ou trans-nationaux. Les différences culturelles sont lues au filtre des différences nationales entre Etat. Comme support d'imaginaire et prescripteurs de normes, comme espace de déploiement du politique et comme espace public, les Etats-nations offrent en effet à l'analyse des institutions et des corpus discursif ou normatif clairement identifiables. Ils permettent d'adopter une perspective constructiviste à l'intérieur d'un cadre territorial clairement défini. L'enveloppe y fait le contenu. Rares sont en revanche les travaux qui se risquent à interroger les discontinuités culturelles au-delà ou en deçà des Etats quand elles transgressent les frontières politiques. Que faire des appartenances confessionnelles ou linguistiques, ou plus difficile encore des comportements politiques et sociaux, types dont on peut observer de fortes variations d'un bout à l'autre du continent mais dont la géographie échappe pour partie aux Etats ? A ce niveau, les méthodes scientifiques susceptibles d'échapper aux deux écueils culturaliste et évolutionniste sont encore peu consolidées.

Une première posture peut consister à en nier la pertinence et à considérer qu'elles sont d'abord le produit des constructions de la représentation de l'Autre. C'est en quelque sorte la démarche de Maria Todorova (1997) dans son analyse documentée et articulée de la construction historique des clichés qui encombrant désormais la perception de la « différence » balkanique. Il nous semble toutefois, que par-delà l'indispensable vigilance critique sur les catégories d'analyse mobilisée il reste nécessaire et possible de penser en des termes à la fois non culturalistes et non évolutionnistes les discontinuités culturelles qui traversent le continent. Nécessaire parce que les différences culturelles existent – tout voyageur sur le continent en fait une expérience sensible et les cartes signalent des régularités qui dépassent ou transgressent le niveau étatique – et que c'est justement à de nouvelles manières de les penser qu'il faut travailler. Possible parce que des perspectives ont été ouvertes.

Pour cette seconde posture, un type d'approches possible est géographique. Elle consiste à articuler la dimension culturelles et la reproduction des différences dans le temps, non pas seulement à la sphère des discours et des représentations mais à la matière des territoires. Je me contenterai d'évoquer ici deux exemples de ce type d'analyse.

L'exemple des discontinuités de la géographie électorale Polonaise

Le premier exemple se rapporte à la Pologne et à l'analyse de cartes électorales. Elle est empruntée aux travaux menés par Violette Rey et son équipe au centre ENS- Géophile de Lyon (REY, 1991, 1995, 1996 ; REY V., MULATIER S., ROTH H., 2004).



De manière récurrente, la géographie des élections libres depuis 1989 dans ce pays a exhumé des lignes de frontières politiques anciennes, hérité du partage entre ses voisins. Le référendum d'adhésion à l'Union Européenne en 2003 en a offert une image particulièrement spectaculaire individualisant avec une vigueur sans équivoque les anciens territoires prussiens puis allemands (incorporés à la Pologne en 1945) et à un moindre degré la grande Pologne (prussienne durant les cent vingt-trois ans de la partition et redevenue polonaise en 1918) par un vote massif en faveur du oui : à plus de 80% en Silésie, Poméranie, Mazurie, et autour de 70% en grande Pologne (voir carte 1). Le reste du territoire voté de manière beaucoup moins franche.

Cette carte fit couler beaucoup d'encre et fut souvent interprétée sous un angle essentiellement mémoriel et identitaire. S'agissant de la Silésie ou de la Poméranie, l'argument prenant appui sur les mémoires collectives et sur les imaginaires fait

problème : dans ces régions, les électeurs sont originaires des territoires orientaux cédés à l'Ukraine et la Biélorussie, d'où ils furent déplacés de manière forcée en 1945–1946. Ce contexte met sur la piste d'une mémoire régionale qui ne se serait pas enregistrée sur le registre discursif de la mémoire culturelle mais sur le registre matériel du territoire et des espaces. La carte électorale renvoie en effet à des « traditions et des comportements politiques façonnés par des itinéraires [socio-politiques] distincts. (...) » (MAUREL, 1993). Une autre carte (carte 2) suffira à valider l'intérêt de l'hypothèse : celle du réseau ferroviaire de la Pologne, constitué de deux réseaux distincts, l'un, très dense, constitué aux temps prussiens et allemands, l'autre, lâche, héritier du moindre développement de la Galicie Autrichienne ou de l'empire Russe.



Source (REY, 1991)

*Carte 2 : le réseau
ferroviaire polonais*

« Cette empreinte spatiale n'est qu'un exemple parmi les multiples traces héritées [de la partition]. » (REY 1995) Elle renvoie à des modes de construction du territoire différentes, à des systèmes de peuplement différents, à des structuration du tissus économique différents, qui modulent aujourd'hui les rapports au travail, au déplacement, aux modes de résidence. Ces structures modulent les manières d'investir les lieux et façonnent les « différences d'horizon » (idem). Selon cette hypothèse, la discontinuité de type culturel que la carte signale ne serait pas le fait d'une convocation volontaire de références au passé mais plutôt la réponse à des enjeux du présent dans un rapport très dynamique entre actions quotidienne et structures héritées, entre pratiques locales et intégration territoriale de plus longue portée.

L'exemple de la discontinuité agraire dans le Banat roumain

Je prendrai un second exemple, examiné à une échelle plus locale, celui que j'ai développé dans mon travail sur la Roumanie à propos de l'exhumation d'une ancienne discontinuité culturelle et linguistique par les pratiques villageoise de sortie du collectivisme, dans le Banat (HIRSCHHAUSEN, 2006).

La comparaison de la carte de la décollectivisation spontanée des coopératives en 1990 et celle de la mosaïque ethnolinguistique (cartes 3 et 4) laisse apparaître des similitudes frappantes. Sur les deux cartes, on observe une ligne de discontinuité qui traverse le département du nord au sud, sans dépendance directe avec le relief. Cette discontinuité n'apparaissait pas sur la carte des structures agraires de 1989 : partout s'entendait l'emprise des coopératives et des fermes d'Etat à l'exception de quelques communes des hauts de versant. La confrontation des deux images peut laisser penser

que les villageois, dès qu'ils ont pu exprimer librement un choix sur la manière dont ils souhaitaient exploiter leur terre (de manière individuelle ou collective) se sont déterminés en fonction d'une ligne invisible qui séparait les communes exclusivement peuplées de populations roumaines des communes portant encore les traces de la multiethnicité du Banat : aux premières, un démembrement spontané et radical des coopératives dès les premiers mois de l'année 1990 ; aux secondes, un attachement aux formes coopératives que confirmera l'évolution des années suivantes.

Y a-t-il alors une relation de causalités directe ou indirecte entre ces deux cartes ? Au moment où j'effectuais mes enquêtes en 1994 ou 1995, beaucoup s'entendaient pour l'affirmer selon une logique essentialiste qui prête aux populations roumaines installées sur ces versants depuis des temps anciens, un attachement à la terre et à leur indépendance paysanne et une volonté affirmée de revenir à une exploitation individuelle de la terre (HIRSCHHAUSEN, 1996). Pourtant si l'on regarde d'autres cartes, on découvre rapidement que le lien, si il existe, est probablement complexe. À partir d'une analyse cartographique des structures par âges et des structures de l'emploi, du système urbain et des réseaux de communication et à partir d'une reconstitution de l'expérience collectiviste dans différentes communes à travers des entretiens et des recherches en archives nous avons pu éclairer, par une analyse régressive, l'exhumation de la discontinuité est-ouest par des chaînes de causalités d'une tout autre nature. L'explication ne mobilise alors ni un quelconque schéma exceptionnaliste et essentialiste pour lequel les montagnes ancestralement paysannes seraient retournées au modèle paysan par choix identitaire, ni un schéma purement typologique qui affecterait aux différents espaces des degrés de modernités. L'analyse montre au contraire que les choix post-collectivistes ont été guidés de manière différenciée

par les modalités locales de traversé de l'expérience socialiste, elles-mêmes tributaires d'une histoire antérieure qui avait fortement typé les espaces agricoles et les structures foncières. L'explication de la discontinuité passe par la connaissance des contextes, construits par des cheminements historiques spécifiques, et par des régularités géographiques de longue durée aux fortes capacités de résistances.

Le lien entre la carte des choix poste collectivistes (carte 3) et la carte ethnolinguistique (carte4) n'est ni direct, ni linéaire. « Dans la durée pluriséculaire de l'histoire du peuplement de la région, il passe par une reproduction de différences géographiques entre différentes formes d'organisation des terroirs agricoles, entre différents niveaux d'encadrement urbain et de densités de réseaux de communication. Au pas de temps plus récent de l'histoire socialiste il passe par la réactualisation de ces différences sous l'effet de la réforme agraire de 1945 et de ses discriminations anti-allemandes, puis sous l'effet des vitesses différenciées de collectivisation et des différents types de pratiques collectivistes. Ce lien n'est pas de type culturaliste ou identitaire ; il passe par l'interdépendance, construite dans la durée, de facteurs d'ordre social et économique qui ont différencié les enjeux du présent et modulé les choix. » (Hirschhausen 2006)

Il nous semble que cette manière d'interroger les discontinuités culturelles observables sur les cartes en les soustrayant à des motivations exclusivement identitaires et en les réintégrant au sein de structurations territoriales construites dans la durée, constitue une manière (bien sûr non exclusive) d'échapper au piège culturaliste. Cette manière postule non seulement une réinscriptions des analyses dans l'histoire (dans leur historicité) mais également dans leur matrice concrète et située (leur « géographicité ») Elle laisse penser (mais il faudra multiplier les études pour valider pleinement l'hypothèse) que la

question des discontinuités culturelles qui sillonnent le continent et qui fragmentent les territoires centre- et est-européens ne saurait se penser sur le seul registre culturel. La question des discontinuités culturelles se joue entre espace et histoire, entre frontières et circulations, entre sphère matérielle et sphère culturelle, entre pratiques quotidiennes et horizons d'attentes de longue portée. C'est ce qui fait sans doute sa grande richesse heuristique pour mieux sortir des impasses où sont trop souvent entrées les pensées de la différence.

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Unbounded Cleavages **Grenzenabbau und die Europäisierung sozialer Ungleichheit**

Europas historische Grenzen, die bereits durch die beiden Weltkriege des 20. Jahrhunderts Verschiebungen unterworfen wurden und im Kalten Krieg eine vorläufige Stabilisierung erfahren hatten, sind in jüngster Zeit wieder in Fluß geraten. Im Inneren der Europäischen Union gehört der ungehinderte grenzüberschreitende Verkehr von Waren, Kapitalien und Personen mittlerweile zum Alltag. Im Schengenraum wurden die Grenzkontrollen auch für Personen weitgehend abgebaut. Mit der Osterweiterung verschieben sich die Außengrenzen des politisch und ökonomisch integrierten Europas weiter nach Osten. Grenzregionen erleben eine Aufwertung, sei es als europäische Förderregionen oder als alte Kontinentalbrüche überwindende Brückenräume. Die aktuellen Prozesse der Grenzüberschreitungen und neuen Grenzbefestigungen werfen daher die Frage nach der Zukunftsgestalt des erweiterten und integrierten Europas auf. Das Problem der „Finalität“ der EU ist somit nicht nur ein Problem der Verfassungsgestalt des supranationalen Herrschaftsverbandes, sondern berührt mittlerweile im verstärkten Maße auch die territoriale Dimension der europäischen Integration. Wer sich

mit Europa beschäftigt und dessen politische und geographische Einheit zu fassen versucht, stößt unweigerlich auf die Grenzenproblematik.

Es war schon immer schwierig und auch stets von politischer Brisanz, die Grenzen des europäischen Kulturraums – besonders im Osten des Kontinents und auf dem Balkan – wissenschaftlich präzise zu bestimmen. „Das schwierigste Problem, das sich den Geographen seit je bei ihrem Nachdenken über Europa stellte“, konstatiert Rolf-Joachim Sattler, „war die Frage, wie dieser Kontinent nach Osten zu Lande abzugrenzen sei, wo und entlang welcher Linie er nach Asien übergehe“ (Sattler 1971, S. 16). Die aktuelle Debatte über einen EU-Beitritt der Türkei ist dafür exemplarisch. Doch bereits die im Mai 2004 eingeleitete fünfte Erweiterungsrunde geht mit einer der ausgreifendsten Expansionen des Herrschaftsterritoriums der EU in der Geschichte der europäischen Integration einher. Deshalb hat besonders die Osterweiterung die Frage nach den Staatsgrenzen Europas ins Zentrum auch der wissenschaftlichen Aufmerksamkeit gerückt. Geopolitische Fragestellungen erlebten – im Anschluß an die geopolitische Wende in der Geographie seit Mitte der 1990er Jahre (vgl. Agnew/Corbridge 1995; Agnew 1998) – auch in der bis dato eher ‚institutionalistisch‘ ausgerichteten Europaforschung einen unerwarteten Aufschwung (vgl. u.a. Zielonka (Hg.) 2002; Anderson 2001). Die Begriffe Grenze und Territorium sind für diesen Ansatz ebenso grundlegend wie für die Geographie im allgemeinen. Aber läßt sich die Frage der europäischen Identität überhaupt geographisch beantworten?

Bekanntlich ist ein Grund für die Schwierigkeit, die territoriale und kulturelle Ausdehnung Europas genauer zu bestimmen, in der Tatsache begründet, daß Europa keine natürlichen Grenzen besitzt, sieht man vom Atlantik und vom Mittelmeer ab, die allerdings in der Geschichte viel weniger

trennend gewirkt haben als etwa nationale und ethnische Gegensätze unmittelbar benachbarter Völker auf dem Kontinent. „Der Natur gegenüber“, stellte Georg Simmel fest, „ist jede Grenzsetzung Willkür, selbst im Falle einer insularen Lage, da doch prinzipiell auch das Meer ‚in Besitz genommen‘ werden kann.“ Simmel führt weiter aus: „Gerade an dieser Unpräjudiziertheit durch den natürlichen Raum macht die trotzdem bestehende unbedingte Schärfe der einmal gesetzten physischen Grenze die formende Macht des gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhangs und ihrer von innen kommenden Notwendigkeiten ganz besonders anschaulich“ (Simmel 1908, S. 465). Mit anderen Worten: Grenzen sind Produkte gesellschaftlicher Prozesse. Auch die Staatsgrenzen Europas sind primär kulturelle, politische und sozial geprägte Trennungs- bzw. Verbindungslinien.

Daß sich Europa als gesellschaftlicher und politischer Raum geographisch nicht befriedigend bestimmen läßt, wird auch von Geographen immer wieder betont. Schon Sattlers vielbeachtete Rekonstruktion des Europa-Begriffs resultierte in der Erkenntnis, daß „eine Inhaltsbestimmung dessen, was Europa als historische Größe meint, ... nicht aus der Geographie gewonnen werden (kann). Denn der Europa-Begriff der Geographie ist deskriptiver Natur; mit einer fast naturwissenschaftlichen Präzision und an Hand morphologischer Kriterien gibt er an, welcher Teil der Erdoberfläche als Europa bezeichnet und dementsprechend kartographisch dargestellt werden kann. Der historische Europa-Begriff dagegen, und das hat er mit allen eine historische Größe bezeichnenden Begriffen gemeinsam, meint ein Abstraktum, das naturwissenschaftlichem Denken unzugänglich ist“ (Sattler 1971, s. 38; ähnlich H.-D. Schultz 2004, insb. S. 52f.). Die sozial- und kulturräumliche Dimension Europas bildet damit ein eigenes Diskursfeld, das

man auch als „symbolische Geographie“ bezeichnen könnte. „Geopolitische Vorstellungen“ (Agnew) sind allerdings weder beliebig noch reine Phantasiegebilde von Intellektuellen. Soweit sich solche territoriale Ordnungsvorstellungen mit politischen Organisationen, wie etwa der EU, verbinden, strukturieren sie konkrete gesellschaftliche Herrschaftsverhältnisse. Durch die damit einhergehenden Grenzziehungen – politische wie kulturelle – wird über legitime Zugehörigkeiten und kollektive Identitäten von gesellschaftlichen Gruppen, damit über Macht und Ohnmacht, Inklusion und Exklusion wesentlich mit entschieden. In dem vorliegenden Beitrag werde ich eine These vorstellen, die sich mit der Reorganisation der Grenzen und der sozialen Räume in Europa beschäftigt, wobei „Europa“ soziologisch als transnationaler Sozialraum¹ konzipiert werden soll.

Grenzbildungen und gesellschaftliche Strukturierung

Vorausgeschickt seien einige begriffliche Klärungen, die das soziologische Verständnis von Grenzen und Grenzprozessen betreffen. Wenn es eine spezifische Perspektive der Soziologie der Grenze gibt, dann die, daß eine Wechselwirkung zwischen Grenzbildungen einerseits und der Strukturierung von gesellschaftlichen Binnenräumen andererseits postuliert wird. Mit anderen Worten, der soziologische Blickwinkel betrachte Grenzverläufe und Grenzprozesse territorialer Räume als *kausale Zuschreibungseinheiten* für gesellschaftliche

¹ In Abgrenzung vom Begriff „europäische Gesellschaft“, bei dem die Vorstellung eines nationalstaatlich organisierten Herrschafts- und Sozialraums mitschwingt und dessen Übertragbarkeit auf die Europäische Union grundsätzlich als problematisch anzusehen ist (vgl. Offe 2001; Delhey 2004).

Strukturbildungen und soziale Dynamiken – diesseits und jenseits der gegebenen Grenzlinien. Nur unter dieser Prämisse ist Grenze als soziologische Kategorie verwendbar. Grenzen, besonders Staatsgrenzen, sind soziale Institutionen.

Stein Rokkan brachte diese Perspektive folgendermaßen auf den Punkt: „Die Geschichte der Strukturierung menschlicher Gesellschaft läßt sich gewinnbringend als Interaktion zwischen geographischen Räumen und Mitgliedschaftsräumen untersuchen“ (Rokkan 2000, S. 138). Bezüglich der gesellschaftlichen Räume, die durch Grenzbildungen als Einheiten mit konstituiert werden, erweist sich bei diesem Ansatz die *Zentrum-Peripherie-Relation* als eine entscheidende Strukturierungsdimension. Dabei ist zwischen einer *horizontalen* Dimension und einer *vertikalen* Dimension der Peripherisierung zu unterscheiden. Die horizontale Peripherisierung bezieht sich auf regionale Disparitäten, mithin auf die je spezifische Konzentration bzw. Diffusion von Herrschaftsressourcen auf einem bestimmten Territorium. Hierbei geht es um „geographische Relationen“, wie Abhängigkeiten von Randregionen oder strukturelle Machtasymmetrien im Verhältnis von regionalen Einheiten. Die zweite Dimension, die vertikale, verweist hingegen auf spezifische Benachteiligungen und Privilegierungen von bestimmten Bevölkerungsgruppen, vorrangig im Hinblick auf deren sozialen Status sowie politischen Einfluß. Beiden Dimensionen gemeinsam ist der Fokus auf „*cleavages*“, d.h. auf Bruch- bzw. Spaltungslinien von Gesellschaften, wie die in soziale Klassen, Konfessionen, oder regionale Disparitäten und ethnische Konfliktlinien. Diese faktischen oder potentiellen Konfliktlinien verweisen auf unterschiedliche Ausprägungen sozialer Ungleichheit.

Entscheidend für mein Argument ist nun, daß man feststellen kann, daß zwischen Prozessen der territorialen Grenzbefestigung und sozialen Strukturen nicht nur bestimmte

Interdependenzen bestehen, sondern daß sich die Muster der Grenzziehungen darüber hinaus direkt auf die Ungleichheitsstrukturen von Gesellschaften auswirken. Dieser Zusammenhang läßt sich paradigmatisch an der europäischen Geschichte der Staatswerdung und Nationsbildung zeigen (vgl. Rokkan 2000): Die Herausbildung und Etablierung der europäischen Nationalstaaten erfolgte in erster Linie durch strategische Grenzverstärkungen in den politischen, militärischen, ökonomischen und kulturellen Vergesellschaftungsräumen. Moderne Staatsbildung lief entweder darauf hinaus, alle vorhandenen Grenzen möglichst kongruent zur Deckung zu bringen, oder zumindest den unbestrittenen Vorrang der politischen und militärischen gegenüber anderen gesellschaftlichen Einheiten durchzusetzen. Der Territorialstaat wirkte wie ein „*geographischer Container*“ der modernen Gesellschaft (Agnew 1998, S. 51).

Mit der äußeren Grenzstabilisierung einher ging ein Prozeß der Binnenstrukturierung des Nationalstaates in politisch-institutioneller und gesellschaftlicher Hinsicht. Dieser Prozeß läßt sich mit Stein Rokkan als *Internalisierung* von *cleavages* verstehen: Mit anderen Worten, die im gleichsam vorstaatlichen europäischen Raum existierenden ethnischen und religiösen Gemeinschaften, Sprachgruppen, Konfessionen und sozialen Klassen mit ihren je eigenen Grenzziehungen und territorialen Identitäten wurden im Zuge der Formierung der modernen Flächenstaaten durch *Internalisierung* in sozialpolitisch deutungsfähige und institutionalisierbare Probleme sozialer Ungleichheit der staatlich organisierten geschlossenen Nationalgesellschaft transformiert (vgl. Flora 2000). Dieser Prozeß der Internalisierung läßt sich an der deutschen Wiedervereinigung veranschaulichen: Durch die Wiederherstellung eines gesamtdeutschen Sozialraums nach dem Fall der Mauer wurden die ökonomischen und sozialen

Disparitäten, die zwischen den neuen und den alten Bundesländern zur Zeit der Doppelstaatlichkeit bestanden, in das in der alten Bundesrepublik vorherrschende Deutungsmuster der sozialen Ungleichheit überführt – mit den bekannten Folgekosten, die mit den enormen Transferzahlungen in die neuen Bundesländer im Zeichen nationaler Solidarität verbunden sind.

Verallgemeinernd kann man sagen: Die Vorgänge der Externalisierung und Internalisierung von *cleavages* sind komplementäre soziale Prozesse. Grenzbefestigungen nach außen ermöglichen die Externalisierung sozialer Kosten und Folgeprobleme in Räume *jenseits* der jeweiligen Grenzlinien. Umgekehrt gehen territoriale Grenzexpansionen in der Regel mit einer Internalisierung von sozio-ökonomischen Kosten, Risiken und Konfliktpotentialen einher. Staatsgrenzen markieren also so gesehen nicht nur Differenzen zwischen Herrschafts- und Kulturräumen. Vom jeweiligen Grad der Durchlässigkeit der Staatsgrenzen hängen nicht zuletzt auch das konkrete soziale Konfliktniveau sowie die Integrationsfähigkeit der gesellschaftlichen Binnenordnung ab.

Für die westeuropäische Staatswerdung und Nationsbildung zeigen Stein Rokkans Arbeiten, wie im Zuge der territorialen Konsolidierung der Nationalstaaten durch Internalisierung der gesellschaftlichen Konflikt- und Komplexitätsbewältigung nicht nur stufenweise die demokratischen Partizipationsrechte verwirklicht und parlamentarische Regierungssysteme geschaffen wurden. Durch die seit Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts flächendeckend eingeführte Massenedukation und verstärkt durch die allgemeine Wehrpflicht für Männer, konnte auch ein relativ hohes Maß an kultureller Homogenisierung und Gefühlsbindung an den eigenen Staat und an die jeweilige Standardsprache erreicht werden. Aber auch die von den Klassenspaltungen ausgehenden

sozialen Konflikte erfuhren – besonders unter den Wohlstandsbedingungen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg – in den Paktierungen der Tarifparteien, in neo-korporatistischen Arrangements und den wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Sicherungssystemen eine erfolgreiche Institutionalisierung. Unter diesem Blickwinkel läßt sich die Geschichte der Staatswerdung und Nationsbildung in Europa im wesentlichen als ein Prozeß der Internalisierung von europaweiten Spaltungslinien und einer parallelen institutionellen Regulierung bzw. Zähmung von sozialen, ethnischen und religiösen Konflikten im Rahmen des souveränen und homogenen Nationalstaates auffassen. Diese historische Konstellation staatlich internalisierter sozialer Konfliktlinien wurde treffend als „*bounded cleavages*“, als gleichsam „eingehegte“ gesellschaftliche Spaltungslinien bezeichnet (Ferrera 2003).

Paradoxien der europäischen Sozialintegration

Mit Bezug auf den neuen europäischen Raum stellt sich nun aber die Frage: Wie wirken sich die Grenzöffnung und Grenzenexpansion im Zusammenhang der EU-Erweiterung auf die skizzierte historische Konstellation geschlossener nationalstaatlicher Sozialräume aus? Wie strukturiert sich der europäische Sozialraum unter diesen neuen Rahmenbedingungen? Bildet sich im Zuge der fortschreitenden Integration und territorialen Expansion der EU eine europaweite und überstaatliche Gesellschaft heraus? Wie entwickelt sich das betreffende Innen-Außen-Schema? Welche neuen Spaltungslinien und Konfliktpotentiale zeichnen sich ab? Kurz: Was bedeutet das für die Formierung der „europäischen Gesellschaft“ und für die soziale Integration Europas insgesamt? Die sozialwissenschaftliche Europaforschung steht hier noch

gänzlich am Anfang. Es zeichnet sich aber jetzt schon eine eigentümliche Problematik der europäischen Integration ab, soweit es um ihre gesellschaftliche Wirkung geht.

Bei der europäischen Integration haben wir es namentlich mit der Paradoxie zu tun, daß die Fortschritte bei der wirtschaftlichen und politisch-institutionellen Einigung mit teilweiser *Desintegration* in gesellschaftlicher Hinsicht einhergehen. Die Dialektik von Grenzabbau im Inneren und Grenzbefestigung nach außen führt zu neuen Ausprägungen und Verschärfungen gesellschaftlicher Spaltungen im sozialen Binnenraum, den die EU als territoriale Herrschaftsinstitution mit eigenen Außengrenzen konstituiert. Zwar formieren sich weder eine europäische Bürgergesellschaft, noch eine europäische Identität, noch eine neue europäische Zivilität, wie die öffentliche Auseinandersetzung um das europäische Demokratiedefizit, die Finalität der EU und die europäische Staatsbürgerschaft verdeutlichen. Wir müssen aber die Fragen des europäischen Volkes und der europäischen Gesellschaft der Staatsbürger in Bezug auf das besondere Problem der Grenzen neu diskutieren, weil sich darin nicht nur materielle Interessenkonflikte, sondern auch auf besondere Weise Spannungen um kollektive Identitätsvorstellungen verdichten (vgl. Balibar 2003). „Sind wir so sicher“, fragt Rémi Brague zu Recht, „daß das was wir bauen, auch Europa ist? Und nicht einfach nur eine Freihandelszone oder ein Machtzentrum, das nur durch seine geographische Lage definiert und durch den Namen, den ‚dieses Vorgebirge des asiatischen Kontinents‘ (Valéry) zufälligerweise bekommen hat“ (Brague 1992, S. XXX).

Daß die europäische Integration gleichbedeutend ist mit Grenzenabbau, liegt auf der Hand. Die größte Durchschlagskraft erzielte bisher zweifellos die europäische Binnenmarktpolitik. Ökonomische Güter zirkulieren weitgehend ungehindert und mit minimierten grenzenbedingte Transaktionskosten im

ausgedehnten europäischen Wirtschaftsraum. Aber auch die grenzenüberschreitende Kontakthäufigkeit und –intensität von Politikern, Beamten und Experten im Rahmen der europäischen Institutionen hat in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten nachweisbar kontinuierlich zugenommen (vgl. Wessels 2000). Eine neue, demokratisch schwach legitimierte „europäische“ Funktionselite lenkt mit immer weiter wachsenden Entscheidungs- und Gesetzgebungskompetenzen die Geschicke der EU und damit eines Großteils unseres Kontinents. Soweit bauen wir vor allem eines: ein Europa als bürokratische Herrschaft und ein supranationales ökonomisches und politisches Machtzentrum (vgl. Bach 2005).

Aber keineswegs alle Lebensbereiche erfahren Entgrenzungen. Die meisten lokalen und lebensweltlichen Ordnungen und die wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Sicherungssysteme bleiben einer traditionellen Semantik der Zugehörigkeit und kollektiven Solidarität verhaftet. Die kulturellen Ordnungen, kollektiven Identifikationen und nationalstaatlichen Wir-Identitäten geraten zwar auch in den Sog der Dialektik von Grenzabbau und Grenzbefestigung, aber ihre Beharrungskraft ist beträchtlich. Die Gefühlsbindungen an den eigenen Staat, die eigene Gesellschaft, die lokalen Lebenszusammenhänge erweisen sich nach wie vor als ungebrochen und lebendig. Unter den verschiedenen Schichten der Wir-Identität kommt der nationalstaatlichen Ebene immer noch ein besonderes Gefühlsgewicht zu. Daran haben auch die fünfzig Jahre europäische Einigung bisher nichts ändern können.

Daran wird deutlich, daß man sich die Öffnung des EU-Binnenraums keineswegs als einen eindimensionalen Prozeß vorstellen darf, der alle gesellschaftlichen Systeme in gleicher oder ähnlicher Weise mit Entgrenzungen konfrontiert. Vielmehr erfolgt der Abbau von Grenzen sektoral und vor allem auf

asynchrone Weise (vgl. Bös 2000). Deshalb ist es zweckmäßig, den „Europabegriff“ zu desaggregieren und von unterschiedlichen sozialen Räumen bzw. territorialen Vergesellschaftungen auszugehen: In Anlehnung an eine aufschlußreiche Einteilung des französischen Geographen J.-F. Drevet (1997) läßt sich die „*nouvelle identité de l'Europe*“ als eine Pluralität territorialer Sozialräume („*territoires*“) bestimmen: Demnach sind unterscheidbar: ein europäischer Raum der Staaten und der supranationalen Institutionen, ein europäischer Raum der ethnischen Gemeinschaften und der kulturellen Minderheiten; darüber hinaus existiert das „Europa der Regionen“, aber auch ein Europa des Binnenmarktes, ferner der europäische Migrationsraum und ein europäischer Raum der Bürgerrechte usw. Wichtig ist dabei, daß die Grenzen dieser multiplen Raumstrukturen keineswegs zusammenfallen. Vielmehr weisen sie eine komplexe Konstellation von asymmetrischen und exzentrischen Grenzverläufen auf. Wir haben es offensichtlich mit einem gegenläufigen Entwicklungsprozeß zur Staatswerdung zu tun: also mit Dissoziation und Dislokation vormals geschlossener und segmentärer, besonders staatlich organisierter Sozialräume. Viele dieser Räume entkoppeln sich zudem von den nationalstaatlichen Institutionenordnungen.

Festgehalten werden kann: Die asynchrone Dialektik von Grenzabbau und Grenzbefestigung, die den europäischen Integrations- und Erweiterungsprozeß wesentlich bestimmt, hat eine neue, weit fluidere Konstellation von Staatsgrenzen und Räumen, von Zentrum-Peripherie-Relationen und von Innen-Außen-Verhältnissen in Europa hervorgebracht. Dabei stellt sich die Frage: Welche Folgen hat die sozio-territoriale Reorganisation Europas im Zeichen des Grenzabbaus nach innen und der Grenzbefestigung nach außen für den Wandel der sozialen Strukturen?

Ein neues europäisches Muster sozialer Ungleichheit

Die Reorganisation der territorialen Sozialsysteme Europas, so meine These, wirkt sich direkt auf die europäischen Gesellschaftsstrukturen aus, indem sich ein gänzlich neues Muster sozialer Ungleichheit im gesamteuropäischen Makroraum herausbildet. Damit gerät eine neue gesellschaftliche Konstellation von grenzüberschreitenden Spaltungs- und Konfliktlinien in den Blick, die ich als *unbounded cleavages* – entgrenzte oder entkoppelte Spaltungsstrukturen – bezeichnen möchte. Diese *unbounded cleavages* verlaufen entlang einer Vielzahl verschiedener Konflikt- und Spannungslinien, so daß in wachsendem Maße neue Ungleichheitsformen und Ungleichheitsrelationen die innergesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse überlagern und prägen. Anders ausgedrückt: Mittlerweile ist ein neues Koordinatensystem der sozialen Ungleichheit in Europa entstanden, das die spezifische europäische Tradition von Spannungsbilanzen in Frage stellt.

Zwei dieser europäischen Konfliktlinien seien hier exemplarisch hervorgehoben: *Erstens* ein *Prozeß der abgestuften Integration von Peripherien*. Hierbei bildet der europäische Raum der Staaten und des Binnenmarktes die relevante Bezugseinheit. Wie Georg Vobruba gezeigt hat, bildet sich ein Muster von „konzentrischen Kreisen“, dem folgende sozio-politische Entwicklungsdynamik der EU zugrunde liegt: Im Zentrum befindet sich ein politisch stabiler Bereich materiellen Wohlstands. Außerhalb dieses Bereichs nimmt der Wohlstand mit zunehmender Entfernung vom Zentrum immer mehr ab. Zwischen den einzelnen Zonen ungleichen Wohlstands existieren Grenzen mit unterschiedlicher Durchlässigkeit; die Durchlässigkeit der Grenzen nimmt von der Peripherie zum Zentrum ab. Daraus ergibt sich einerseits, daß die wohlhabende

Kernzone durch einen „*cordon sanitaire*“ abgesichert wird. Andererseits entspricht das einem territorialen Muster wirtschaftlicher und politischer Peripherisierung, das dem europäischen Raum der Staaten und des Marktes eine nachhaltige soziale Ungleichheitsstruktur aufprägt (Vobruba 2001). Die EU-Osterweiterung verschärft diese Problematik dadurch, daß die europäische Integration mittlerweile an die geographischen Grenzen Europas stößt. Das bedeutet, daß die Staaten des ehemaligen „*cordon sanitaire*“ außerhalb der Europäischen Union sich *heute* nicht mehr als Peripherie der Europäischen Union von *morgen* und somit auch nicht mehr als Teil ihres wohlhabenden Kerns von *übermorgen* betrachten können. Damit entsteht eine neue Konstellation, nämlich eine schroffe Unterscheidung und dauerhafte Grenze zwischen der Europäischen Union und ihren Anrainerstaaten (ebd.).

Was folgt daraus für die Binnenverhältnisse des europäischen Sozialraums? Nach innen gewendet heißt das, daß sich die enormen wirtschaftlichen Disparitäten der Länder und Regionen der erweiterten Union in europaweite Binnendifferenzierungen umsetzen. Das Muster konzentrischer Kreise wird sich voraussichtlich auf die Weise durchsetzen, daß EU-Mitglieder erster, zweiter und vielleicht dritter Klasse entstehen. Die hier skizzierte neue europäische Konstellation der sozialen Ungleichheit ist demzufolge das Produkt der Zunahme von grenzüberschreitenden Transaktionen im EU-Raum, also vor allem ist sie eine Folge der neuen Mobilität von ökonomischen Gütern, politischen und administrativen Ressourcen, sowie (wenn auch noch deutlich mit gebremster Dynamik) von Arbeitskräften. Unter diesem Blickwinkel zeichnet sich eine neue gesamteuropäische Struktur von regionalen Disparitäten in der Wohlstandsverteilung sowie der territorialen Distribution von Opportunitätsstrukturen ab. Dieses

Szenario wird jetzt schon vor allem von zwischenstaatlichen und interregionalen Verteilungskonflikte geprägt, und zwar entlang zweier sich neuerdings kreuzender Spaltungslinien: der Nord-Süd-Spaltung einerseits, der Ost-West-Spaltung andererseits.

Bei den zuletzt genannten Disparitäten verfügt der EU-Verband über Ausgleichsinstrumente und gewisse strategische Handlungsmöglichkeiten: die Struktur- und Kohäsionsfonds. Allerdings wird die daraus resultierende Transferlogik, die bei der EU-15 noch wirksam und erfolgreich war, sich nicht ohne weiteres auf die EU-25 plus x übertragen lassen. Die historischen Inklusionsmechanismen der EU, die territoriale Peripherien mittels Transferleistungen zu kompensieren und einzubinden, stoßen mittlerweile definitiv an ihre Grenzen, sowohl an Schranken der Finanzierungs-bereitschaft wie der Legitimierbarkeit von relativ kostspieligen Fördermaßnahmen. Auf der anderen Seite begründen die auf europäischer Ebene paktierten Leitideen der europäischen Solidarität und Kohäsion sowie die entsprechenden Finanzierungsinstrumente eigentlich erst das Europa der Förderregionen und Kohäsionsstaaten als *fait social*. Interessenlagen der politischen Akteure richten sich daran aus. Die EU-Mitgliedschaft wird so zum legitimen Anspruchstitel auf effektive Förderung bei den benachteiligten oder sich als benachteiligt ansehenden Ländern und Regionen der Union. Nationale und regionale Disparitäten im gesamteuropäischen Raum werden auf diese Weise zu Relevanzkriterien eines neuen sozial- und transferpolitisch instrumentalisierbaren *europäischen* Deutungsmusters von sozialer Ungleichheit. Unter diesem Blickwinkel wird die europäische Ungleichheit als ein Konstrukt der institutionalisierten Regional- und Strukturpolitik der EU sichtbar, gleichsam als selbstreferentielles Produkt der supranationalen Regulierung.

Abgestufte Inklusion im europäischen Raum der Bürgerrechte

Einen zweiten Prozeß der Peripherisierung möchte ich als *abgestufte Inklusion* bezeichnen. Hier sind die Referenzeinheiten der europäische Raum der Bürgerrechte sowie der europäische Migrationsraum. Die Grenzverschiebungen nach außen im Zuge der Osterweiterung zeitigen unmittelbare Wirkungen auf die sozialen Inklusions- und Exklusions-Spannungen im Binnenraum der EU. Dies vor allem dadurch, daß europaweite Spaltungslinien, wie diejenigen zwischen Unionsbürgern und „Drittstaatenangehörigen“, „Christen“ und „Muslimen“ oder Modernisierungsverlierern und Modernisierungsgewinnern dazu beitragen, daß sich die sozialen Polarisierungen in den gesellschaftlichen Binnenverhältnissen der Mitgliedsstaaten verschärfen. Das neue Innen-Außen-Schema, das durch die Unionsbürgerschaft definiert wird, konstituiert einen exklusiven europäischen Raum der Bürgerrechte mit schroffen symbolischen Grenzen der Zugehörigkeit und der Ausgrenzung. Hierbei reproduzieren sich die *externen* politischen Grenzziehungen des Europas der Staaten im innergesellschaftlichen Raum – vor allem in den nationalen Migrationsräumen – als soziale Exklusion in der Form abgestufter Teilhaberechte und einer begleitenden Semantik der „*neuen Apartheid*“ (E. Balibar).

Derjenige soziale Raum, welcher unter dem Druck der Grenzveränderungen den wohl dramatischsten Strukturwandel erfährt, ist der europäische Raum der ethnischen Gemeinschaften und kulturellen Minderheiten. Konflikte um kollektive Identitäten sind die Folge, vor allem im Zusammenhang mit den Einwanderungsprozessen, die europaweit in den vergangenen Jahren eine neue Qualität

angenommen haben. Immerhin lebten bereits vor der jüngsten Erweiterung gut 50 Millionen von 344 Millionen Menschen in der EU, die eine andere Sprache als die ihres Aufenthaltslandes sprachen. Hinzu kommen schätzungsweise 14 Millionen Muslime. Nationale Identitätsfragen gewinnen unter diesen Voraussetzungen an politischer Brisanz, und die Bedeutung der religiösen Dimension hat trotz fortschreitender Säkularisierung in Europa deutlich zugenommen. Diese Prozesse können einen neuen Nationalismus oder auch einen nicht weniger fremdenfeindlichen Euro-Chauvinismus fördern. Dort, wo diese Tendenzen sich mit sozialen Spaltungen verbinden, könnten sie sogar die gegenwärtigen Institutionen der Europäischen Union in Frage stellen.(vgl. Fijalkowski 2000).

Die hier nur exemplarisch skizzierten Szenarien von *unbounded cleavages* des europaweiten Sozialraumes werden in der Öffentlichkeit zwar zunehmend als interne Probleme der EU-Gesellschaft wahrgenommen und die EU wird auch vielfach für deren negative Konsequenzen verantwortlich gemacht, beispielsweise für die Probleme in den östlichen Grenzregionen mit großem Lohn- und Wohlstandsgefälle, obwohl diese Probleme keineswegs in jedem Falle der europäischen Politik allein angelastet werden können. Als wichtiger und folgenreicher erweist sich allerdings der Umstand, daß dem gegenwärtigen politischen System der EU in vielerlei Hinsicht die geeigneten institutionellen Instrumente und die nötige soziokulturelle Verankerung fehlen, um nachholend jene Institutionalisierung und Domestikation der *cleavages* zu erreichen, die der nationalstaatlichen Vergesellschaftungsform nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in Europa ihre relative Integrationskraft und Systemstabilität verliehen hatte.

Wir werden es also in Zukunft in Europa, so eine naheliegende Prognose, zunehmend mit Konstellationen von

unbounded cleavages oder, um Claus Offe (2001) zu zitieren, von "schlecht strukturierten Konflikten" und sozialen sowie kulturellen Brüchen und Spannungen zu tun haben. Mit anderen Worten: Die vertraute Tradition von Spannungsbalancen verliert zunehmend ihren institutionellen und sozialstrukturellen Rückhalt. Gleichzeitig führen neue Ungleichheitsrelationen – territoriale, soziale, ethnische, kulturelle – zu ungeahnten Herausforderungen der sozialen Integration und Desintegration im politisch und ökonomisch geeinten Europa. Von einer 'europäischen Gesellschaft' sind wir damit noch weit entfernt. „Sind wir sicher, daß das, was wir bauen, auch Europa ist?“. Diese Frage stellt sich, so scheint es, nach der Osterweiterung und in Anbetracht der noch bevorstehenden Expansionen der EU dringlicher denn je.

Die Beitritte zur EU verändern nicht nur die geopolitischen Gewichte innerhalb und außerhalb Europas. Geopolitik nimmt vorrangig souveräne und territorial konsolidierte Staaten in den Blick. Der Fokus liegt auf den Außengrenzen. Die EU formiert sich in dieser Hinsicht als ein Machtgebilde mit relativ großer politischer Integrationskraft und darauf gründender außenpolitischer Handlungsfähigkeit. Zugleich zeitigt der Wandel der Grenzstrukturen in Europa aber auch Rückwirkungen auf die gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen und Konstellationen dieser Ordnungen. Als Folge des Grenzabbaus und der neuen Durchlässigkeit der Staatsgrenzen im Binnenraum der EU wird das bisher dominierende grenzenkongruente Gesellschaftsmodell des europäischen Nationalstaates in Frage gestellt. Gelingt es letzterem, wie vor allem Rokkan zeigt, durch externe Grenzstabilisierung und interne Konfliktinstitutionalisierung soziale Spaltungen und Ungleichheiten mehr oder minder erfolgreich zu überformen und gleichsam einzuhegen, so wird dieses gesellschaftliche Integrationsmodell mit fortschreitender Europäisierung

zunehmend unterminiert, ohne daß auf europäischer Ebene ein neues Modell gesellschaftlicher Integration erkennbar würde. Die europäische Integration entkoppelt sich somit immer mehr von ihren Bezugsgesellschaften. Es erhebt sich dann aber die Frage, mit welchen spezifischen Grenzen sich die Gesellschaften unterhalb der politischen Integrationsebene in Zukunft formieren und Geltung verschaffen werden, und welche Konfliktpotentiale und Pazifizierungsaussichten die neue Konstellation von *unbounded cleavages* hervorbringen wird.

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Le rythme des frontières¹

Mots-clé: frontières, Etats, régions, Union Européenne

Poser le problème des frontières politiques c'est poser le problème de la nature et de la légitimité du contenu qu'elles enveloppent, c'est-à-dire des Etats modernes. Dans ce champ d'analyse, la géographie ne peut pas se substituer aux sciences politiques mais elle peut compléter leurs approches avec une dimension essentielle pour la compréhension des dynamiques à l'œuvre: la dimension spatiale.

Depuis 2000, la devise de l'Union Européenne est « Unie dans la diversité ». Cette devise couvre une réalité relativement banale: l'Europe est un continent petit (7% des terres et 12% de la population de la planète) mais extrêmement fragmenté dans ses composantes naturelles et surtout sociales. La volonté de créer une certaine unité de l'espace européen suppose un projet, un principe et des moyens. Le projet c'est l'Union Européenne, mais quel est le principe et quels sont les moyens nécessaire à son accomplissement et surtout quels sont les obstacles les plus forts qui risquent d'entraver la construction de cette unité ? On reviendra sur le principe et sur les moyens; pour l'instant on risque une affirmation un peu provocatrice: les obstacles sont constitués par les Etats européens eux-mêmes et par leur expression spatiale la plus évidente – les frontières.

¹ Cet article est publié aussi dans la *Revue Roumaine de Géographie*, 2006.

1. Etats et frontières, les clés de l'arythmie de l'espace européen

Si on peut considérer que des esquisses d'identité de groupe (identité nationale ?) et les organisations politiques les encadrant sont apparues très tôt en Europe (Duroselle, 1990; Lévy, 1997), l'Etat moderne est une invention relativement récente. L'Etat a besoin d'une condition fondamentale: un territoire bien délimité par des frontières imposées aux voisins. Les organisations politiques du Moyen Âge fonctionnaient plutôt grâce à des réseaux commerciaux, supportées par des réseaux urbains puissants – l'exemple de la Hanse est symptomatique. L'Europe des réseaux n'était pas compatible avec l'organisation étatique ayant le contrôle absolu dans chaque point de l'espace et le pouvoir des seigneurs ou des rois diminuait au fur et à mesure qu'on s'éloignait de leurs sièges. Il n'y avait que l'Eglise qui avait un pouvoir constant sur tout l'espace où elle était présente. La possibilité des mesures géodésiques exactes n'est apparue que vers la fin de la Renaissance; on peut dire que la cartographie est à l'origine de l'Etat moderne; ce n'est qu'après avoir tracé des limites précises que l'entité spatiale dotée d'un système de pouvoir a pu s'organiser administrativement, avec tout ce que cela implique. L'exemple des républiques italiennes, devenues les premiers *Etats-territoire*, et dotées d'un appareil diplomatique auprès les cours de l'Europe dès la moitié du XVe siècle, a été très vite suivi mais ce n'est qu'après la paix de Westphalie (1648) que le principe de souveraineté a consacré le concept moderne de territoire et donc de frontière.

Les Etats post-westphaliens n'étaient pourtant que des contenants administratifs, vides d'idéologie ou plutôt contenant la même idéologie du pouvoir et du contrôle: la religion mise à part, ils étaient relativement indifférents vis-à-vis de leur contenu ethnique ou linguistique. Le droit divin des rois et des empereurs transgressait facilement les frontières des souverainetés décrétées

par des pouvoirs terrestres... d'où une recomposition incessante des marges et des frontières. Ce n'est qu'après la Révolution française et la cristallisation de l'*Etat-nation* que les frontières deviennent sacrées au nom des idéologies nationales. La souveraineté commence à s'exercer entre des nations et pas entre des entités administratives; la frontière devient une présence au moins aussi forte dans les esprits que dans l'espace. Ces inventions politiques incessantes ont changé maintes fois la nature du pouvoir étatique et par la suite ont interdit toute stabilité territoriale sur de longues durées.

Géopolitiquement, l'Europe est un espace récent: seulement 23,8% des frontières européennes ont été établies avant le XIX^e siècle. Environ 22% des frontières actuelles datent du XIX^e siècle et le siècle suivant a encore remanié 24,3% entre 1910 et 1924 et 29,9% entre 1945 et 1949. Qui plus est, la plupart des frontières présentes du continent n'a pas été tracée par des négociations directes entre des voisins: plus des 50% des lignes de frontière de l'Europe résultent des décisions internationales et 19% des décisions unilatérales, notamment dans l'espace européen de l'ex-URSS (Foucher, 1998; Thébault, 2006). Ce résultat instable de l'architecture politique des territoires européens est le résultat de la confrontation de quelques pôles historiques (fig. 1), qui ont généré des royaumes, des empires et des Etats-Nation dont les ambitions expansionnistes ont eu comme terrain d'action un espace continental relativement réduit et densément peuplé par des sociétés très différenciées. Au gré des flux et des reflux de ces centres de pouvoir, l'Europe est devenue au fil du temps une sorte de piano difforme, avec des cordes enchevêtrées (fig. 2) dont la musique grotesque s'est faite entendre très fort pendant les deux conflits mondiaux. Trop petits ou trop ambitieux, les Etats de l'Europe se sont toujours révélés impuissants à durablement régler leurs contentieux et leurs affaires ont été maintes fois « résolues » par des interventions extérieures, fait évident à la fin des deux guerres mondiales.

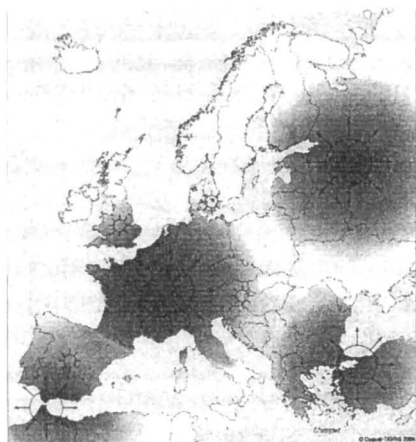


Figure 1: Pôles historiques en concurrence dans la construction territoriale de l'Europe
(Source: TIGRIS – Iași, 2006)

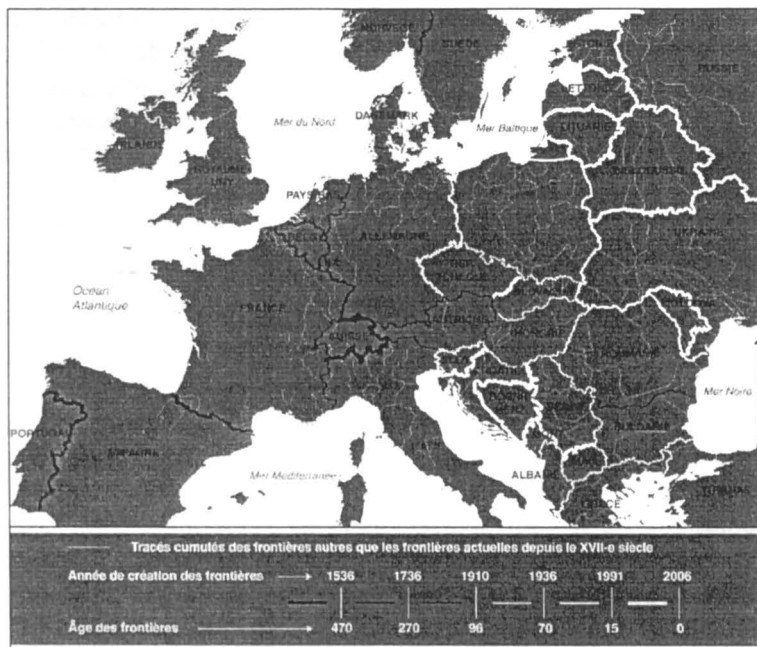


Figure 2: Diffusion ouest – est de l'Etat – nation
(Source: M. Foucher, 1998 ; V. Thébault, 2006)

Les solutions wilsoniennes par exemple, fondées sur le droit divin des peuples et essayées après la première conflagration mondiale, se sont révélées non appropriées et n'ont pas empêché la deuxième guerre. La période d'après le deuxième conflit mondial a vu apparaître le principe d'*intangibilité des frontières*. Promu par Moscou, afin de rendre impossible les revendications territoriales latentes entre les Etats du camp communiste, il ne devient effectif – et mondial – qu'après la Conférence sur la Sécurité et la Coopération en Europe, qui a eu lieu en 1975 à Helsinki, avec la participation de 33 pays européens, des Etats Unis et du Canada. Apparemment fort et capable d'assurer la paix pour longtemps, ce principe a un talon d'Achille, mis en évidence de façon très puissante après la chute des régimes totalitaires de l'Est. En effet, hormis l'idée de stabilité des frontières, il impose la primauté de la frontière d'Etat sur les frontières culturelles telles les clivages ethniques, linguistiques ou religieux. Corroboré avec *le principe de souveraineté*, il accorde le pouvoir complet de l'Etat sur ses citoyens, au-delà de toute différenciation par race ou nationalité mais seulement à l'intérieur de ses frontières, ce qui implique le fait que l'Etat n'a le droit à aucune emprise sur ses ressortissants habitants les pays voisins. Ce point faible a été cruellement révélé par le déchirement de la Yougoslavie et par des tensions aiguës entre les Etats candidats à l'Union Européenne. Encore une fois les Etats européens ont fait faillite à leur devoir, confondant l'intangibilité des frontières avec leur immuabilité.

Sur l'ensemble du territoire européen, la conséquence spatiale principale de la confrontation des pôles historiques et de l'apparition ultérieure des Etats modernes et de leurs frontières se traduit dans une organisation de type centre-périphérie. Le centre, organisé sur l'axe de « l'Europe lotharingienne », a toujours été un espace d'invention et a su garder son avance politique, culturelle, technologique et sociale. Avant la mise en

place des frontières *nationales*, au fil des siècles, la diffusion des inventions s'est faite *par le bas*, sur les routes de la guerre, de la culture et du commerce, par l'intermédiaire des milliers de connexions individuelles, suivant les goûts, les intérêts, les orgueils et les moyens des individus et des groupes. Gouvernée par les temps longs et soumise aux filtres de la distance, cette diffusion par contagion a créé des gradients dont les intensités diminuaient de façon continue vers les périphéries lointaines de l'entre-deux (Rey, 2001) où se faisaient ressentir des influences venues d'autres horizons. Le phénomène peut très bien être mis en évidence dans le cadre de l'Europe Centre-orientale (Rey, 1996), Ukraine comprise...

L'apparition des frontières nationales, dont les contenus héritaient dans la plupart des cas des fragments d'Etats-territoire et des structures territoriales organisées par des gradients historiques, a créé des obstacles redoutables devant la diffusion par le bas et a ouvert largement les portes à une diffusion hiérarchique et sélective, par le haut, des inventions du centre. L'étranglement des canaux traditionnels de diffusion a presque figé l'organisation profonde des territoires, les bandes longitudinales créées par les gradients historiques témoignant d'une inertie spatiale évidente, dont le poids s'avère considérable même dans le cadre des dynamiques actuelles (fig. 3).

Source de déséquilibres spatiaux, ces gradients dont les intensités diminuent de l'ouest vers l'est et qui témoignent des degrés divers de percolation de *la modernité de type ouest-européen*, ont créé des difficultés évidentes de gestion territoriale. Soucieux de gagner le jeu de la démocratie (à l'Ouest) ou essayant de mettre en œuvre les idéologies égalitaristes (à l'Est), les Etats se sont doté de politiques d'aménagement du territoire et ont procédé à des actions gigantesques censées diminuer ces décalages infranationaux. Les résultats n'ont pas été à la hauteur des moyens: bien que le

niveau général de développement ait considérablement augmenté, les déséquilibres sont restés en place, avec une conséquence inattendue: dans la majorité des cas les décalages entre les régions situées d'un côté et de l'autre des frontières des pays voisins sont devenus encore plus marqués. A l'échelle de l'Europe et à l'échelle nationale, les Etats et les frontières se sont vus ainsi en posture de générer une véritable arithmie spatiale, par les discontinuités systématiquement produites.

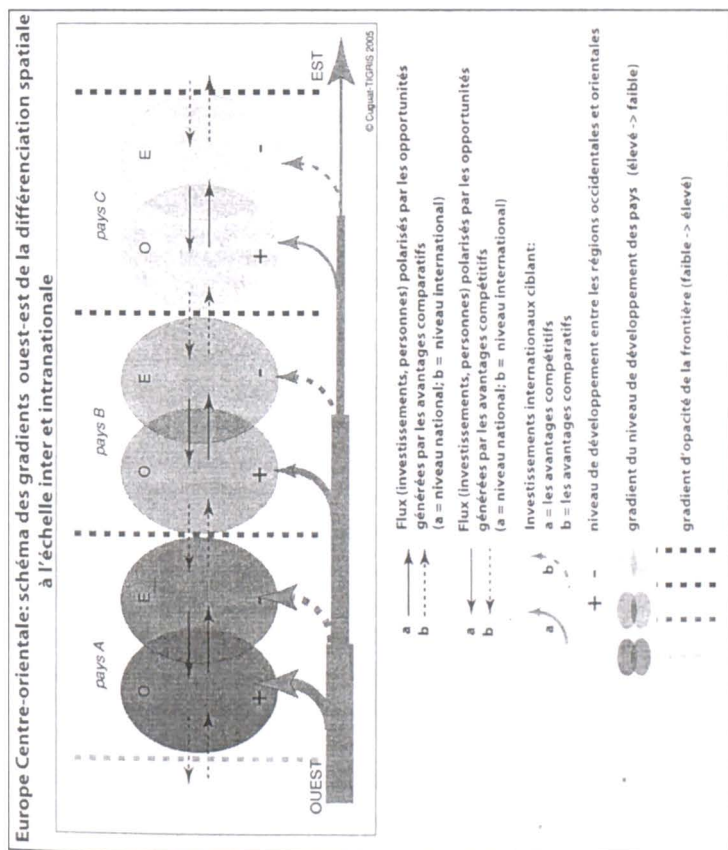


Figure 3: Exemple de l'organisation centre-périphérie de l'Europe
(Source: TIGRIS-Iași, projet ESPON 3.4.1.)

2. Les Etats et l'Union Européenne : résistances des souverainetés nationales

Durant la période des communautés (la CECA – Communauté Européenne du Charbon et de l'Acier, l'EURATOM – Communauté Européenne de l'Energie Atomique et CEE – Communauté Economique Européenne), qui s'étale entre le Traité de Rome (1957) et le Traité de Maastricht (1993) la construction d'un marché commun et d'un espace économique s'est déroulé sans confrontations capables de mettre en péril le projet d'une Europe unie. L'Europe des six, puis l'Europe des neuf, puis l'Europe des douze ont été autant des niveaux de construction réussie qui ont entretenu un espoir que la direction était bonne.

Il y a eu pourtant un signe puissant qui avait montré très tôt que la distance entre *Communauté* et *Union* est très grande et cela parce qu'en chemin il y avait beaucoup de... frontières. Suite à la proposition faite en 1950 par la France, en mai 1952 les pays membres essayent de mettre en route la CED – Communauté Européenne de la Défense, projet abandonné deux années plus tard suite au refus de l'Assemblée nationale... française. Cet échec a mis en lumière la jalousie de l'Etat-nation quant à ses prérogatives régaliennes (il aurait perdu les attributs qui touchaient à la défense et à la politique extérieure) et aussi le poids des peurs enfermées entre les frontières des nations. Il a montré encore une fois l'incapacité des Etats à trouver les voies de l'entente, laissant de nouveau l'étranger se mêler des affaires de sécurité (l'OTAN). Pourtant ce moment délicat a constitué aussi un moment qui a prouvé la capacité d'invention du « centre »: à la place de la CED a été mise en route l'UEO – l'Union de l'Europe Occidentale, organisme censé renforcer la coopération politique et surtout militaire entre les pays membres. S'il y a aujourd'hui de bonnes prémices pour la

constitution d'une force armée européenne, cela est dû à l'UEO. L'épisode est seulement un des jalons qui ont construit lentement le sentiment que *le principe fondamental* d'une Europe unie peut être trouvé.

Mais les Etats on du mal à renoncer à l'idée de souveraineté nationale et donc au contrôle strict des frontières. Si les frontières commerciales ont été vite enlevées et le marché commun est devenu très tôt une réalité européenne, les frontières politiques – enveloppes de toutes sortes de nationalismes – résistent très bien. L'idée de la libre circulation des personnes, véritable symbole de la disparition des frontières, a eu du mal à s'imposer et encore plus de mal à devenir réalité. Le premier pas a été fait en 1985 dans une petite commune luxembourgeoise, Schengen, où cinq pays (la France, la RFA, la Belgique, les Pays Bas et le Luxembourg) ont signé un accord concernant l'abandon progressif des contrôles frontaliers pour les ressortissants de la CEE. Complété par la Convention de Dublin en 1990, l'accord n'entre en vigueur qu'en 1995 mais les autres Etats finissent d'adhérer à peine en 1998, et là encore avec les exceptions notables du Royaume Uni et de l'Irlande.

La création de l'Union Européenne par le Traité de Maastricht (1992–1993) a pourtant des ambitions qui dépassent nettement l'idée d'espace économique: c'est un espace politique qui est ciblé dorénavant. Toutefois, la réserve manifestée par les Etats quant à la perte de leurs attributs essentiels, qui en dernière instance leur assure la légitimité, reste le chaînon faible du processus. Dans le cadre de la CEE, les compétences de décision étaient partagées et presque jamais à la défaveur des Etats. La Communauté avait quelques *compétences exclusives* mais consenties par les pays et/ou en position assez périphérique (la politique commerciale, la politique concernant certaines ressources de la mer) et *partageait* avec les Etats quelques domaines « neutres » ou d'un intérêt commun évident (la

politique concernant l'environnement, la politique sociale...). Les Etats se gardaient la part du lion, leurs *compétences réservées* concernant les domaines clé: la défense, la politique extérieure, la politique du système sanitaire ou la fiscalité. Le principe de *subsidiarité* ne règle que très partiellement le problème. Le projet d'Union Européenne se propose de changer les choses, car sa construction repose sur un trépied composé de *la communauté économique* (qui peine pour construire la zone euro), de *la coopération poussée en matière de police et de justice* (prévue pour l'instant seulement comme une structure intergouvernementale) avec notamment la *PESC – Politique Etrangère et de Sécurité Commune*, sujet très sensible car touchant une des prérogatives vitales des Etats modernes.

Deux des objectifs annoncés par le Traité de Maastricht « menacent » vraiment les fondations étatiques et donc les frontières: la promotion d'une *identité* et d'une *citoyenneté* européennes. L'un et l'autre de ces deux éléments posent problème. La citoyenneté européenne ne peut pas être traitée comme simple formalité administrative, car chaque citoyen aura des droits électoraux partout dans l'espace de l'Union et sera représenté (et défendu) dans l'espace international par des institutions européennes (pour l'instant par l'appareil diplomatique des douze Etats fondateurs de l'UE, car le « non » français à la Constitution a reconduit le statut de *sans papiers* de l'Union Européenne). Le système de la double citoyenneté (européenne et nationale) sera-t-elle une solution ?

Avec l'identité les choses se compliquent encore plus. Y a-t-il une identité européenne ? En septembre 1973 les neuf pays de la Communauté ont produit un texte concernant l'identité européenne mais ce ne fut qu'un phénomène de conjoncture, un certain désir de se définir par rapport aux Etats Unis. Jusqu'au Traité de Maastricht on ne pouvait trouver dans aucun texte

officiel européen la moindre allusion à la *culture*, pourtant élément essentiel dans la construction des identités. Même Maastricht n'a fait que révéler encore une fois la chasse gardée des Etats – *l'identité nationale*. Concernant la culture, le Traité ne prévoit qu'une coopération en termes vagues, car plusieurs Etats ont refusé avec violence tout essai d'homogénéisation des politiques culturelles. Ce n'est pas étonnant alors de constater que le processus d'adhésion à l'Union des nouveaux membres n'a pas pu acquérir des dimensions symboliques dans l'esprit des populations concernées². Ce n'est pas sans intérêt de préciser aussi que le refus allemand d'une politique culturelle commune a eu pour cause la pression des *Länder*, car on a là un bon exemple de voir l'autre volet de la construction de l'Union – les régions.

En bonne ou en moins bonne position économique, les régions de l'Europe s'affirment de plus en plus comme acteurs majeurs – économiques mais aussi politiques – sur la scène internationale. Suite à la lenteur de la mise en place d'une politique européenne d'aménagement territorial (v. *encadré*), et aux phénomènes de décentralisation administrative à l'intérieur des Etats, des groupes de pression ont commencé à agir auprès des instances européennes. Parmi les plus actives on note l'ARFE – l'Assemblée des Régions Frontalières Européennes, qui fonctionne depuis 1971 sur la base de la convention-cadre sur la coopération transfrontalière (Charte de Madrid), avec plus de 160 régions affiliées et l'ARE – l'Assemblée des Régions d'Europe, qui, depuis 1985 compte plus de 255 des régions provenant de 30 pays différents.

² Cf. Michel Foucher, conférence dans le cadre du colloque *Frontières... européenisation, mondialisation*, organisé le 7 novembre 2006 par le centre Géophile de l'ENS-LSH, Lyon.

Brève histoire de la construction des politiques d'aménagement du territoire européen

1961 – La conférence permanente des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux de l'Europe (CPLRE) du Conseil de l'Europe sur la nécessité d'une politique commune d'aménagement

1970 – à Bonn le Conseil organise la première Conférence des ministres responsables de l'aménagement du territoire (CEMAT); résultats:

1983 – à Torremolinos est adoptée la Charte européenne de l'aménagement du territoire

1988 – à Lausanne est présenté le Schéma européen du développement du territoire

1989 – à Nantes commencent les débats communautaires sur l'aménagement du territoire

1990 – lancement des programmes INTERREG à financement communautaire

1999 – à Potsdam est adopté le **Schéma de développement de l'espace communautaire et l'ESDP (European Spatial Development Perspective)** qui cible «une meilleure coopération entre les politiques sectorielles à impact significatif, entre les Etats-membres, entre leurs régions et leurs villes" (ESDP, p. 11) ».

Accusés d'avoir des intérêts obscurs au profit de l'un ou de l'autre des Etats de l'Union Européenne³, ces *lobbies* oeuvrent pour une autonomie accrue des régions et militent pour l'implication sérieuse de l'Union dans le développement régional. Compte tenu du fait que parmi les objectifs du Traité

³ V. par exemple Pierre Hillar (<http://www.diploweb.com/forum/hillard2.htm>)

de Maastricht figure celui de la réduction des disparités territoriales (pour augmenter le degré de cohésion économique et sociale de ses membres) et du fait que la région s'impose comme élément primordial de l'architecture territoriale de l'Europe, il est évident que le volet régional de la politique européenne devient un instrument important pour assouplir la position des Etats quant à la politique d'aménagement. Pris dans l'étau constitué par les exigences de la construction de l'Union et par la nécessité de déléguer des responsabilités vers les régions, l'Etat européen se voit affaibli par rapports aux normes classiques de la modernité mais en même temps il est obligé de se réformer et de se repenser. Pour l'instant il réussit plutôt bien et, d'obstacle à l'Union, il en devient le moteur principal. Le mécanisme n'a rien d'alchimique...

3. L'Union Européenne, son principe et ses moyens : un regard géographique

Il ne faut pas (ou il ne faut *plus*) chercher les frontières de l'Europe en relation avec l'Union Européenne. L'Europe est un continent dont les limites peuvent intéresser au plus les géographes, pour les besoins de leurs cours magistraux ou de leurs querelles académiques. L'Union Européenne est une association volontaire *d'Etats*, à vocation intégrative, dont les frontières peuvent très bien avoir une géométrie variable (d'ailleurs le projet de Constitution stipulait, pour les Etats-membres, la possibilité de quitter l'Union, ce qui n'est pas le cas à présent). Le principe initial de la communauté européenne était celui de compatibilité entre les membres. Une fois le critère accompli, l'adhésion se révélait simple. Dans ces conditions, le rideau de fer faisait figure de frontière claire, bien que des Etats

s'y juxtaposant (Autriche, Finlande, Suède) n'osaient pas déposer leur candidature d'adhésion. La dégringolade du monde communiste a rendu cette frontière très embarrassante pour les stratégies de la construction européenne. L'embarras provenait du fait que personne ne mettait vraiment en cause le statut *européen* des pays de l'Europe Centre-orientale et que dans l'acte fondateur de la communauté il était dit que *tout état européen* peut devenir membre. Pourtant, *l'incompatibilité* entre les Etats de l'Union et ces nouveaux prétendants à la légitimité européenne était plus qu'évidente. Pour la première fois dans l'histoire de l'Union il n'était pas question de juxtaposer des *semblables* mais des *semblables différents*... Il n'était plus question d'une simple *adhésion*.

Parce que les textes fondateurs ne contenaient aucune précision sur les critères susceptibles de « mesurer » le caractère européen⁴ ou l'identité européenne d'un nouveau candidat, l'Union s'est vue obligée de regarder dans son propre passé afin de trouver une solution. Le résultat a été surprenant: durant ses 33 années d'évolution, elle avait accumulé un bagage richissime d'expérience, positive ou négative, unique au monde, concernant les processus *d'intégration*. Synthétisée et épurée, cette expérience constituait une sorte de manuel de bonne conduite pour les membres et pour les éventuels candidats. Ce manuel, connu très vite sous le nom d'*acquis communautaire*, et composé de plus de 80.000 pages d'actes juridiques et de principes de droit, groupées en 31 chapitres, pouvait très bien servir comme filtre ou comme *unité de mesure* de l'*européanité* du candidat. Ce filtre n'est pas un produit culturel hérité de l'histoire ancienne; il n'est pas taillé selon les normes d'une

⁴ Pourtant la candidature du Maroc, déposée en 1987 a été rejetée car le pays n'était pas... européen.

européanité chargée de toutes les idéologies, les craintes et les peurs ancestrales. Il reflète des normes d'une européanité récente, construite au quotidien, dans le cadre d'un projet commun qui a fait les preuves de sa viabilité. Qui plus est, ce n'est pas un produit fini: il est une structure évolutive et les éventuels candidats devenus membres étaient appelés à continuer l'œuvre. Ce filtre n'est pas une sorte de lit de Procuste –cadre rigide et imposé– mais une invitation et un défi en même temps, adressé à des nations et à des Etats qui, en le relevant, devront se confronter à eux-mêmes.

A partir de là il est inutile de chercher les limites de l'Union car devient européen celui qui le veut et... le peut. Le Conseil européen de Copenhague de juin 1993 a énoncé trois critères qui doivent être accomplis par tout Etat désireux d'intégrer l'Union Européenne: posséder une économie de marché viable, des institutions démocratiques et stables, et surtout manifester *la capacité d'intégrer complètement l'acquis communautaire*. Si d'autres espaces sur d'autres continents peuvent avoir l'économie et les institutions conformes aux exigences européennes, l'acquis est un trésor propre à l'Europe et l'accepter et le mettre en pratique c'est s'eupéaniser. Il était évident que postuler dans ce contexte pour le statut de membre n'était pas seulement une *adhésion*; le Conseil européen de Luxembourg de décembre 1997 a décidé de rendre explicite sa volonté de faire valoir l'acquis communautaire et a appelé *élargissement* toute extension future de l'Union. L'acquis communautaire fait donc figure de modèle à suivre et intégrer l'Union signifie intégrer les procédures, les normes et les valeurs construites depuis le Traité de Rome. *Sur ce principe nouveau d'eupéanité, le centre recommence à rayonner par ses innovations et de plus*

en plus dans un espace où les frontières commencent à perdre leur arythmie, à perdre de leurs fonctions de discontinuités spatiales. Le terme d'élargissement couvre donc un phénomène géographique, de diffusion spatiale d'un modèle innovant, processus qui combine de façon équilibré et simultanée les canaux officiels (importation par le haut des institutions et des procédures) et les canaux officieux, de la diffusion par le bas, au niveau des individus et des micro groupes, la seule capable de construire une identité européenne. Et c'est pour la première fois dans l'histoire que ces deux dynamiques sont encadrées par une organisation politique, l'Union Européenne, qui se donne les moyens pour le faire.

La diffusion « par le haut » est financée par les fonds de pré adhésion (SAPARD, PHARE, ISPA), par les divers programmes communautaires (INTERREG, EQUAL, URBAN, LEADER) et par les fonds structurels post adhésion. La diffusion par le bas est financée indirectement, notamment à travers les politiques communes d'aménagement territorial, où les villes et les voies de transport sont au premier plan. L'Europe est en train d'inventer une organisation politique flexible et hybride, qui combine les traits classiques de l'Etat moderne avec la logique pré moderne des réseaux et celle post moderne de la gouvernance et des territoires nomades.

Mais l'Union Européenne n'évolue pas sur une planète déserte et sa destinée dépend aussi de la force et l'habileté qu'elle aura à s'adapter aux exigences de la mondialisation. La tentation – et la nécessité d'ailleurs – sont pressantes pour qu'elle se mesurer aux forces des pôles mondiaux très puissants (ALENA, Extrême Orient). En 2000 à Lisbonne, le sommet des chefs d'État, puis en 2002 à Barcelone le Conseil européen ont lancé une stratégie de compétitivité destinée à

faire de l'UE le premier pôle technologique mondial, tout en perfectionnant « le modèle social » européen, en augmentant le taux d'activité et en limitant les exclusions ; peu réaliste (l'échéance pour les objectifs était 2012 !) cette stratégie est toujours défendue par les forces et les *lobbies* néolibéraux de l'Union. Ces orientations ont été retouchées à l'occasion du Conseil européen de Göteborg (juin 2001), finalisé par la mise en route d'une stratégie de développement durable, destiné à concilier les trois volets principaux de la construction européenne : économie, société et environnement. Cette stratégie est fondée sur un triptyque d'actions (élaboration coordonnée des politiques communes de développement durable ; gestion équilibrée des ressources naturelles et limitation des effets des aléas dus au changement climatique ; respect du protocole de Kyoto). Les figures 4 et 5, réalisées par le centre de recherches TIGRIS de Iași dans le cadre du contrat européen de recherches ESPON 3.2 illustrent la situation de 2030 selon que l'Europe suivra l'un ou l'autre des stratégies établies à Lisbonne et à Göteborg.

Ces deux stratégies ne s'excluent pas réciproquement ; il y a toujours moyens de trouver une voie de compromis, qui puisse tenir compte des conjonctures mais sans perdre de vue l'objectif majeur. La seule condition est de ne plus laisser aux frontières et aux Etats le soin de rythmer le territoire – cela doit être l'affaire des citoyens. L'Etat « est devenu trop petit pour résoudre les grandes problèmes et trop petit pour en résoudre les petits problèmes » (Lundmark, Malmberg, 2000). L'Union Européenne semble avoir bien compris la leçon. La frontière comme limite absolue ne fait plus partie de ses stratégies – la politique de voisinage en est la preuve. Pourvu que le monde soit préparé à accepter cette nouvelle invention européenne.

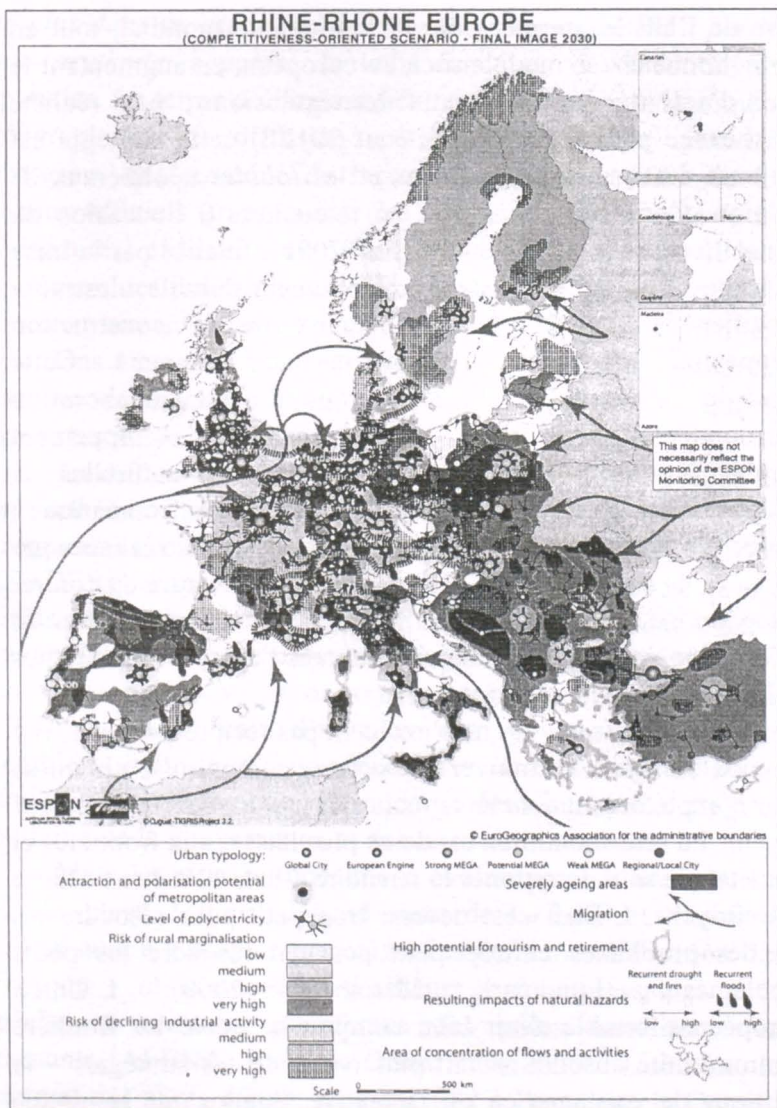


Figure 4: Le scénario de l'Europe compétitive de l'an 2030
(Source: TIGRIS-Iași, projet ESPON 3.2.)

DANUBIAN EUROPE (COHESION-ORIENTED SCENARIO - FINAL IMAGE 2030)

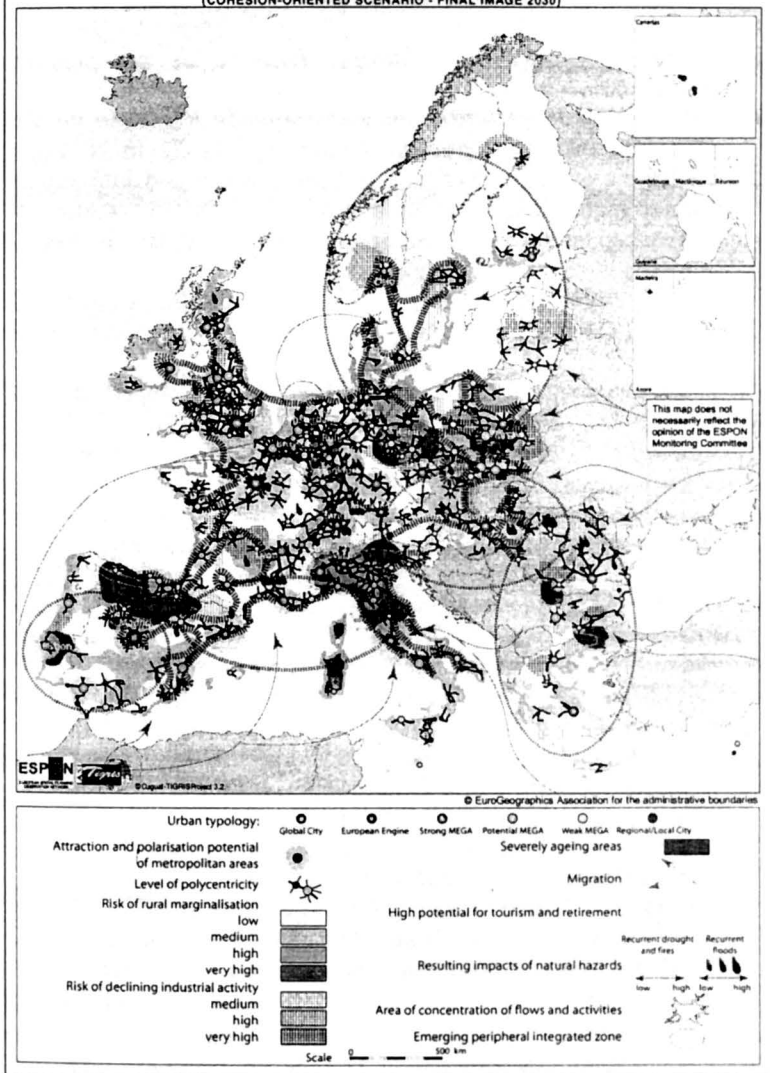


Figure 5: Le scénario de l'Europe cohésive de l'an 2030
(Source: TIGRIS-Iași, projet ESPON 3.2.)

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Borders: a view from the European Far-East

Europe and its Limits

In European usage, the meaning of the word border has progressively changed from a fact of nature to a cultural, political and ideological product of human will (Power, 1999:6–13) Natural frontiers do not exist either in a topographical or in a linguistic sense and the self-conscious linking of place and identity is quite a modern phenomenon, rooted in nineteenth century Europe. (Febvre, 1932:296–314)

Modern sociologists insist that frontiers are not spatial entities with sociological implications but rather social facts that manifest themselves in spatial forms. This type of spatial limits is just a translation of the psychological processes of delimitation into spatial coordinates. At the same time, modern cultural sociology urges us to take into account the manipulation of the category of frontier in the most diverse social and cultural practices. (Kaiser, 1998:380-84) Thus, according to Georg Simmel, psychical processes of delimitation ultimately produce regions, countries, realms and in many other types of cultural spaces, representative for a specific social collectivity and not necessarily coincident with the geo-political existing borderlines. (Kaiser, 1998:382.)

The German sociologist focuses on the active role played by collectivities of any size in the process of defining borders

and frontiers. At the same time he broadens the semantic area of the categories of border and frontier so that they represent all psychological processes of delimitation connected in some way with collective cultural practices.

In a more general sense, accepted by a broader category of cultural researchers, (be they anthropologists, historians, literary comparatists, ethnologists and so on), we may conclude that frontiers are elementary spatial structures that assume the function of marking geopolitical discontinuities, operating on several levels of the real, the symbolical and the imaginary. (Foucher, 1991:38)

On a symbolic level they are linked to the identity of specific communities related to specific territories. Anthropologists have underlined the essential part played by symbolism in the foundation, by way of delimitation, of all collective identities. On an imaginary level, the processes of manufacturing border identities tend to result in elaborate fictional projections.

These sketchy considerations also apply to the European processes of spatial delimitation.

From a strictly theoretical perspective, the French tradition inaugurated by the *Annales School* constantly focused on the significant relationship between the categories of frontier and identity. From Lucien Febvre to Fernand Braudel, the French school of geographical history cherished the idea of a topographical identity based on so-called *genius loci*. To quote Marie Claire Robic, "The genius loci of the French territory is caused by its spatial pattern and its history can be seen as a process leading from a natural spatial order to a human spatial organization." (Robic Marie-Claire, "National Identity in Vidal's *Tableau de la géographie de la France*: From Political to Human Geography", in Hooson 1994:58-71)

The equation frontier versus identity has been constantly present in Fernand Braudel's considerations on French identity. (*L'Identité de la France*). In his turn, Lucien Febvre had analyzed the semantic evolution of the notion of the frontier as a sign of changing historical realities during the period of nation building.

As Eric Hobsbawm has already contended, during the XX century the European identity as a complex unit became a cultural construction that would always include certain spatial areas and would necessarily exclude others. (Hobsbawm, 1997: 220). It can even be said that the idea of a the European cultural identity covers geopolitical, ideological, symbolic, dimensions that are not completely coincident, but instead overlap, converge and diverge in confusing and sometimes even paradoxical ways.

Eastern versus Western Europe, the European core area versus its peripheral areas, Mittel Europa, the Balkans, the European Occident versus the European Orient, these are a few examples of competing, overlapping and crisscrossing European delimitations disguising various geopolitical, ideological, cultural, moral, economic and aesthetic alternatives,

Throughout the XX century this way of representing Europe has accumulated a rich store of mostly reductionist conceptual matter, that is still active up to the present day.

In what follows I will focus on the Romanian cultural case study as an epitome of the process of manufacturing projective spatial delimitations across the Eastern European area.

Symbolic Delimitations

Romanians have always been open to the idea that their geographical location in the world has symbolic significance. This awareness provoked a strong commitment to Western values, seen as the truly European, while the less clear-cut and

confusing symbolic border between the European and the non-European area came to acquire an essentially ideological significance. This peculiar perception could also be related to the obvious lack of "natural" demarcations in the continental divide between Europe and non-Europe, primarily between Europe and Asia.

The Western European roots of Romanian identity were over problematized and emotionally blown out of proportion. Throughout the 19th and the 20th centuries, interminable debates concerning national identity focused repeatedly on the cultural heritage of the Roman Empire and on the Romance origins of the Romanian language. Membership in the linguistic club of heirs to Latin was seen as irrefutable proof of a western European connection and allegiance.

However, for the majority of Romanians, Romance meant French. Modern France came to be regarded by Romania as the most dignified successor of the late Roman Empire. The French Revolution of 1848 was seen in Bucharest as the starting point of a mythical process of creating an imaginary France, a Jerusalem of liberty and of eternal revolution. In the Romanian modern culture with Paris, the capital city of this mythical realm, an everlasting icon of true European mentality.

The idea of non-Europeaness was less clear-cut, since the South was identified as non-European. This representation of the non-European side of Romanian identity was a violent reaction to the stereotypes generated with the onset of the European Enlightenment and conspicuous in the pages of many travel journals. Western travelers to Eastern Europe, particularly the British and the Germans, insisted on classifying the Romanians as a kind of Greeks or Turks, thus confining them to a confusing ethnic brew, that prompted 1848 Romanian romantics to retort. (Konstantinovic, 1999)

On the level of the intellectual discourse of the time, non-European was the equivalent of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, defeating the Ottoman Empire in 1877 was the major turning point on Romania's road toward Europe. It also happened that the event occurred in the atmosphere of secularized Romanticism, that was the most lasting effect of the French Revolution in the area.

Parting with the non-European legacy involved especially the cutting of ties with the Ottoman legacy followed by a spectacular turn towards a "free", "civilized" and "prosperous" West. Although lead by the successful and hard working German Hohenzollern dynasty, the new independent Kingdom that came into being kept its gaze fixed on the democratic and constitutional principles of Paris, as the Mecca of late XIX century political thinking. The Romanian press of the time fell upon the slogan of the French revolution "Liberte, egalite, fraternite" like never before and never again.

Socially and morally the term *non European* was applied by the 1848 generation to the Phanariot legacy, its institutions, its individual and collective norms of behaviour and what was seen as its defining system of values: weakness of character, laziness, duplicity, fraud, corruption flattery, etc. The Romanian revolutionaries blamed the phanariots for every possible fault in the character of the Romanian nation and even went so far as drawing a sharp distinction between the latter and the brave inhabitants of contemporary Greece.

In contrast with European fashion, popularly known as "German", garments of oriental or Turkish inspiration were among the most visible emblems of Balkanism. A similar gap ran between the so called "reactionary" aristocracy and its Turkish style hierarchy on the one hand and the newly developing bourgeoisie and the professionals and intellectuals, often graduates of western schools and therefore nicknamed "les

bonjuristes" on the other. This hurried process by which Western fashion replaced Greco-Turkish clothing was epitome of the sudden change of direction triggered by the the French Revolution of 1848.

However as far as popular perception and day-to-day behaviour were concerned, the issue was never as clear-cut as this and featured sometimes shocking mixtures.

In this respect, both the biography and the cultural output of the revolutionary, politician, ideologist and writer Ion Ghica are a good example. Born of an aristocratic Albanian family, with Phanariot rulers of the principalities among his ancestors, he began his education by attending one of the many Greek schools of Bucharest before moving to J. A Vaillant's newly opened "Progressive French School" and from there to completing a baccalaureate in a Paris lycee and then graduating from an engineering course at L' Ecole des Mines. One of the most committed Western 1848 revolutionaries, he was afterwards appointed governor of Samos on behalf of the Ottoman Empire.

Some of his writings, amongst which the *Economic Dialogues* and the fascinating *Letters to Vasile Alecsandri*, were written partly in French and together constitute a sharp and clear X ray of contemporary culture and mentalities in the middle of the XIXth century. *The Economic Dialogues* both provide a theoretical justification of capitalist liberalism and include a collection, following the well-known template of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persannes.*, of the imaginary letters of an Englishman visiting Bucharest. Whether in French or in Romanian, in real or in imaginary letters, in the form of memoirs or of fictional dialogues, the picture that emerges from Ion Ghica's works is that of a country in which love for the Southern legacy and the drive towards the West have quite distinct areas of influence but nonetheless coexist cheerfully, despite the official move away from the former and towards the latter.

Ideological Delimitations

Like all other peripheral European areas, Romanian culture shows a tendency to structure its reservoirs of meaning tightly in hard authoritarian conceptual frames in order to prevent potential identity confusions both within and without. This tendency usually develops into a process of ideological closure, followed by an aggressive rejection of alterity, even if most frequently this alterity is strictly imaginary.

The ideologically opposing categories of *Occident* and *Orient* provide an enduring and efficient framework for the study of East European collective identities. Before the XX century had drawn to a close and especially after the end of the Cold War and the fall of communism, the dichotomy of *Orient* versus *Occident* had taken on a cluster of hermeneutic and legitimizing functions in the Romanian cultural area.

Indeed, modern Romanian culture seems to have been especially sensitive to the projective potential of *Occident* and *Orient* as “ideological borders”. Turned into existential, philosophical, moral, ideological or political strategies, this antinomy also developed into stereotypes, literary topoi, genres, super-styles, images, verbal clichés etc.

Defining the *Occident* was not a challenge for Romanian intellectuals. On the contrary, it was drawing the border between *Occident* and *Orient* that turned out to be a thorny issue. The French historian Catherine Durandin finds it hard to pin down non-Occidentalism and uses a label as revealing as it is vague *the Byzantine-Russian-Balkan-Orthodox model*.

Consequently, a credible and coherent *Orient* was badly needed and the allegedly Oriental Balkans, located beyond the “natural border” of the Danube, emerged as the genetic, historical and geopolitical antidote to the Romanian Occident.

At this point, a few purely topographical remarks are necessary to clarify the problem. Romanian geography textbooks describe the Balkans as a European peninsula dominated by the Balkan Mountains and delineated in all directions by water. The peninsula is surrounded by seas in the East, West and South and is cut off completely from continental Europe in the North by the Danube.

Situated as she is beyond its northern limit, usually Romania didn't see herself as Balkan territory. In the Romanian culture, the Danube remained a crucial landmark of national identity. Historically, the Danube has always been perceived as defensive barricade against any aggressive Otherness. The first symbolic step taken by the Roman Empire in conquering Dacia was to build a monumental bridge over the Danube at Drobeta, a project that was duly carried out by Apollodorus of Damascus.

The symbolic distance between the Carpathians and land the North of the Danube and the area between the Danube and the Bosphorus which is dominated by the Balkan Mountains, has had different ideological significance in different periods of Romanian cultural history. Starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Oriental dimension of national identity was mainly approached by proclaiming the Balkans as the perfect synonym to the "Romanian Orient".

During the first half of the XX century, the gap between Orient and Occident ran deeper, became more complex and acquired an ideology of its own. The XX century witnessed the growth of a cultural immune system that fought off Balkan pressures, while the latter become no more nor less than the equivalent of the perfect opposite to the ideal Romanian Self and a paradigm of Alterity. This period also saw a powerful yearning for Modernity into the Romanian culture, as an expression of Occidental Europeanism. Ideological values were

thus interpreted in an aesthetic register and the Balkans became no less than the equivalent of "Anti modernism".

Thus any deficiency, delay or failure of modernization was blamed on purported Romanian Orientalism of Balkan origin, that became the supreme symbolic stumbling block in the way of modernization. The demonization of the Balkans climaxed at the height of modernization, when it became a derogatory label and a stigma for some and, mostly rhetorically, a blessing for others, as well as occasionally subject to attempts of exorcism.

However, the relationship between the Occidental and the Oriental patterns that dominated the area of Romanian culture remained visibly paradoxical. Indeed even the most obstinately vitalist, autochtonist, traditionalist opinions, although viewed at the time as orientalist, Balkan and at times as completely anti-European, used a rationalist, modern and urban mode of expression, as well as literary and rhetorical techniques of unmistakable Western origin.

The Western model was in fact the very starting point of its Oriental complement: the latter operated exclusively as a reaction to the former. Balkan orientalism was often flamboyant but never more than a Counter-occident, whose very *raison d'être* would have been lost without its opposite.

The case of the Romanian born writer Panit Istrati is very illuminating in this respect. Istrati is the author of the epic series *The Stories of Adrian Zograffi* of which the best known is *Kyra Kyralina*, published for the first time in French in the literary magazine *Europe* with an introduction by Roman Rolland.

Within days Istrati who lived in Paris on and off became quite successful, all because of a publication that, in his own country, ironically would not have conformed to what were seen as the fashionable Western literary canons of the time. To be more precise, because Europeanism and Modernism were

assumed to be one and the same in interwar Romania, every contemporary local writer was fighting to create an urban, psychological and analytical novel, in the style of Proust or Gide. Panait Istrati was obviously running against the current in this respect.

Istrati himself had been born on the Danube border in an interstitial area where several cultural identities overlapped: «Je ne connais pas très bien l'histoire de ma mère. Son père, un Turc bon et pieux avait été envoyé de Stamboul. On ne faisait rien de plus dans cette maison que d'entasser de l'argent et de prier deux Dieux dans trois langues différentes.» (Istrati, 1966:116): "I do not know my mother's life story very well. Her father, a good and pious Turk, had been exiled from Istanbul. All that went on in this house was piling up money and praying to two Gods in three different languages.")

This biographical accident marked Istrati's work forever. His most cherished theme was life on cultural, religious, social and linguistic frontiers – frontiers usually embodied by the Danubian city of Braila, in Romania and his protagonist, Adrian Zograffi, was constantly rambling across the peripheries of the world.

On an aesthetic level, Istrati explicitly disliked Modernism which he perceived as cold, unsentimental and decadent. Consequently the poetics of his narrative played the card of oriental story telling, in the style of the *Arabian Nights*.

In the words of Roman Rolland: «Il est un conteur-né, un conteur d'Orient, qui s'enchanté et qui s'émeut de ses propres récits, et si bien s'y laisse prendre qu'une fois l'histoire commencée, nul ne sait, ni lui-même, si elle durera une heure ou bien mille et une nuits.» He is a natural-born story teller, an oriental story teller who is charmed and moved by his own stories and, once the tale has begun, if he allows himself to be

caught in it, no one will know, not even himself, if it will go on for an hour or even for "*A thousand and one nights*".

For Istrati the Balkans, on and beyond the Danube, was the realm of stories, situated beyond the border of European Modernity as a whole. When his novels were translated into Romanian for the first time, his universe of the cosmopolitan, vulgar, trivial, immoral and corrupt international harbour was proclaimed incompatible with the local mentality and its commitment to modernism. Although a few isolated voices dared compare him to Byzantine frescoes or even to the Homeric epics – Greek and Balkan landmarks, already embraced by European cultural tradition as prestigious parts of its cultural heritage – the great majority of the professional analysts of his literature assimilated Istrati to a "poor Scheherazade", symbol of an orientalism both destructive and dangerous for the national effort to build a genuine European and Occidental culture in Romania.

Vesna Goldsworthy focused on this type of perception in her notable study, *Inventing Ruritania*, and identified it as a form of "imaginary colonization. According to Goldsworthy, the Balkans were the object of an occidental imaginary colonization throughout the XX century, by means of both ideological and political discourses and, in a circular process, by means of ingenious fictional projections. During this circular cooperation between ideology and fiction, political discourse had borrowed significant metaphors from fiction, which, in its turn, took on the task of spreading the political message around, transforming it into popular images and stereotypes. In a nutshell, the analytical category created by Vesna Goldsworthy helps clarify the successive European means of manipulating the cooperation between the political and the aesthetic in order to cope with the representation of the Balkans. (Goldsworthy, 1998)

As Goldsworthy maintains: "The Balkans continued to offer locations for imaginary Illyrias and Ruritania, long after the other corners of Europe had become too thoroughly explored to hose an imaginary town. Many of their creators never set foot in the peninsula and were, anyway, more preoccupied with specific projections of Britishness than with the accuracy of their scenic Balkan backdrop." (Goldsworthy, 1998:230)

On close inspection, the imaginary and the textual colonization seems illustrative for the genuine tendency of every distinct culture to get somehow engaged in a dialog with itself. This was precisely the case of Western European culture. In West-European cultural discourses, predominantly in mass culture and especially in the press, Ruritania very quickly became the master generic metaphor for the 'border' status of any Balkan country.

"The idea of the borderline represents one of the most persistent symbolic images of a peninsula which, throughout known history, has been defined by major divisions. Individual Balkan identities were shaped over the centuries by the idea of a frontier existence on which they based their own sense of importance. Various Balkan nations symbolically define themselves as being at a gate, on a bridge, or at the crossroads between different worlds." (Goldsworthy, 1998:87)

European border areas, where identities overlap in hybrid cultural products, may offer the ideal starting point for imaginary quasi phantasmic topographies that usually embody an "inner alterity", which is demonised and finally exorcised.

By way of Conclusions

The Romanian case study is proof of how complex the border issue has been in Eastern Europe over the last two

centuries and the paradigmatic anxiety brought about by the obsessions of a peripheral cultural identity can be traced on several levels. It highlights the variable meanings of the notion of border and illustrates the ways in which many Eastern European communities locate borders, assign meaning to them and reassert their functions. In this type of cultural process key identifiers of selfhood and self worth are generated by narratives through which people on either side of the border construct their identities by manipulating a set of shared rhetoric.

Collective perceptions of borders usually foster conflicting ideologies, rhetorical devices and topoi of the social imaginary. They generate literary programmes and they also create symbolic topographies and sites of memory: Almost all descriptive terms involved in these processes usually convey value judgments.

In recent decades, European cartography has become a privileged and flexible instrument of the impetuous offensives launched by all kind of emergent European identities, cultural, social, national, gender etc. Consequently a series of academic disciplines (cultural geography, anthropology, critical postcolonial theories, comparative studies) had provided strong arguments for their campaigns.

I cannot end my analysis before quoting David Hooson, a former chairman of the International Commission on the History of Geographical Thought: "Although this naughty world seems to be becoming even more resistant to simple classification and interpretation, the continuing search for national identity shows no sign of calming down. The full return of geography – from both its scientific, cultural and aesthetic angles – to provide a more or less rational underpinning and understanding of insistent but volatile identity questions across the world, seems more needed than ever." (Hooson, 1994:6)

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The Banat Euro-region: Prospects and Obstacles¹

Introduction

The political 'change of guard' in October 2000 initiated a variety of developments in Serbia. Some of these developments were of an external character, whereas others had internal repercussions. With specific focus on the former, the state's membership in international organizations was progressively restored. These developments generated a renewed wave of optimism with regard to Serbia's 'European' aspirations.

What will be discussed in this paper are Serbia's prospects within the framework of cross-border cooperation in Southeast Europe and European integration. Special attention will be paid to the Serbian autonomous province of Vojvodina and its participation in the 'Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza' Euro-region. Then the bilateral relations between Serbia and European institutions will be assessed. What will be demonstrated is that the prospects for Serbia's integration to European structures can be facilitated through: a. the willingness of regional authorities

¹ It should be born in mind that most of this paper was completed prior to the Montenegrin referendum for secession from the Serb-Montenegrin federation and the suspension of the accession talks between the Serbian government and the EU (May 2006).

and entrepreneurs to participate in the cross-border cooperation schemes; b. the willingness of the EU to relax potential impediments to cross-border cooperation (e.g. the Schengen visa regime). But first, a theoretical definition of the term 'Euro-region' should be made.

What is a 'Euro-region'?

The term 'region', as used within the Euro-region context, derives etymologically from the Latin term *regio*. Within the Roman Empire, the term *regio* was used in order to denote an area rather than to govern it. In other words, it did not correspond to legislative or administrative institutions.

In a very similar vein, the contemporary Euro-regions do not generally aim at creating new types of government at a trans-frontier level. Such cross-border cooperation structures do not have political powers and their activity is restricted to the jurisdictions of the local and regional authorities that constitute them. Therefore, a Euro-region might be aptly defined as any form of structured cooperation, established between local and regional authorities across the national borders, with the objective to jointly adopt common goals and pursue them in a coordinated and sustained way². The scope of the activities undertaken within the bounds of the Euro-regions may range from projects aiming at the development of the socioeconomic infrastructure around the borderline to interethnic reconciliation (especially in those borderlines where national minorities are present) and other such objectives.

² See Council of Europe Publishing House, 'Trans-frontier Cooperation in Southeast Europe,' (Report by the Council of Europe- Directorate of Cooperation for Local and Regional Democracy, Strasbourg 2002), p. 4.

According to the guidelines specified by the Association of European Border Regions, operating within the bounds of the Council of Europe, the following criteria have been set up for the identification of the various Euro-regions: **a.** an association of local and regional bodies on either side of the national border, sometimes endowed with a parliamentary assembly; **b.** a trans-frontier association with a permanent secretariat and a technical/administrative team managing its own resources; **c.** an association of a private legal character based on non-profit making associations in either side of the border, in compliance with the national legislation(s) in force; **d.** an association of a public legal nature, based on inter-state agreements that have been concluded with the participation of the borderline local/regional authorities involved³.

With regard to the general strategy employed for the establishment of Euro-regions, three basic preconditions are taken into account: **a.** the capacities of the participating entities; **b.** the adequacy of the means available to the objectives to be pursued; **c.** the sustainability of the Euro-region over the years, in order for it to achieve its goals.

In accordance with the aforementioned guidelines, there is encountered a relative diversity with regard to the level of authority enjoyed by each participatory body within a Euro-region. For instance, some Euro-regions include similar levels of authority, such as regions and provinces. This is the case, for instance, with the Carpathian Euro-region, which is made up of Hungarian *megye* (counties), Ukrainian *oblasti* (regions), Polish *województwa* (provinces), and Romanian *judete* (counties). On the other hand, other Euro-regions demonstrate a mixed structure. One example of this kind is the Euro-region Maas-

³ On this issue see 'Euro-regions in Europe', in Council of Europe, <http://www.coe.int>

Rhineland-Nord where Dutch and Belgian provinces cooperate with Regio Aachen (i.e. an association of German municipalities) and the German community of Belgium. Another similar example is the Euro-region Saar-Lor-Lux Rhine, which comprises not only regions but also a country, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

In an overall assessment, three main types of Euro-regions currently operate in the Continent: **a.** Euro-regions without a legal status (i.e. working communities or communities of interest – e.g. the Euro-region Neisse, the Euro-region Elbe-Labe); **b.** Euro-regions that rely on private law (e.g. the Euro-region Saar-Lor-Lux Rhine that has been set up under Luxembourg's private law); **c.** Euro-regions that function in accordance with public law (e.g. the Rhine-Waal Euro-region). Many of the recently established Euro-regions in Central and Eastern European countries are working communities of interest that serve as forums for informal trans-frontier information and consultation. As a matter of fact, over forty Euro-regions of all the above-mentioned types function throughout the Continent⁴.

The Council of Europe and the international bodies in which it participates (e.g. the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, as far as the Balkan region is concerned) have underlined the significance of the Euro-regions as an additional step towards the realization of the vision of European integration. This is particularly the case as far as the Euro-region schemes operating in Central and Eastern Europe are concerned. The Council of Europe has not prescribed any specific guidelines with regard to the function of the Euro-region schemes or the policies of the participatory states towards the projects in question.

⁴ For a full listing of the Euro-region projects operating throughout Europe see *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, the concept of Euro-regions is very much viewed as the result of a bottom-up process, initiated and carried out by local/regional governments and social entrepreneurs. Moreover, it is emphasized that long-term processes aiming at regional development; cross-border cooperation or even interethnic reconciliation can only acquire some content at the level where local people face daily needs and challenges. Therefore, the need for decentralization is particularly highlighted. According to the Council of Europe and the other sub-organizations involved, decentralization of state administration and strengthening of local/regional government institutions remain crucial preconditions for regional, economic, and social development-including the proper function of the Euro-regions⁵. This issue will be dealt with in greater depth, when focusing on the DKMT Euro-region.

As has been made clear so far, the Euro-region concept is a largely functional and technocratic one. Nevertheless, when treated from a theoretical perspective and in relation to Central and Eastern Europe, the whole idea acquires a more interesting dimension. In other words, it can serve as a rudimentary step towards the application of pre-modern elements, specific to this macro-region, into a post-modern state of affairs.

Precisely speaking, the Habsburg era of multiethnic and multicultural, or perhaps more precisely intercultural, cohabitation was succeeded by an era of 'hard', sometimes impenetrable, national borders, throughout the previous century. In the interwar era, this was accompanied by internal policies of intense homogenization of the linguistic and cultural trends encountered among the domestic populations, in accordance

⁵ On this issue see Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, 'Local Democracy and Cross-border Cooperation', in <http://www.stabilitypact.org>.

with a standardized model of national identity. In the Cold War era, old nationalist disputes between neighbouring states often interweaved with an antagonism at the ideological level (e.g. the case of Communist Hungary and Ceausescu's Romania over the Transylvanian question).

This state of mutual suspicion, especially as far as national minority issues were concerned, persisted throughout the post-Communist era until the early and mid-'90s. It has not been prior to the late '90s that certain attempts have been made by the states in the region to approach each other or reach a *modus vivendi* with regard to a variety of issues. Some formal indications of this more positive climate were certain inter-state agreements concluded with regard to minority rights protection, and, of course, the cross-border cooperation schemes.

Especially as far as the latter are concerned, it may well be argued that the Euro-regions operating in Central and Eastern Europe can have a positive impact on the region as a whole. First of all, they can restore the communication between borderline populations that prior to the establishment of hard national borders used to be in close interaction with each other. This is particularly crucial in such borderlines populated by a multitude of ethnic minorities. Therefore, on such occasions, the Euro-region schemes as such can facilitate the mutual contact between ethnic minorities and their national 'motherlands', without, at the same time, generating fears or suspicions of irredentist trends. The eradication of irredentist fears can be further facilitated through the conclusion of inter-state agreements for the protection of the minorities in question.

Another positive contribution of such cross-border cooperation schemes to Central and East European border regions is the encouragement of grass-roots participation in the local decision-making process. In other words, such projects can facilitate the operation of democratic procedures at the micro-

level. This, in turn, can be preconditioned by the devolution of authority towards the provincial and municipal administrative bodies in the Euro-regions. Indeed, popular participation in the projects undertaken within the Central and East European schemes of cross-border cooperation can facilitate the proper function of grass-roots democracy in these areas. This can be in itself a notable development, bearing in mind that the political apathy in certain parts of the West has largely resulted from the deficient participation of citizens in decision-making procedures at the local level. This element acquires an even higher significance, considering that, on this occasion, grass-roots participation in decision-making mechanisms (e.g. regarding the planning of cross-border infrastructure projects) would transcend the narrow borders of the participatory entities and those of their nation-states at large⁶.

Vojvodina as part of a Euro-region

The Serbian autonomous province of Vojvodina forms part of the DKMT (Danube- Kris- Maros- Tisza) Euro-region, formed on November 21st, 1997. This Euro-region can be classified as a working community of interest with no legal status and comprises the following territories: a. the Arad, Caras-Severin, Hunedoara and Timis municipalities in the Romanian Banat; b. the Southern Hungarian counties of Bacs-Kiskun, Bekes, Csongrad and Jasz-Nagykun-Szolnok; c. the Serbian autonomous province of Vojvodina. Therefore, with

⁶ For a theoretical discussion over this issue see Nenad Dimitrijević, 'Region o postsocijalizmu: O cemu mišlimo kad govorimo o demokratiji,' in Slobodan Beljanski, Dragan Golubović, Svetislav Jovanov, Alpar Losonc and Aleksandar Molnar, *Regionalizam kao put ka otvorenom društvu*, Visio Mundi Academic Press: Novi Sad (1994), 65–107.

specific focus on Vojvodina's administrative status in comparison to those of the Hungarian and Romanian participatory entities, the DKMT Euro-region comprises different levels of authority.

According to Article 3 of the DKMT Euro-region's Founding Protocol, the project was launched with the aim to intensify the cooperation among the participatory entities in the fields of economy, education and science within the prospect of European integration. As far as the economic sector is concerned, the participatory entities are encouraged to: **a.** organize projects for the more adequate cooperation among financial institutions based in the Euro-region (e.g. banks, industrial firms), including the arrangement of bilateral, or multilateral, contracts; **b.** facilitate cooperation in the field of agriculture; **c.** organize financial activities with bodies or companies based outside the states of which the participatory entities in the Euro-region form parts.

With regard to the communication and infrastructure sectors, the Euro-region's constituent entities are encouraged to: **a.** organize projects in the fields of water transport, irrigation and reconstruction of the road and railway networks; **b.** cooperate in the construction of new border-control stations as well as the re-organization of the already existing ones.

As far as the sectors of education, culture and science are concerned, the participatory entities are encouraged to: **a.** facilitate more adequate cooperation among their scientific, educational and cultural institutions (e.g. universities, museums); **b.** promote cooperation among their social organizations and civic groups (e.g. NGOs); **c.** secure the adequate protection of minority rights within the Euro-region, according to the guidelines of international law and those of the national legislations in question; **d.** provide for the adequate

multilateral cooperation in the fields of health and social welfare. In addition to these, certain provisions are made in the fields of tourism and environmental protection.

According to Article 5 of the Protocol, the main bodies within the DKMT Euro-region are: **a.** the presidential forum that consists of fifteen members; **b.** the consultant office; **c.** the presidential office; **d.** the DKMT secretariat; **e.** a variety of working groups. The presidential forum is made up of various regional officials and is responsible for: **a.** approving the projects and programmes of cooperation; **b.** electing the president of the Euro-region; **c.** receiving and analysing the reports of the working groups; **d.** arranging the annual budget. The presidential forum organizes three annual regular meetings in three different places within the DKMT. The decisions of these meetings are taken in terms of consensus among the participants and issued in the Serbian, Romanian, Hungarian and English languages. As for the consultant office, it is mainly responsible for preparing subjects for discussion and proposals regarding cooperation within the bounds of the Euro-region.

The president of the Euro-region is appointed for a one-year term in office via the medium of rotation. His/her main responsibilities are: **a.** to call regular as well as irregular meetings of the presidential forum; **b.** to preside over meetings and discussions; **c.** to organize and coordinate the activities of the secretariat. The secretariat is mainly responsible for keeping a record of the decisions taken at the regular and irregular sessions of the presidential forum. Finally, the working groups are responsible for working out various projects/programmes and formulating proposals and reports, which they later submit to the presidential forum. The projects organized within the bounds of the DKMT Euro-region are to be financed by: **a.** public financial

bodies and organizations based in the Euro-region's constituent entities; **b.** European as well as international organizations (e.g. the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe); **c.** other sources.

Finally, Article 9 of the Protocol clarifies that the DKMT Euro-region is not a legal subject. Moreover, Article 10 specifies that the whole project relies on voluntary partnership and that it is always possible for one, or more, of the participatory entities to withdraw from the Euro-region at any time. The same article also specifies that the text of the Protocol cannot be amended⁷. Some joint projects that have currently been launched within the Euro-region are: **a.** the cleaning of the Bega-Tisza canals and their preparation for international traffic (including the opening of new border crossings as well as the reorganization of the existing ones); **b.** the construction of the Szeged-Kikinda-Timisoara railway line; **c.** the construction of the road route E-75, leading from Belgrade to Szeged and from there to Romania.

There exist certain strengths and weaknesses with regard to the future prospects of the DKMT Euro-region. With specific focus on the former, there exist rather positive prospects with regard to the effective protection of minority rights within the Euro-region. This is facilitated, first of all, by the conclusion of bilateral agreements over the protection of minority rights by the states whose administrative units participate in the Euro-region. Such examples are the agreements concluded between Serbia and Romania (October 30th 2002) and Serbia and Hungary (December 27th 2002) on the bilateral protection of national minorities. To these should

⁷ The Protocol of the DKMT Euro-region scheme was agreed upon on November 21st, 1997, in Szeged, Hungary. For a full text-version of the Protocol see DKMT Euro-region, <http://www.dkmt.regionalnet.org>

be added the agreement on a 'Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of Romania', reached in Budapest on December 22nd, 2001⁸.

With specific focus on Vojvodina, the Serbian Law for the Protection of the Rights and Liberties of National Minorities (February 2002) grants members of national minorities the right to freely cooperate with legal subjects residing outside the administrative borders of Serbia, especially those to which they bear ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious affinities (i.e. 'Pravo saradnje sa sunarodnicima u zemlji i u inostranstvu', Article 6). This provision can facilitate the cooperation between Vojvodinian Hungarian institutions/organizations and similar organizations/institutions based in Hungary.

In the event that the provisions of the Serbian Law on National Minorities (Article 6 in particular) are properly implemented, this can bring about positive developments for Vojvodinian Hungarians, especially in the fields of education, the press and the media. As a matter of fact, the adequate cooperation between Vojvodinian Hungarian institutions/organizations and their counterparts in Hungary is one of the main concerns of the Hungarian political elites in the province.

⁸ This memorandum clearly specifies that the Republic of Hungary will not provide any kind of support to the Hungarian political groupings in Romania unless it has previously informed the Romanian authorities and obtained their consent (Section I, Article 10). Moreover, it is mentioned that the Romanian and Hungarian governments give priority to the development of railway and road networks connecting the two countries and to the improvement of the border crossing infrastructure programme linked to it. For a full text-version of the memorandum see Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad at the Hungarian Government, Budapest, <http://www.htmh.hu>.

This is also the case with other minority interest groups functioning within the DKMT Euro-region⁹.

Certain positive prospects have opened, regarding cross-border cooperation within the DKMT, in the fields of education and culture. As a matter of fact, the universities based within the Euro-region have undertaken quite a few joint projects so far¹⁰. This has also been the case as far as cross-border cooperation between museums and other cultural institutions are concerned¹¹. The establishment of a Regional Chancellery for Cultural Cooperation, within the bounds of the

⁹ For example, the Democratic Union of Serbs and Carasovans in Romania has always been urging for the conclusion of a bilateral agreement between Serbia and Romania, which would facilitate the effective cooperation between the Serbs of the Romanian Banat and their 'motherland'. On this issue see Demokratski Savez Srba i Karasevaka u Rumuniji, *Program 1990–1995* (Timisoara, 1995), pp. 114–15. According to the 1992 Romanian national census 16,999 ethnic Serbs were resident in the Timis county, plus 7,885 more in the Caras-Severin county. Moreover, DSSKR has one deputy at the Romanian parliament.

¹⁰ A good example of this kind is the regional project titled *Geographic Monographs of European Regions: Banat*, undertaken jointly by the Geography departments at the University of Novi Sad, West University Timisoara and Jozsef Attila University (Szeged) in 1997.

¹¹ Throughout 2002, a joint project was carried out by the museums of Vojvodina (Novi Sad), Banat (Timisoara) and the 'mountain museum of the Banat' (Resita) on Paleolithic art in the historic Banat region. A similar project on the gold of the Avars, who had settled in the Pannonian plain in the early Middle Ages, was carried out by the museum of Vojvodina in coordination with the museum of Szeged and the National Hungarian Museum in Budapest, over the same year. It should be added that the ethnological departments of the Vojvodina and the Szeged museums maintain close cooperation with each other. Finally, the museum of Vojvodina has launched one more project on the Ostrogoth settlement in the Pannonian plain, in conjunction with the museum of Banat (Timisoara). Some information on these issues was disclosed to the author in the course of his field research in Vojvodina (Interview with the general manager assistant in the museum of Vojvodina, Novi Sad; April 1st, 2002).

DKMT-financed by the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, is also being envisaged¹².

Apart from the field of culture, some optimist prospects have opened in the area of economic cooperation as well. These have been generated by certain free trade agreements concluded among those states whose administrative units form part of the DKMT. First of all, on December 19th, 2002, a bilateral agreement was reached between Serbia and Romania on free trade, including a list of industrial and agricultural products that would be exchanged at lower customs rates¹³. Some months earlier, on March 8th, 2002, a similar agreement was concluded between Serbia and Hungary, according to which 86 percent of all industrial products and one-third of agricultural produce would no longer be on the customs regime. According to the estimations of Hungarian and Serbian officials, this agreement is expected to boost bilateral trade by an average 20 to 25 percent within the next years¹⁴.

Apart from these positive prospects, however, there also exist setbacks. First of all, certain parts of the DKMT are not particularly developed with regard to their industrial and other infrastructure. The Csongrad *megye*, for example, has remained a largely agricultural region up to date. Salaries and other income data are lower than the Hungarian average, whereas only 4.72 percent of the gross value of industrial fixed assets of

¹² On this issue see R. Lotina, 'Kulturna saradnja u Evro-regionu DKMT: U slivu Evrope,' in *Dnevnik* (May 22nd, 2002).

¹³ According to the Provincial Secretariat for Finance, A.P. Vojvodina had a total profit of \$4.2 million from its exports to Romania in the year 2002. For this figure see Denis Kolundzija, 'Danas u Napulju: Vojvodina ulazi u evropsku porodicu,' in *Dnevnik* (November 28th, 2002).

¹⁴ According to the Provincial Secretariat for Finance, Vojvodina had an overall profit of \$28 million from its exports to Hungary in the year 2002. For this figure see *Ibid*.

Csongrad belongs to the county. An additional problem is that the equipment of the local industry is rather poor and largely outdated¹⁵. Especially as far as the Mako municipality is concerned, the level of telecommunications is rather low and the supply of telephone main lines is one of the worst in Hungary. The health care system is not developed either¹⁶.

Most important, considerable damage was inflicted on Vojvodina's technical and industrial infrastructure, as result of the 1999 NATO bombing. As a matter of fact, the bombing inflicted heavy damage on the petrochemical and the metal industry installations in Kikinda, Novi Sad, and Pančevo. Furthermore, quite a few bridges were destroyed. The reconstruction process has seriously hampered, and still hampers, Vojvodinian initiatives within the DKMT¹⁷. Apart from the 1999 bombing, Vojvodinian industry was negatively affected by the UN embargo. As a matter of fact, the technical equipment in quite a few factories remained largely out of date, since the import of new machinery was not possible. Moreover, the chemical industry in particular was seriously affected by the shortage in natural gas and other primary resources¹⁸.

¹⁵ See Abonyine-Palotas Jolan, 'Industry in the Borderline Region,' in University of Novi Sad, West University of Timisoara, Jozsef Attila University, *Geographic Monographs of European Regions: Banat*, Novi Sad 1997, pp. 187–89.

¹⁶ See Abonyine-Palotas Jolan, 'Infrastructure of the Borderline Area,' in *Ibid*, pp. 212–14.

¹⁷ According to an independent estimation, the total damage inflicted on Serbia, as result of the NATO bombing, amounts to \$ 29,608.5 million. For this estimation see Grupa Plus 17, *Završni račun NATO-a bombardovanja* (Belgrade, 2000).

¹⁸ See Pavle Tomić and Jovan Romelić, 'Industry in the Yugoslav Part of the Banat,' in University of Novi Sad, West University of Timisoara, Jozsef Attila University, *Geographic Monographs of European Regions: Banat*, (Novi Sad 1997), pp. 169–81.

Future prospects for the DKMT Euro-region are equally hampered by the inadequate function of the regional and local administration in participatory entities. This has been, for example, the case with the Romanian municipalities participating in the scheme¹⁹. Also, with regard to Vojvodina, the provincial and municipal authorities often did not have direct access to the projects organized within the DKMT, since all major decisions were taken by the republican authorities in Belgrade. It is expected, however, that the provisions of the 2002 'Omnibus Zakon'²⁰, can provide a sound solution to this problem. Especially, as far as Vojvodina is concerned, the province's cross-border aspirations are an additional factor that advocates for the concession of an 'asymmetric' status at the provincial level.

¹⁹ According to a report, drafted by the Council of Europe in April 2002, the following problems persist with regard to the state of local self-government in Romania: a. Self-government is highly conditioned by the political interests and the forces in power at central level; b. The financial resources of local authorities continue to be too limited, based on excessively rigid regulations that do not correspond to the powers allocated and oblige local authorities to depend too large an extent on state transfers; c. An unhealthy combination of private interests and public priorities is largely the case at the regional and municipal level. For more information on this issue see Council of Europe, <http://www.coe.int>

²⁰ The 'Omnibus Zakon' was drafted by the executive council of the autonomous province of Vojvodina in Novi Sad on December 14th 2001, and officially approved by the republican parliament in Belgrade on February 4th 2002. This legal document provides a set of competencies to the Vojvodinian assembly that extend to over twenty areas such as education, culture, regional infrastructure projects, agriculture, health and social welfare, public information, and official use of the recognized languages and alphabets in the province. It further authorizes the executive council of A.P Vojvodina to finance certain projects and activities of a regional interest from the provincial budget. For a full text-version of the 'Omnibus Zakon' see <http://www.vojvodina.com/prilozi/omnibus.htm> at: <http://www.vojvodina.com>.

Another problem is the fact that the funds siphoned by the EU and other European/international organizations (e.g. the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe) towards the DKMT and other Euro-regions in Eastern Europe have not been sufficient. This, in itself, is a crucial problem bearing in mind that projects such as the Szeged-Kikinda-Timisoara railway line and the cleaning of the Tisza-Bega canals can only be met with success if some substantial funds are invested by the international and European organisations. Especially with regard to Vojvodina, local political circles have even accused the EU of 'using' the DKMT for its short-term economic interests (e.g. for conducting tax-free trade with Russia since trade between Serbia and Russia is tax-free), without any genuine interest in regional development²¹.

To these should be added the following hindrance: The Schengen visa regime of the EU and the enlargement of the Schengen borders, especially with regard to the transactions between Serbia and Hungary since May 1st, 2004. The latter issue will be dealt with in greater depth later in this section.

As a matter of fact, the following steps are recommended so that the aforementioned problems, especially the economic ones, can be adequately tackled. First of all, the governments of the region, alongside the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe and the regional/municipal authorities involved in the Euro-region projects, should jointly seek to engage the European Commission in a policy dialogue towards the harmonization of EU instruments for financial assistance in Southeast Europe (primarily the CARDS and INTERREG programmes) so that the genuine availability of funds for cross-border cooperation schemes can be ensured.

²¹ Interview with DSS representative (Novi Sad, March 15th, 2001).

As an interim solution to the lack of funding, the same agents should jointly engage the national governments of the region to allocate funds within their national CARDS budgets to cross-border cooperation schemes²². A basic precondition should be that the governments consult the regional and local administrations involved when negotiating the terms of their CARDS assistance. This, of course, is subject to the genuine decentralization processes undertaken within the Southeast European states in question.

Furthermore, it is essential that the EU move towards a strategy that supports local and regional development and cohesion processes within Southeast Europe, and between Southeast Europe and the EU. This strategy should rely on the experiences acquired by the EU with regard to the Accession Process, focusing particularly on the experience of programmes aimed at preparing countries and regions for the implementation of the Structural and Cohesion Funds (e.g. the PHARE, SAPARD and ISPA programmes). The implementation of such an approach is also essential in order to convince the local elites involved in the DKMT and other Euro-regions of the European organizations' genuine interest in regional reconstruction.

Finally, the governments of the region (at central, regional and local levels) alongside the Stability Pact and other institutions and organizations should work towards a solution of visa-related barriers to cooperation across borders within Southeast Europe. At this given moment, this may take the form of schemes to facilitate easy access to long-term visas or border passes for border region communities. Any innovative proposals

²² Especially as far as Serbia is concerned, in the period between 2000 and 2001, the country received 260 million Euros annually from the CARDS programme extended as grant in aid.

towards this objective must be researched and elaborated in consultation with national and local authorities²³.

The efficient function of cross-border cooperation schemes in Southeast Europe is largely dependent on the utilization of 'strong points' as opposed to the 'weak' ones. The term 'strong points' refers to positive elements that can be found in the social and cultural fields in the regions/municipalities involved (e.g. the existence of linguistic and cultural factors that facilitate cross-border cooperation), the degree of the development of civil society in the borderline regions/communities and the level of their economic capacities. The term 'weak points', on the contrary, refers to the incompetence of local self-government units, the poor administrative coordination, and the lack in adequate administrative structures (e.g. counterproductive relationship between central state administration and local authorities, inadequate training and preparedness of staff, etc.). Both strong and weak points are considered 'internal' to the cross-border cooperation system.

Furthermore, there exist a variety of 'external' potentialities and obstacles, with regard to cross-border cooperation, that have to be adequately exploited and/or overcome. These 'external' opportunities/potentialities are mainly: a. the propensity of the administrative units to cross-border cooperation; b. the preparedness (or not) of territorial communities or authorities involved in Euro-region projects and the coordination among them; c. the level of cooperation in the various fields of economic activity. The 'outer' obstacles, on the

²³ For a list of similar proposals see Council of Europe Publishing House, *Cross-border Cooperation in Southeast Europe: Obstacles and Opportunities for Euro-regional Cooperation-Report*, (International Conference co-organized by the Danube-Drava-Sava Euro-regional Cooperation, the Council of Europe and the East-West Institute), Ošijek and Bližovac, Croatia, November 18–19, 2002, pp. 1–6.

other hand, usually are institutional, economic and socio-cultural hindrances (e.g. tensions among the participatory bodies related to minority groups and their aspirations) that can be detrimental to cross-border cooperation.

Within this framework, it might well be argued that, with regard to cross-border cooperation between Serbia/Vojvodina and Romania in the DKMT, a strategy that focuses on the high rate of inner strong points supported by the existence of equally strong external opportunities, whose mutual relationship creates the ideal conditions for overcoming the scarce and minor weaknesses and threats, should be pursued. On this occasion, the Romanian as well as the Serbian/Vojvodinian regional and local authorities along the borderline have fully demonstrated their intention to expand their cross-border transactions at all levels. Moreover, no such problems as tensions related to the aspirations of the Serbian and Romanian minorities on either side of the border are the case. A problem that has emerged recently, though, is the imposition of a visa-regime to Serbian citizens by Romania and the swift reaction of the Serbian side with regard to Romanian citizens wishing to travel to Serbia.

With regard to Hungarian-Serbian/Vojvodinian cross-border cooperation within the DKMT, the Hungarian as well as the Serbian/Vojvodinian regional elites have fully demonstrated their willingness to cooperate within the project. Moreover, the free trade between Hungary and Serbia, in combination with the provisions of the Serbian legislation on national minorities and the Hungarian-Serbian agreement on the protection of national minorities, were some notable steps towards limiting outer threats that could be detrimental to the function of the DKMT. A crucial problem however, which will be dealt with later in this section, is the visa regime in force between Serbia and Hungary, following the latter's accession to the EU.

At this point, it should be noted that apart from the DKMT, Vojvodina, or more precisely the Novi Sad municipality, participates in the Danube-Drava-Sava Euro-region scheme as well. A micro-region consisting of the municipality of Novi Sad (Serbia/Vojvodina), the canton of Tuzla (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and the municipality of Ošijek (Croatia) operates within the bounds of that Euro-region since 2001. The establishment of this micro-region is quite a positive step for the economic activities of the province, always bearing in mind that the transactions with Croatia and especially Bosnia-Herzegovina have been quite profitable for Vojvodina as a whole²⁴.

In this latter case, the recommended strategy regarding cross-border cooperation between Croatia and Serbia should underline the role of inner strengths and outer opportunities, in order to reduce the effects of inner weaknesses and outer threats that are of disturbing importance. In this light, the free-trade agreement signed between Serbia and Croatia on December 23rd, 2002, is a particularly positive step towards this direction²⁵. Nevertheless, the coordination between the municipalities of Novi Sad and Ošijek within the micro-region scheme has not been sufficient so far. Most important, the question of the repatriation of the evicted Serbs to Croatia as well as the regulation of the Croatian minority's collective status in Vojvodina pose as major obstacles in the path of cross-border cooperation between the two states. The search for a regulatory formula, with regard to these

²⁴ According to the Provincial Secretariat for Finance, Vojvodina had a total profit of \$56 million from its exports to Bosnia-Herzegovina in the year 2002. In the same year, the province also had an overall profit of \$11.5 million from its exports to Croatia. For these figures see Denis Kolundzija, 'Povodom prijema naše pokrajine u skupštinu evropskih regija: Vojvodina zna prečicu,' in *Dnevnik* (November 9th, 2002).

²⁵ According to this agreement, the duty-free regime would be applied to 70 percent of industrial and 30 percent of agricultural products.

two issues, is vital for the development of inter-state cooperation between Serbia and Croatia at the macro-level.

Finally, it might be useful to add that since November 28th, 2002, Vojvodina participates in the Brussels-based 'Association of European Regions'²⁶. Through their participation in this institution, the authorities of the province expect to secure some funding for the infrastructure projects carried out in Vojvodina, from the EU financial bodies. Moreover, it is expected that Vojvodina will extend its cooperation with the other regions participating in this institution on areas of common concern (e.g. management of minority issues, environmental policies, economic cooperation, promotion of regionalization, strengthening of regional and local self-government, etc.). Also, participation in the 'Association of European Regions' of other multiethnic/multicultural Southeast European regions (e.g. the Croatian region of Istria) can facilitate the fertile dialogue between Vojvodina and these regions on common-interest subjects such as the development of multicultural policies²⁷.

Serbia's 'European Aspirations': The place of Vojvodina

The Euro-region projects in Southeast Europe serve as a positive, albeit rudimentary, step towards the accession of the

²⁶ The 'Assembly of European Regions' was founded in Brussels, in 1985. Its programmatic objective is to function as a forum, according to the pattern of an NGO framework, which could bring together various European regions. Even though not formally affiliated to any of them, the 'Assembly of European Regions' maintains close connections with both the Council of Europe and the EU. The aforementioned organisation currently has 250 member regions from thirty countries and twelve member organizations.

²⁷ For more information on this issue see *Dnevnik*, November 9th, 2002 and November 28th, 2002.

countries of the region to European structures. Nevertheless, with specific focus on Serbia, it seems that the actual integration of the country into these structures should still be considered a long-term objective. Serbia's path towards its full integration into European structures is still paved with a variety of obstacles.

As far as the country's accession to the EU is concerned, Serbia's admission to the union as a full-fledged member by the year 2010 has been set as a long-term objective by the Serbian government. Nevertheless, the problem of persistent political instability, in combination with the ill function of the state's economic mechanism, pose as two major obstacles that have to be overcome for the materialization of this objective. To these obstacles, should be added the fact that the state's industrial and other infrastructure (e.g. communication networks, bridges and other such facilities) is still in a phase of reconstruction, following the aftermath of the 1999 NATO bombing. Finally, the various pressures exerted on the Serbian government by the EU regarding the former's cooperation with the Hague Tribunal still generates serious disagreements and tensions between the two sides.

Apart from the programmes of financial assistance to Serbia, within the bounds of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, the country is also a beneficiary of the EU 'special trade measures'. In other words, customs tariffs have been abolished for imports into the EU from Serbia, with minor exceptions. With specific focus on Vojvodina and other regions within Serbia that possess considerable agricultural wealth and a developed food industry this is a positive development. Still, in order for Serbia to take full advantage of this provision, the reconstruction and modernization process of the state's industrial infrastructure as well as its economic mechanisms should be carried out successfully.

On the other hand, the EU has recommended a variety of guidelines for the reorganization of the legislative and constitutional framework of Serbia so that they can be compatible to the standards set by the EU. These recommendations touch upon areas such as the democratization of the state's political structures, regional and local self-government, banking, trade (including customs tariffs), fiscal policy, the judicial system and certain infrastructure issues (e.g. telecommunications, energy).

With specific focus on regional and local self-government, which are of central concern to this work, the following recommendations have been made to the Serbian government: **a.** The Republican Law on Local Finances should include provisions on local finance that match financial resources to responsibilities to ensure that there is enough; **b.** The Law on the Elections of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia should allow minorities to obtain the number of seats corresponding to their electoral weight; **c.** The regionalization process within Serbia should also focus on the structures that might be proposed to the regions where a considerable percentage of national minorities reside (e.g. Vojvodina, Sandžak). With regard to all these issues, EU officials have expressed their intentions to offer their assistance to the Serbian authorities.

Serbia enjoyed the special guest (or 'observer') status at the Council of Europe since 2001. Not being a full-fledged member-state of this institution, Serbia could not accede to the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level.

Nevertheless, throughout 2001 and 2002, the Serbian government proceeded to a variety of reforms that rendered the state's full-fledged membership of the Council of Europe a more attainable aim. The most notable of these innovations was the

inauguration of the Serbian Law on National Minorities, which is more than compatible to the guidelines of the COE's *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*²⁸. These steps facilitated considerably the process of the state's full admission to the Council of Europe. Consequently, Serbia was fully admitted to the Council of Europe on April 3rd, 2003.

Coming back to the EU enlargement issue, the whole process has had as consequence a 'collateral damage' on Serbia, which has been particularly felt in Vojvodina. This 'collateral damage' has to do with the visa regime imposed between Serbia and Hungary since April 2004, following Hungary's admission to the EU. With regard to the economic macro-level, the imposition of the EU Schengen visa regime between the two countries may be quite detrimental to the economic activities of Serbian entrepreneurs, especially as far as those based in Vojvodina are concerned. The whole arrangement may also be quite detrimental, perhaps even more than is the case with the Serbs, to the economic transactions of Hungarian entrepreneurs with Serbia. As a matter of fact, Hungary derived much benefit from its economic relations with Serbia during the period of the UN embargo²⁹.

With regard to Vojvodina's micro-level, though, the new prospects seem to be even more negative. Quite a few financial entrepreneurs based in the province, have expressed the view

²⁸ For more information on this issue see Council of Europe Publishing House, *Report Submitted by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Pursuant to Article 25, Paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, ACFC/SR (2002) 003 (October 16th, 2002).

²⁹ It should be also mentioned that in the year 2001 the ratio of exports to imports between the two states continued to be unfavourable for the Serbian side. Indeed, Serbian exports to Hungary amounted to \$65 million whereas Hungarian imports into Serbia amounted to \$194 million.

that the transformation of the Hungarian-Serbian border into one of the EU's external borders may in the long term prove 'almost as bad as sanctions' for their activities. The main problem facing Vojvodina's entrepreneurs, with regard to these novel prospects, has to do with the fact that the Schengen visa is very expensive for them³⁰.

Moreover, the imposition of the visa regime may have a rather negative impact on all Vojvodinian citizens residing along the borderline. Indeed, a significant degree of economic interdependence has been built up on the Hungarian-Serbian border, over the past decade, on the basis of informal cross-border trade and commuting for employment. With specific focus on the residents of the most peripheral, often impoverished, rural communities of Vojvodina these activities have been of vital importance for their economic survival.

As also suggested by the participants in the DKMT and other Euro-regions in Central and Southeast Europe, new schemes should be elaborated for the avoidance of barriers to the free contact and cooperation of local border communities across the enlarging EU borders. The case of the Kaliningrad *oblast* and the various proposed solutions to its isolation after the first wave of EU enlargement has been recommended as a good starting point.

At this given moment, the following suggestions could be made to the EU and its relevant sub-organizations. First of all, it is recommended that the EU member-states cooperate with each other in order to set up joint consular facilities or, in the best

³⁰ Nevertheless, it should be added that a slightly more optimistic expectation of Vojvodina's entrepreneurs is that, following Hungary's accession to the EU, the first European investors will come to Vojvodina, especially to the cities close to the border. Still, however, this optimism is restricted to entrepreneurs based in municipalities such as Subotica and Sombor.

case, transfer visa-issuing authority to common EU consulates in the borderline regions. Such provisions may relieve the residents of Vojvodina, and other East European regions on the EU border, from the burden of having to travel to the EU members' embassies in the national capitals for their visas. Moreover, it is essential that the EU advises and assists local/regional authorities and NGOs in applying to the Stability Pact and other sources for financial support since people in Vojvodina and other peripheral regions are often ill equipped and inexperienced with these issues. Finally, a greater proportion of funds should be siphoned from the EU coffers towards the establishment of additional border-crossing points, in Vojvodina and elsewhere on the EU border. This move might offset the impression in domestic political circles that the EU is principally interested in strengthening the protective and exclusionary functions of border controls³¹.

Once again, the positive role of Euro-region projects such as the DKMT should be further emphasized. In other words, it is essential for the EU officials to understand that it is in their interest to provide for the long-term development of the DKMT and other Euro-regions in Central and Southeast Europe. Flourishing Euro-regions could avert the danger of economic malfunction in the borderlands, with the ensuing implications of rising criminality, emigration pressures, etc. The introduction of EU borderline-monitoring mechanisms on the Schengen border can be an additional measure for the control of such phenomena. Furthermore, the EU should support the current achievements of these Euro-regions with regard to multiethnic cohabitation and facilitate the materialization of these regions' aspirations to

³¹ For a listing of similar proposals see Judy Batt, 'The Impact of EU Enlargement on Regions on the EU's New Eastern Border' (Paper Presented to Governance, WG6, London, 2001), pp. 1–8.

assume the role of 'gateways to Europe' for their less developed hinterlands³². This is very much the case of Vojvodina in relation to the rest of Serbia.

At this point, it should be added that, as far as Vojvodina is concerned, the materialization of these suggestions would require the parallel concession of administrative jurisdictions to the provincial organs (e.g. with regard to the operation of the border-crossing stations or the creation of new ones, the applications to European institutions for funding, the management of incoming foreign currency, etc.). On this occasion, the argumentation in favour of an 'asymmetric' administrative status to be conceded to Vojvodina within Serbia gains bonus points, since it would be less time-consuming and more effective for these issues to be dealt with 'on the spot'.

Conclusion

Since Hungary's accession to the EU on May 1st, 2004, Vojvodina formally became Serbia's gateway to the 'new Europe'. Through the adequate reinforcement of the cross-border cooperation projects that the province participates in, Vojvodina can assume a more active role in, once again, leading Serbia 'back to Europe'. Vojvodina's positive role can be enhanced if a *modus vivendi* is reached between the relevant EU and Serbian organs with regard to the new Schengen border. With specific focus on Serbia, and Vojvodina in particular, it is

³² At the same time, though, and with specific regard to the management of minority issues at the border regions, the EU should be careful to consult with the national capitals so that no misunderstandings occur (e.g. suspicions over the potential resurgence of irredentist trends). In other words, the EU should manage its role so as to be considered strictly neutral in the light of any national or political antagonism.

the major wish of the provincial as well as the republican bodies that the Schengen border is not going to bring about a brand new era of isolation and impenetrable boundaries at the beginning of the 21st century. Therefore, it is in the EU's interest to comprehend that the long-term effects of erecting walls between the EU and its new borderline regions such as Vojvodina can be anything but positive for the states to which these regions belong and the EU as such.

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Frontières imaginaires de l'hellénisme

Longtemps avant d'être un continent, l'Europe était une princesse, héroïne d'un conte de fées. Tout comme Ariadnè, *la Sacrée*, ou Pasiphaé, *Celle qui voit tout*, Europe, *Celle qui voit au-delà des horizons lointains*, est l'une des héritières des innombrables épiphanies de la Grande Déesse de Crète. Fille du roi phénicien Agénor (ou, plus clairement encore, Phoinix, comme dans l'*Iliade*), entrevue par Zeus au bord de la mer, où elle jouait avec ses compagnes, elle aurait suscité la flamme du dieu qui, métamorphosé en taureau blanc comme neige, l'aurait séduite par sa douce soumission, l'invitant à monter sur son dos puissant, et l'aurait ainsi emportée en Crète. Là, le dieu s'unit à la princesse qui donna naissance aux trois fils royaux Minos, Rhadamanthe et Sarpédon. En vain envoya Agénor ses trois fils, Cadmos, Phoinix et Cilix, pour retrouver la princesse, en vain leur mère, Telephassa, erra en cherchant sa fille. Non seulement elle resta perdue à jamais, mais, comme elle, ses trois frères deviendront rois dans des contrées lointaines : Cadmos à Thèbes de Béotie, Phoinix en Afrique et Cilix en Asie Mineure, dans la Cilicie qui portera son nom. Europe fût épousée par le roi Astérios, et elle reçut de son divin amant, en dot, trois auxiliaires de la royauté : un géant en bronze, Talos, qui jetait des rochers à la

tête tout ennemi qui approchait l'île, un lévrier qui ne ratait aucune proie et un javelot qui ne ratait jamais son but¹.

Comment tracer les frontières d'un mythe ? Eschyle, sans doute le premier poète à marquer fermement ce que l'on compte souvent pour la frontière de l'Europe (mais j'y reviendrai), a néanmoins composé un drame perdu, dont le titre, *Les Cariens*, a été par la suite glosé *ou Europe* : on en déduit aisément que la version eschyléenne du mythe attribuait à notre princesse une origine carienne. Le seul qui paraît avoir essayé de conjuguer le conte de fées et la géographie aurait été Moschon, un poète de l'époque hellénistique, c'est-à-dire d'un âge qui, suite à la pénétration des Grecs aussi bien en Asie qu'en Afrique du Nord, aurait du valoriser la géographie aux dépens du mythe. Et pourtant, le petit poème de 166 de vers, aujourd'hui perdu, de Moschon ne faisait que reprendre le thème eschyléen du rêve où s'affrontaient l'Europe et l'Asie².

Dans sa tragédie, représentée en 472 av. J.C., huit ans à peine après la victoire décisive de Salamine, le poète avait en effet inventé le thème du rêve prémonitoire de la reine Atossa, la mère de Xerxès, qui voit en songe deux femmes dont non seulement le costume, mais aussi, et surtout, le comportement est mis en contraste. LA femme vêtue d'un somptueux vêtement asiatique se soumet sans réagir au joug qui l'attache au char triomphal du Grand Roi, tandis que celle vêtue d'un *péplos dorien* se débat et refuse la servitude³. Une longue tradition veut faire de cette scène onirique l'épitomé de l'affrontement de deux civilisations et de deux continents, ouvrant ainsi une voie qui

¹ Apoll. Rhod. 4. 1643; [Eratosth.] 33., cf. Ov. Met. 7. 681 ff

² Winifried Bühler, *Die Europa des Moschos*, Munich 1960; ead., *Europa; ein Überblick über die Zeugnisse des Mythos in der antiken Literatur und Kunst*, Munich 1968.

³ A. Pers. 176 sqq.

aboutira, en fin de compte, à Huntington, avec son trop fameux « choc des civilisations ».

A y regarder de plus près, cependant, il s'agit moins de déterminisme géographique que de politique à l'ancienne : ce qu'évoque Eschyle, ce n'est pas tant l'Asie confrontée à l'Europe, mais plutôt l'Empire qui se heurte à la Cité : Il y a, certes, une limite topographique de l'Empire, que Xerxès a eu le malheur de transgresser, mais cette limite est double : à l'aller, c'est la mer elle-même qui, enchaînée et soumise au joug par le roi, tout comme la grande et belle femme au péplos dorien, se vengera de ses entraves à Salamine ; et au retour, c'est le fleuve Strymon qui, d'abord gelé miraculeusement hors saison, *aoros*, *atopos*, feint d'être un pont pour les restes de l'armée vaincue, mais les engloutit dès que le soleil monte en réchauffant ses eaux⁴. En fin de compte, ce n'est pas une frontière humaine que l'*hybris* de Xerxès transgresse, mais un grandiose interdit cosmique, qui n'oppose pas des races ou des peuples, mais la liberté et la servitude, la monarchie ou *hypeuthunos poli*, « qui n'a pas à rendre de compte à la cité », de la *polis* unie et gouvernée par des égaux responsables : c'est pourquoi le désastre du Grand Roi sera infligé par Zeus *Barus Euthunos*, « le Lourd Exacteur de Comptes »⁵.

⁴ A. Pers. 496; N.M. Horsfall, *Aeschylus and the Strymon*, "Hermes" CII, 1974, pp. 503–505; Serena Bianchetti, *Il confine Europa-Asia in Eschilo*, „Sileno", XIV, 1988, pp. 205–214; B. Lincoln, *Death by Water, Strange Events at the Strymon* (Persae 492–507) and the Categorical Opposition of East and West, CPh 95, 2000, pp. 12–20.

⁵ A. Pers. 212 sq. – *praxas men eu thaumastos an genoit' aner*. | *kakos de praxas ouch hypeuthynos polei*; cf. 827 sq. – *Zeus toi kolastes ton hyperkompon agan* | *phronematon epestin, euthynos barys*; v. R.P. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus*, Londres 1983, p. 1–15; Zoe Petre, *Eschyle, Salamine et les Epigrammes de Marathon*, « Revue Roumaine d'Histoire » 17, 1978, 327–336 et ead., *Gold in Aeschylus' Persae*, "Annales de l'Université de Bucarest", Série Histoire, 28, 1979, 61–71; Barbara Goward, *Telling Tragedy. Narrative Technique in Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides*, Londres 1999.

Eschyle était sans aucun doute au courant des explorations des deux générations antérieures de Ioniens, à commencer avec Hécatee, dont le poète athénien connaissait sûrement l'œuvre. Pourtant, sa géographie tragique infléchit ces nouvelles connaissances dans des structures de pensée héritées des traditions épiques, inscrivant les exploits des héros dans des espaces construits d'après un modèle concentrique, où le plus de distance par rapport à la Grèce marque le plus de distance par rapport à un centre ordonné, qui se situe au juste milieu, entre les dieux et la nature sauvage. Espace de culture par excellence, gouverné par les justes rites du sacrifice, du labour de la terre et du mariage, c'est le monde des *mortels mangeurs de pain*⁶.

Ce paradigme de l'humanité vit au centre de l'oikoumène, et Télémaque, guidé par Athéna, en prendra connaissance pendant son voyage initiatique. Au contraire, son père, Ulysse, rentrant de la guerre, sera jeté malgré lui loin de ce cercle humain de la culture par une tempête qui le surprend dans les mers thraces, et ne saura pas réintégrer tout seul l'espace familial, où il reviendra comme en songe, porté par ces passeurs professionnels que sont les Phéaciens, après avoir dû explorer toutes les formes possibles d'une humanité absente ou incertaine. Le monde inhumain des errances d'Ulysse est un monde marin, où le voyageur pénètre malgré lui à l'Est et vogue d'île en île et de monstre à monstre jusqu'à l'extrême Occident ; par où il parvient enfin à retrouver son Ithaque. Ce n'est qu'à la fin de sa vie qu'une prophétie lui fera virtuellement explorer les profondeurs du continent, ignorant à tel point des choses de la

⁶ P..Vidal-Naquet, "Valeurs religieuses et mythiques de la terre et du sacrifice dans l'Odyssée", *Le Chasseur Noir. Formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec*², Paris 1983, p. 39–68; id. *La démocratie grecque vue d'ailleurs; essais d'historiographie ancienne et moderne*, Paris 1990; F. Hartog, *Mémoire d'Ulysse, Récits sur la frontière en Grèce ancienne*, Paris 1996.

mer que ses mystérieux habitants prendront les rames du navire pour des outils agricoles⁷.

Les quatre points cardinaux, si l'on peut dire, des errances d'Ulysse sont donc vers l'Orient celui des vignes merveilleuses de la Thrace – car Mâron, le prêtre d'Apollon, est fils d'Euanthes « aux belles fleurs » et petit-fils d'Oinopion, « le buveur de vin », lui-même rejeton de Dionysos et d'Ariadnè ; c'est Mâron qui offre en don d'hospitalité au héros un vin merveilleux, ce même vin qui le sauvera de l'ancre du Cyclope⁸. On est bien, avec les Cicones, à l'orée d'un monde plus archaïque – plus merveilleux aussi – que celui des champs cultivés, dans un espace transitoire et sur une route qui pourrait mener directement à Ithaque, mais qui s'ouvre, en fait, vers un voyage qui traverse les diverses formes de l'inhumain avant de revenir sur la terre d'Ithaque. De là, Ulysse va errer sur la mer « vineuse » jusqu'à l'extrême Occident et au monde dédoublé de l'île de Schérie, où les arbres en fleur côtoient les arbres chargés de fruits. De là part le chemin vers Ithaque, au centre même du monde humain du labour, des saisons successives, de l'élevage qui prend soin des bœufs sacrificiels, du mariage enfin. Ulysse devra pourtant quitter derechef ce centre du monde sur la fin de sa vie, pour aller ; par des chemins poussiéreux, jusque là où la mer n'existe même pas dans l'imagination des mortels consacrés uniquement au travail de la terre : serait-ce du Septentrion extrême, avec ses steppes sans fin, qu'il s'agirait ainsi ?

Vers le nord et ses steppes, la géographie mythique d'Homère et de ses successeurs fait vivre des peuples de plus en plus étranges, qui se répartissent alternativement la pureté et la

⁷ *Il.*2.846, 17.73; *Od.*9.39, 9.47, 9.59, 9.66, 9.165, 23.310; Ouid. *Met.*6.710, 10.2, 11.3.

⁸ *Il.*2.846, 17.73; *Od.*9.39, 9.47, 9.59, 9.66, 9.165, 23.310; Ouid. *Met.*6.710, 10.2, 11.3.

sauvagerie : Amazones égorgées d'hommes ou Androphages cannibales, mais aussi Galactophages purs, *Abioi*, « les non-vivants » des ascètes, *les plus justes des hommes*, refusant toute nourriture carnée et se nourrissant uniquement de fromage, de lait et de miel, comme pour marquer mieux leur statut d'intermédiaires entre le monde de la nature et celui de la culture, qui est essentiellement la culture du blé.

L'Istros⁹ au nord fait pendant au Nil vers le sud, tout comme le désert trans-danubien et glacial que l'on y imagine fait pendant aux sables infertiles du sud, où la chaleur trop intense brûle tout être vivant. Ces deux frontières du monde sont en apparence des limites infranchissables, mais il y a au-delà de chacune d'entre elles un pays mystérieux et interdit : vers le Nord, lorsqu'on dépasse le pays de Borée, il y a un lieu heureux et enchanteur qui a pour nom celui de ses habitants, les Hyperboréens, tout comme le voyageur naviguant dans les mers du sud peut un jour se retrouver poussé par le hasard ou la volonté de quelque dieu au pays au-delà du vent du sud, le Notios – en Hypernotie donc.

Ce pays du Soleil, avec sa table merveilleuse où les Éthiopiens aux “faces brûlées”, une race d'hommes d'une pureté incomparable, sont les commensaux des dieux, comme au temps jadis de l'âge d'or, est, ainsi que Louis Gernet l'a brillamment démontré, à la fois une Utopie – en l'occurrence, celle racontée à l'âge hellénistique par Iamboulos – et un pays des Morts¹⁰.

⁹ Dans le catalogue hésiodique, l'Istros *kallirhéethron* est le pendant et le frère du Nil, ainsi que des quatre autres grands fleuves engendrés par Thétis et Okéanos : l'Alphée, l'Eridanos, le Strymon et le Méandre (Hes. *Th.*, 337–339; v. F. Hartog, *Le miroir d'Hérodote. Essai sur la représentation de l'autre*², Paris 2001, pp. 74–78..

¹⁰ Diod., 3.2. 1–4 ; L. Gernet, “La cité future et le pays des morts”, in id., *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique*, Paris 1968, pp. 139–153 ; A. Lesky, “Aithiopika”, *Hermes*, 87, 1962, pp. 27–38 ; J. Latacz, “Zeus's Reise zu den

Son pendant, le pays des Hyperboréens, voué à ce Soleil autre qu'est l'Apollon hivernal, partage lui aussi cette double détermination. Ce pays d'un Septentrion curieusement printanier et doux est le refuge du dieu, qui y va d'hiver en hiver, porté par son char merveilleux tiré par des cygnes¹¹. Ce pays introuvable – car, tout comme le pays du Soleil au sud, les terres hyperboréennes sont interdites au commun des mortels, ainsi que le dit Pindare : *pour les mortels il n'y a pas de voie, ni sur terre, ni sur mer, sur les nefs rapides*¹², par laquelle ils puissent rejoindre ces contrées si ce n'est par quelque miracle – est un pays bienheureux – Eschyle aussi fait allusion au bonheur proverbial des Hyperboréens¹³ – où les Muses sont chez elles, un lieu de fête perpétuelle où *les hymnes entonnés par les chœurs de jeunes filles, le chant plaintif de la lyre et le haut son des flûtes font toujours résonner les cieux*, pendant que le dieu, entouré de son peuple *aux cheveux pris dans des résilles en or, festoie joyeusement. Ni la maladie, ni l'horrible vieillesse ne se mêlent à cette race sacrée, vivant toujours loin du souci et des guerres, en contournant la juste rançon du sort*¹⁴, c'est à dire la mort. Au seuil d'un trépas qu'il attend avec une sérénité souriante, c'est en pensant à ce pays des Bienheureux que dira

Äthiopen", in G. Kurz, D. Müller, W. Nikolai, ed., *Gnomosyne. Menschliches Denken und Handeln in der frühgriechischen Literatur. Festschrift W. Marg.* München 1981, pp. 53–81; A. Ballabriga, *Le Soleil et le Tartare. L'image mythique du monde en Grèce archaïque*, Paris, Editions de l'EHESS, 1986 ; Chr Jacob, *Géographie et ethnographie en Grèce ancienne*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1991.

¹¹ Hes. *Scut.* 58–59 ; Stesichor., fr. 207, PMG ; A. H. Krappe, *Apollôn Kyknos*, "Class. Phil". 37, 1942, pp. 353–370 ; Francis Vian, "Le combat d'Héraklès et de Kyknos", REA 47, 1945, pp. 5–32 ; R. Janko, "The Shield of Herakles and the Legend of Kyknus", CQ 36, 1986, pp. 38–59.

¹² Pi. P. 10. 34 sqq.

¹³ A. fr. 73 N.

¹⁴ Pi. P. 10. 34–44.

Socrate qu'il chante avec une joie sans pareil le chant des cygnes merveilleux d'Apollon Hyperboréen¹⁵.

Cette Utopie septentrionale est donc, de même que le Pays du Soleil, une terre imaginaire des morts bienheureux, commensaux du dieu Apollon vivant une vie éternelle de liesse. Mais c'est aussi un pays des terres merveilleusement fertiles, car les offrandes que les Hyperboréens avaient envoyé depuis toujours à Délos, est faite de couronnes tressées en paille et de gerbes de blé : une offrande essentiellement agraire, qui semble au premier abord plus appropriée à Déméter qu'au dieu oraculaire de Delphes. C'est sans doute l'aspect solaire du dieu, qui met en rapport le Solstice d'hiver et le Solstice d'été, le pays des morts et les céréales, substance de vie pour les mortels mangeurs de pain, qui préside à ces offrandes. Mais aussi devrait-on les mettre en rapport avec l'Apollon Aiguieus, le dieu qui ouvre aux colons grecs le chemin des nouvelles fondations riches en blé.

Une inscription hellénistique de Délos prouve bien que ces offrandes existent, puisqu'elles sont dûment enregistrées dans l'inventaire du sanctuaire délien¹⁶. On peut se demander si elles provenaient d'un groupe isolé de colons grecs égarés quelque part au fond de l'Asie profonde, comme on le présume d'habitude, ou bien si, pour répondre au mythe incessamment répété de bouche à oreille et de poète à périégète, le sacerdoce délien aurait fini par produire la preuve matérielle de l'historicité de ces légendaires offrandes.

¹⁵ Pl. *Phaid.* 85 b.

¹⁶ Jean Tréheux, "La réalité historique des offrandes hyperboréennes de Délos", in *Studies presented to D. M. Robinson, II*, Oxford 1953, p.754-774 ; Philippe Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et romaine*, Paris 1970, p. 38-48 ; Giorgio B. Biancucci, "La via Iperborea", *RIFC* 101, 1973, p. 207-220.

Est-ce vers ces contrées merveilleuses du blé qu'Ulysse dirigera ses pas pour un dernier voyage ? Bien qu'on ne puisse l'affirmer, la géographie imaginaire de l'épopée nous fait entrevoir deux grands axes du monde : celui qui, de l'Est à l'Ouest, traverse la mer, et celui qui va du Nil au Danube et au-delà de ce fleuve, en s'enfonçant toujours plus loin dans les champs de blé transitant vers le pays bienheureux des morts. Lorsque les premiers marins, les premiers colons de langue et de culture grecque parcouraient des mers et des terres inconnues, le seul outil intellectuel dont ils disposaient était cet amas de récits très divers recomposant dans une logique qui était celle du mythe – polysémique, structurée par des oppositions binaires, équivalant de façon systématique le lointain, l'étranger et l'étrange – une vision du monde illustrant les thèmes de l'altérité.

Les premiers explorateurs grecs traversant la Méditerranée pour fonder sur ses bords de nouvelles cités, ou bien, un siècle plus tard, les Milésiens longeant la côte du Pont Euxin pour y fonder Istros ou Olbia, guidés par l'Apollon des colons, *Archagetes*, par le dieu des nouvelles terres, *Aiguieus*, n'avaient aucune carte, sauf ces premiers récits, dont la descendance ne sera jamais oubliée. Même lorsque les premiers ouvrages descriptifs en prose, avec leurs périples et leurs cartes, s'ajouteront, à partir du VI^e siècle, à ce savoir hérité, ces contes de jadis ne furent pas oubliés¹⁷. Au contraire, dirais-je : la première œuvre descriptive, celle d'Hécatee de Milet, portait

¹⁷ Hekataios, *FrgrHist.* 1 F 1 – Pour l'importance de l'innovation intellectuelle de l'œuvre d'Hécatee v. F. Jacoby, "Die Entwicklung der griechischen Historiographie", in Herbert Bloch, ed. *Abhandlungen zur griechischen Geschichtsschreibung von Felix Jacoby*, Leiden 1956; Kurt von Fritz, *Die Griechische Geschichtsschreibung*, Berlin 1967, I, pp. 48–76; M. I. Finley, *Myth, Memory, History*, Londra 1978; Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd, *The Revolution of Wisdom*, Berkeley 1987; A. Momigliano, *Les Fondations du savoir historique*, trad. fr., Paris 1992.

bien le titre de *Periodos Ges*¹⁸, mais ce même titre désignera par la suite aussi bien des cartes très schématiques, telle celle d'Anaximandre, que des poèmes mythologiques évoquant les Harpies et les Griffons, voisins des Arimaspes et des Skiapodes.

Traditionnellement, la recherche moderne affronte la géographie mythique à l'essor d'une première géographie descriptive, dans une logique du progrès de la connaissance du monde du mythe à la raison. Mutuellement exclusifs, les anciens récits et la nouvelle science se livreraient un combat dont l'issue est prévisible : le *logos* triomphe, le *muthos* se réfugie dans le conte enfantin. Or, à y regarder de plus près, ce trajet n'est pas celui des faits, mais seulement celui, platonicien et idéal, d'une évacuation de l'imaginaire au-delà des frontières de la cité parfaite. Ce n'est nullement la vérité d'une pensée qui n'exclut rien en fait, mais qui, au contraire, bricole sans arrêt des images successives de l'oikoumène, employant ce qui lui tombe sous la main - observation par autopsie, récit merveilleux, mensuration des arpenteurs, astronomie et astrologie - pour reconstruire une représentation de l'inconnu et de ses frontières.

Je n'en veux qu'un exemple, celui de l'île d'Achille, *Leukè*, l'Île Blanche de la Mer Noire. *Leukè* existe bel et bien. Elle est généralement identifiée à un rocher désert situé près des bouches du Danube, qu'on appelle aujourd'hui "l'Île des Serpents", et où l'on a d'ailleurs trouvé des vestiges antiques, notamment une dédicace pour Achille du Ve siècle, provenant

¹⁸ v. Aldo Corcella, "*Geografia e storia*", in Giuseppe Cambiano, Luigi Canfora, Diego Lanza ed., *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica*, I, Roma 1993, pp. 265-277; les sources antiques attribuent ce titre en première soit à Anaximandre - D.-K I. A 14. 23, v. W. A. Heidel, "Anaximander's Book, the earliest known geographical Treatise", *Proc. Amer. Acad. Arts and Sciences* 56, 1921, pp. 239-287, soit à Hécatee, cf. Hérodote 4.36; v. F. Jacoby, RE s.v. *Hekataios*, col. 2672, et *FgrHist.* 1.1, p. 328. Démocrite et Ctésias auraient aussi produit des *periodoi ges* en prose.

selon toute probabilité de la cité d'Olbia Pontique¹⁹. Mais les contes remémorant la geste du héros et l'île sacrée où il prolonge sa vie au-delà de la mort dépassent de loin en importance et en persistance les modestes traces matérielles d'un culte olbiopolitain d'Achille. Le cygne blanc d'Apollon peut bien être parent des oiseaux au plumage candide qui, selon des auteurs anciens, aurait donné son nom à l'île. Baignée par les flots de la Mer Inhospitalière, *Axenos*, que les marins ioniens essaieront de flatter par la suite en l'appelant *Euxeinos*, "favorable aux étrangers", l'île d'Achille est dite *phaénna*, "d'une blancheur éclatante, lumineuse"²⁰, soit parce que c'est un rocher désert et miraculeusement blanc, soit parce qu'elle est envahie par l'écume des flots ou par des oiseaux blancs. Mais elle est aussi *leuké*, blanche, parce que c'est une terre livide des morts-vivants exsangues²¹.

C'est Thétis elle-même qui y aurait porté près des limites septentrionales du monde la dépouille de son fils tombé devant Troie, afin de lui accorder une vie posthume dans les mystérieuses contrées pontiques. Une vie bien différente de celle des humains, car le héros y passe son temps soit en festoyant de nuit, soit en dévorant des victimes humaines. Or, ces contes ne sont pas consignés par écrit uniquement dans les premiers périple du VI^e siècle av. J.C.²² Au contraire, ils sont encore bien vivants en pleine époque impériale, lorsque Arrien, par exemple, les raconte au bénéfice de l'Empereur Hadrien, ou bien

¹⁹ IOSPE I, 325 ; v. maintenant Guy Hadreen, "The Cult of Achilles in the Euxine", *Hesperia*, 1991, 2, pp. 313-325.

²⁰ Pi. N. 4.50; v. si Gregory Nagy, "Phaeton, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas", *HSCP* 77, 1973, p. 150.

²¹ Erwin Rohde, *Psychè*, trad. fr., Paris 1928, p. 66.

²² Arktinos, *Aithiopsis*, in *Epic. Gr. Fragm.* I, Kinkel, p. 32-33 ; Pi. N. 4.50 ; v. Gregory Nagy, "Phaeton..." cit. supra, n. 20.

lorsque Philostrate les reprend dans ses *Héroïques*²³. Arrien recueille une riche moisson de récits sur la survie d'Achille, et remarque savamment que, tout comme les Dioscures, le héros se montre dans des épiphanies sur le mât des navires, ou bien ou en rêve aux marins, mais que, à l'encontre de Castor et de Pollux, qui sont des dieux sauveurs, le spectre d'Achille est parfois bénéfique, parfois dangereux²⁴. Le récit de Philostrate est sinistre, en évoquant des naufrages et des hécatombes de vierges, égorgées et dévorées par le héros enragé d'avoir perdu sa fiancée Iphigénie²⁵. Moins violent, Maxime de Tyr nous fait voir le fantôme aux cheveux blonds d'Achille, armé et casqué d'or, qui danse au bord de la mer et festoie en compagnie de Patrocle et de sa mère Thétis²⁶.

Il me semble tout à fait évident que, si le périple utilitaire qu'Arrien avait rédigé à l'intention d'Hadrien laissait de côté l'arpentage et la description précise des criques et des vents pour s'attarder si longtemps à raconter ces mythes, ce n'est pas uniquement par souci érudit ou pour distraire ce philhellène qu'était son impérial maître, mais aussi parce que cette géographie imaginaire était encore vivante, du moins aux confins de l'Empire. D'autant plus, pour les simples navigateurs

²³ Pi. N. 4.49–52 ; Eur. *IT* 435–438 ; Eur. *Andr.*, 1260–1262 ; Lycophron, 186–189 ; Skylax, 68 ; [Skymnos] 793–794 ; Dionys. *Perieget.* 541–545 ; Plin. *NH* 4.13 (27), 92 ; Arrian, *Peripl. PE.* 38–40 ; Paus. 3.19.11 ; Philostrat. *Heroic.* 20.32–40 ; Anonym. *Peripl.* 66–68 ; Maxim. Tyr. 9. 15, 6–7 ; Auien. *Descr. Orbis* 720–729. v. Alexandre Bashmakoff, *La Synthèse des périples pontiques. Méthode de précision en paleo-anthropologie, Texte grec et traduction française des Périples de Skylax et d'Arrien, suivis du périple d'un auteur anonyme et de sa continuation selon le Codex Londiniensi, avec une Etude Critique et des Cartes*, Paris 1948.

²⁴ Απ. *Peripl. PE.* 39.

²⁵ Philostr. *Heroic.* 20.32–40.

²⁶ Maxim. Tyr. 9. 15, 6–7.

milésiens ou athéniens des Vie–Ve siècles, l'Istros et l'Île Blanche étaient encore des frontières du monde habité et des lieux dont le récit mythique rendait compte tout aussi bien, sinon mieux que la description scientifique des logographes. Pour les poètes aussi, car ces limites du monde trouvaient tout naturellement leur place dans ces affrontements liminaires de haut risque que le théâtre tragique donnait à voir avec tant de violence et d'éclat²⁷. Dans l'imaginaire géographique de la cité, ces frontières du monde, *peirata gaies* que nul navigateur, nul

²⁷ Pour le concept de liminalité, v. V. Turner, V. Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 1969, pp. 94–113; id. V. Turner, "Liminal to liminoid in play, flow and ritual," *Rice University Studies* 60, no. 3, 1974, pp. 53–92; id. "Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology," in *From ritual to Theatre*. New York 1982, pp. 89–101; et "Images and reflections: ritual, drama, carnival, film and spectacle in cultural performance," *The Anthropology of Performance*, 1988, pp. 65–88. – Les études concernant le théâtre tragique et le spectacle de l'altérité sont trop nombreuses pour figurer ici au complet. Je limite mes références à quelques repères essentiels pour ma démarche, à commencer avec J. P. Vernant & P. Vidal-Naquet, *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne*, Paris 1972; id., *Mythe et tragédie deux*, Paris 1986; v. aussi Helen H. Bacon, *Barbarians in Greek tragedy*, New Haven 1961; Liana Lupas & Zoe Petre, *Commentaire aux "Sept contre Thèbes" d'Eschyle*, Bucarest-Paris 1981; Ch. Segal, *Violence and the Other: Greek, Female, and Barbarian in Euripides' Hecuba*, TAPA 120, 1990, pp. 109–13; S. Goldhill, *The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology*, JHS 107, 1987, pp. 58–76; Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian 'Greek Self-definition Through Tragedy'*, Oxford 1991; Froma I. Zeitlin, *Playing the other: gender and society in classical Greek literature*, Chicago 1996; Nicole Loraux, *La voix endeuillée: essai sur la tragédie grecque*, Paris 1999; S. Goldhill, *Civic Ideology and the Problem of Difference: The Politics of Aeschylean Tragedy, Once again*, JHS 120, 2000, pp. 34–56; Zoe Petre, *L'immortalité du roi Charnabon*, in *Fașetele istoriei. Existențe, identități, Dinamici*. Omagiu acad. Șt. Ștefănescu, București 2000, 395–406; ead., *Sacrifices pour Zalmoxis*, RESEE 2003, pp. 31–50; ead., *Le «Triptolème» de Sophocle et la date du «Prométhée Enchaîné»*, "Studii Clasice" 40–41, 2004–2005, 255–270.

timonier, ne pouvait atteindre, et que seuls les héros du temps jadis auraient découvert et perdu en errant dans les territoires infinis de l'Altérité, accompagnent les navires des hommes voguant toujours plus loin vers les rives jamais atteintes du grand fleuve Okéanos²⁸. Ce conglomerat mythique de récits cosmogoniques, de fragments d'épopée, de contes de la mer et de souvenirs des expériences vécues – mais vécues toujours à travers cet écran fabuleux – résiste dans l'imaginaire antique pendant de longs siècles parce qu'il l'ordonne en fonction du centre, celui de la Grèce des cités qui s'oppose et se reflète dans ce miroir inversé de la frontière²⁹.

²⁸ Il. 18, 607–608; Hes. Scut. 314–315; v. J. S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in ancient Thought. Geography, exploration, and fiction*, Princeton 1992, pp. 13–14 et *passim*.

²⁹ Ann Bergren, *The Etymology and Uses of "peirar" in Early Greek Poetry*, "American Classical Studies" 2, 1975, pp. 22–115; v. încă Robert Onians, *Origins of European Thought*, Cambridge 1951; Rodolfo Mondolfo, *L'Infinito nel pensiero dell'antichità classica*, Florence 1956.

The Lotharingian Border: Historical Realities and Imaginary geopolitics

The Atlantic Ocean to the West, the English Channel to the North West, the Pyreneans and the Mediterranean to the South and the Alps to the South East: France is surrounded by what was termed as “natural borders”. But it has also a terrestrial, not natural border, which has played an essential role in its history, as well as in European geopolitics: the Lotharingian frontier. This is the north-eastern frontier with present-day Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium which has always been the main gate of military invasions (starting with the barbarian invasions that caused the collapse of the Roman Empire to Hitler’s divisions side-stepping the Maginot line and swiftly turning France into a province of the Third Reich). The Lotharingian border is the keystone in the history of European conflicts between France and Germany. It was also at the core of a « Carolingian » definition and vision about Europe, one that is probably dying right now, wiped out before our eyes.

This Lotharingian border was the main territorial bone of contention in the two world wars of the 20th century. After the French army was defeated in 1870, Alsatia and the department of Moselle were annexed by the German Reich. Germany considered those two provinces to be part of its empire. The main argument was that Germanic dialects were spoken in the

area, proof positive of the old Germanic roots of those provinces. The linguistic argument was then used as a political pretext, but the idea was false in principle: in fact, fierce resistance was put to the forced germanization of those regions. This is evidence of their profoundly French identity and of their right place being on the French side of the border.

France: First, we should notice that the word *franc* which gave *France* (Francia) is of German origin.¹ However, by a paradox of history, French does not belong to the Germanic language family, but to the Romance one. This simple lexical notice shows that it is between Germany and Latinity that France has built its national identity. Consequently, the north-eastern Lotharingian border between the Romanic and the Germanic areas has for a long time been of paramount importance in the cultural geopolitics of Europe: it used to be the area of contact and confrontation between the big imperial policies of two millennia (since the *Romanum Imperium* till the three German Empires or Reichs, Napoleon's Empire in between). It is also across this border that the large-scale destabilizing operations of modern Europe have been carried out.

We should recall that besides *borderline*, there is in English a synonym, *frontier*, from the French *frontière*, which in old French meant the front line of an army, before meaning in the 18th century, a fortified place which confronts and is in front of the enemy. *Frontière* is derived from *front*. It is an adjective whose masculine form was *frontier*, wherefrom the English word originated. Today *frontière* (frontier) is the limit that separates two countries. By extension, it designates any limit of territory, although it is obvious that *frontier* was born first and

¹ L. Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen: essai sur les sources du racisme et des nationalismes*, Paris, Pocket, 1994.

mostly from the situation of war.² A war was needed for a frontier to be delineated and established. The frontier line on geographical maps is always the result of military clashes, followed by legal conventions and treaties. It can be understood only in the light of the conflicts whose outcome it finally is. However, the frontier is also a product of the cultural imaginary and it can be perceived only in a long historical perspective.

The «Limes»: The Sensitive Area of the Roman Empire

Two great texts of Roman Antiquity (*The War of Gauls* by Julius Cesar and *Germania* by Tacitus) begin by evoking this pre-Lotharingian frontier of the empire as if this line was predestined to become a limit impossible to cross, as if it stood in fact for an invisible border, between the Mediterranean civilization and the northern barbaric realm.

After the war against the Gauls, the Roman legions swiftly occupied Gaul's territory. However, when the Romans arrived in the Rhenania area, they understood they had stretched their borders to the extreme. A symbol of that expansion, the Porta Nigra in Trier is a landmark separating the Roman Empire from the germanic world, in other words, civilization from barbarism. This monument of the frontier is simultaneously a triumph arch and a defensive gate. And especially, it is the psychological boundary stone marking the limit of the *pax romana*.

Between the Meuse and the Rhine, Romans started to build a lot of cities having also in mind strategic and defensive objectives. They fully recognized the strategic importance of the town of Trier (Augusta Trevirorum) and of Colonia

² O. Bloch et W. von Wartburg, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*, Paris, PUF (Quadrige), 2002, p. 279.

Agrippinensis (Köln) and they were so sure of it, that at the beginning of the war against the Gauls, Caesar acknowledged the Rhine frontier as an extreme limit of civilization. Beyond that limit, there were only rebel and warlike peoples:

The bravest of all these Gallic peoples are the Belgians because they are the farthest in space from the civilization and the refined and lax manners and habits of the Province; merchants hardly reach those places to sell the locals things that could soften their heart and mind. The Belgians are the bravest also because they are the closest to the Germans, who live on the other bank of the river Rhine and against whom they constantly wage wars.³

The eulogy is to be admired. The Romanized Belgians are finally more virtuous than the citizens of the Eternal City. They managed to keep intact the old Roman civic virtues, while the real Romans in their native homeland were falling prone to weaknesses and laxity and sinking into decadence. The limit is clearly marked: the “limes”, in this case is the Rhine and this is obviously a military frontier. Caesar’s sympathy for the Belgians points to the sharing of common interests, which are civilization values. The Belgians finally adopted the values of the *pax romana* and felt repugnance for the warlike manners and habits of their neighboring Germans.

The effacement of those “limes” marked the fall of the Western Latin Empire. That was obviously the weak point of that Empire. However, the pressure of the barbarians’ invasions bore perhaps a lesser impact on the collapse of the Empire than the enrollment in the Roman legions of foreign mercenaries, who gradually and increasingly replaced the Roman citizens-

³ Caesar, *La Guerre des Gaules*, translated by M. Rat, Paris, GF, 1964, p. 13.

soldiers. At the beginning of his *Germania*, Tacitus presents a quasi insular Germanic world, locked behind frontiers that nobody thought to dispute:

Germania is totally isolated: from the Gauls [today Belgium], Rhetia [Grisons, Venice and Tyrol] and Panonia [Austria and Hungary], by the waters of the Rhine and the Danube; from the Dacians [Wallachia, Transylvania, Moldavia, Bessarabia] and the Sarmatians [Russian populations, Cossacks], by mutual fear or by mountains; the rest of its borders touch the Ocean.

For Tacitus, Germania's isolation behind borders viewed as objective is in fact the geographical expression of a strong German cultural identity based on a culture of war. The essential part of the military terminology adopted by French is of Germanic origin. Also, starting with the 1st century AD, the Germans have massively penetrated the Roman army as mercenaries. In the 4th century AD, they were the majority of that army.⁴ It is from that side that the danger was to come: the large Germanic invasions irrevocably destabilized an empire whose authority had been weakening since the 3rd century AD, even more so through the enrollment of Germans in the Roman army; the final outcome was anarchy. However, after the invasions, the German language did not become prevalent in Gaul, as German-speaking people were quite few in those areas. French remained a Romance language, during the chaos of the Merovingian epic included. Linguists today think that the linguistic frontier between the Romance and the Germanic worlds has hardly changed in time, remaining almost the same throughout history.

⁴ W. von Wartburg, *Evolution et structure de la langue française*, Berne, Francke, 1969 (9th edition), p. 55.

Lotharingia: A Sensitive Area of the Carolingian Empire

After some fifty military campaigns, the king of France, Charles the 1st managed to unite the largest part of the German and Latin worlds under his authority. He was crowned emperor in the year 800. That act asserted the symbolic restoration of the Western Roman Empire. However, its center had moved from southern to northern Europe, confirming the decline of the Mediterranean world. Although crowned in Rome, Charlemagne set his capital in Aix, at the core of the old land of the Franks; thus, he established that region as the new center of the world, conferring it a leading political value, since that was the cradle of his dynasty.

In Strasbourg, on February 14th 842 AD, two nephews of Charlemagne (Louis the German and Charles the Bald) publicly proclaimed their alliance against their elder brother, emperor Lothair (heir to Lotharingia) According to a project perfectly conceived both politically and ideologically, they mutually recognized their part of the heritage (part of the old Carolingian empire) under the cover of military assistance. This partition foreshadows the emergence of two distinctive political entities, whose birth certificate is to be found in the *Strasbourg Oaths*. The territorial and institutional dismantle of the old Carolingian empire was signed at that time, as well as the birth of a new geopolitical situation, further to be characterized by the opposition between the Imperium and the Regnum, that is the Empire (German) and the Kingdom (of France). Louis the German took the eastern part of the former Empire (the kingdom of the Franks from Germany) and Charles the Bald took the western part (the kingdom of the Franks from France). In between the two was Lothair's land: Lotharingia. Hence, three distinctive territories were set up on what was left from Charles' former Empire.

Taking a solemn oath of allegiance, the two sovereigns swore before God and the people to mutually support each other and provide help and assistance if need be. In fact, under the cover of a pact of assistance and military cooperation, it was the partition of the world that took place and the setting of new political and cultural borders within the Empire. This event was of high importance for the entire geopolitics of the Middle Ages and of the subsequent epochs. The *Strasbourg Oaths* is a document of first choice for the study of the interference between politics and linguistics in the emergence of new borders.

It is a well known fact that the *Strasbourg Oaths* are particularly important for the history of French as an identity language. In fact, the Strasbourg Oaths are the very birth certificate of French⁵ as they are the oldest written document in this language. In the 9th century, the inhabitants of the Carolingian Empire realized the language they were speaking was no more Latin, but a new language, that had emancipated from its Latin matrix. Similarly, the Germanic subjects of the former Carolingian Empire realized they formed a distinctive bloc, impossible to be confused with the Romance one. A linguistic frontier was born within the world of the Franks. In fact, this linguistic frontier must have existed for a time, since the Germanic bloc of the Carolingian empire had not been conquered by the ancient Imperium Romanum (except for a small strip of land including today's towns of Trier and Köln). Therefore, the really Germanic area could not be "romanized". On the other hand, neither could the invasions of the Franks "francisize" the old "Gallo-Roman" land, turned Gallo-Roman. The seeds of a linguistic and political fracture were germinating in this double resistance structure.

⁵ B. Cerquiglini, *La naissance du français*, Paris, PUF, 1993.

The *Strasbourg Oaths* endorsed an irreversible linguistic development in the former Carolingian empire, acknowledging the crystallization of this irreversible evolution. Lotharingia, an intermediary zone, crossed by the linguistic frontier, was the political victim of that evolution. The linguistic difference has fueled a political and cultural antagonism. The language is the foundation of the subjects' political identity, defined by their common affiliation to the same geographical and linguistic area. The language marks also the dawn of political awareness, by establishing the cultural identity of a given community and by acting as a unifying factor for a human group.

Lotharingia derives from the name of Lothair, who was one of the three nephews of Charlemagne. In 842 AD, in Strasbourg, two other nephews (Louis the German and Charles the Bald) concluded an alliance against their elder brother, Emperor Lothair. Two armies were present when this pact was signed. The soldiers of one army (that of Charles the Bald) spoke old French. The others (Louis' army) spoke a German dialect. The *Strasbourg Oaths*, the oldest written text preserved in Romance were read in both languages.⁶ The Oaths stand for the official birth certificate of both a geolinguistic and a geopolitical space, where French on the one side and German on the other are used as identity landmarks of two blocs issued from the old empire of Charlemagne. Between these two blocs, there was Lothair's kingdom belonging to neither of the two, although it obviously pertains to both.⁷

A fracture was born at the very core of the Carolingian Empire, blowing up its theoretical unity, so much paraded at the

⁶ *Les plus anciens monuments de la langue française (IXe-Xe siècles)*, publiés par G. Paris, Paris, SATF, 1875.

⁷ *Histoire de la Lorraine. L'époque médiévale : Austrasie, Lotharingie, Lorraine* (sous la direction de M. Parisse), Metz, Editions Serpenoise et Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1990.

800 AD crowning. The *Strasbourg Oaths* shortly preceded the Verdun partition of 843 AD, which established the political borders between the three lands that had broken away from the former Carolingian Empire. These frontiers marked Lothair's defeat by his two brothers. As far as the Alemanic bloc is concerned, the borders of Louis's Kingdom were gradually coinciding with the present-day borders of Germany as if, out of a sudden and with extreme precision, the linguistic frontiers of today's Europe were fixed forever in the 9th century. As regards the intermediary zone of the Empire (Lotharingia), there were gaps which perpetuated throughout the centuries and which the current geo-political situation is still striving to bridge: for instance, the problem of Belgium, torn apart between its Walloon and Flemish sides. Facing the animosity between these two linguistic communities, Belgium is still today in pursuit of an impossible unity, struggling to surmount the linguistic and cultural fracture that undermines its daily life. This linguistic fracture is an old, post-Carolingian heritage.

More to the south, in the Lorraine part of Lotharingia, there is an area (Alsatia and Lorraine) which lay at the core of the French-German dispute rooted in the 1870 defeat; the same area was the contention in WW1 (the lost provinces had to be recuperated). In fact, that disputed part of the old Carolingian Empire, claimed by both sides has been a bone of contention between the Franks of France and the Franks of Germany all throughout the centuries. It is the neuralgic point of the Franco-German conflicts.

Lothair's son, Lothair the 2nd, became king of Lotharingia from 855 to 869 AD, before the Mersen Treaty that provided for the dismantle of the Lotharingian bloc. It was in 923 AD that the German emperor took control of Lotharingia, which was divided into two duchies under Othon the 1st: Higher Lotharingia and

Lower Lotharingia. It is precisely at that epoch that the epic literature of the Middle Ages started to developed, as before the 12th century, there is no *chanson de geste* in France. Therefore, we may state that the *chanson de geste* or epos, a genre characteristic to cultures in quest of their cultural identity is the privileged genre in the 12th and 13th centuries, that is at a time when the frontier issue was acute and national identities in the making. We may recall that the epic literature corresponds to the stage of a people's or nation's identity building. This phase of identity building was much more obvious in France than in Germany. The Kingdom of France was in the course of state consolidation during Philippe Auguste and Saint Louis, while the German unity was achieved only much later, within the framework of the modern state. On February the 1st 962AD, Germany's king Othon the First restored the empire, but on the German side, as his initiative came from Oriental Francia.

Subsequently, from the Othonians to the Hapsburgs, passing by the Saliens and the Hohenstaufen, the Holy German Roman Empire lasted until 1806. Located between the French and the German territories, Lothair's Lotharingia has for a long time struggled to find its destiny. This realm of the in- between, this forever middle area is in fact the real problem of the empire after the Verdun partition; this territory belongs to neither of the two blocs and aspires to real autonomy, while being at the same time claimed by both blocs alike. This frontier territory is, however, the heart of the Carolingian empire, as it includes the real cradles of the dynasty, the cities of Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen) or Metz, but at the same time it is deprived of its power of influence to the benefit of the new political centers located further north or south in the two antagonistic blocs of the former Carolingian empire. Far from being a residual of history,

a region impossible to be assimilated by either of the two blocs, Lotharingia stood in fact for the real matrix of the Carolingian world, a synthesis of the two realms. This is a land of challenges and of origins at the same time

It became the object of a latent antagonism that surfaced many a times in history, even in periods closer to our time, long after the Middle Ages. The imaginary of the Roman epics evokes this complex historical situation in many respects. The frontiers and the Lotharingian limits, impregnated in the imaginary of these texts, are recurrently reflected in the mirror of epic fiction. If the Roman epic is a "frontier epic", it is on this Lotharingian border that it focuses its main attention since this frontier marks the line between the aspirations of the King of France and the claims of the Emperor of Germany.

France and the Holy Empire

In the 12th century, a new power emerged on the European arena: the Anglo-Angevin empire of the Plantagenets. At the height of Henry the Second's reign, the empire included the British Isles and a substantial part of western France, while the French kingdom was confined to a narrow area between Paris, Bourges, Orleans and Sens. The king of France is a little king, with no significant power. A real propaganda to expand the French kingdom was carried out by the influential milieus (especially ecclesiastic) close to the Capetian monarchy, for instance the large Saint-Denis monastery in the vicinity of Paris and all the establishments subordinated to it. The instrument of that propaganda was the *chanson de geste* (epic poem) in which the political issues related to the royal function and the territorial border claims are amply evoked. A large part of the French

chansons de geste may be read in this political key of the Capetian's border expansion. These epic poems build geopolitical scenarios based on geographic imaginary.

In this respect, a grand historical figure was resuscitated for the benefit of the Capetian dynasty: Charlemagne. He embodies the dreams of a French continental empire recapturing at least the frontiers of the old Carolingian empire. The embodiment of a dreamt Capetian empire, Charlemagne counteracts the mythical king Arthur, the epitome of the Plantagenets' political utopia.⁸ King Arthur is a dominant figure in the Great and Small Britain and the expansion of his kingdom is built starting from these two provinces. This Arthurian kingdom covering that of the Plantagenets was to become the absolute master of the seas. Hence, the emergence of a Euro-Atlantic space, based on maritime supremacy, having the British Isles at its core; in fact, the inhabitants of the British Isles are the descendants of the Norman settlers that William the Conqueror had pushed in the conquest adventure of the big island. Once they settled on that island, the Normans supplanted the influence of the Vikings⁹ and Saxons, who between 789 and 1100 AD, stood for the other big maritime power that conquered European lands and whose hearth was the Baltic area.¹⁰

Historical events reinforce these representations issued from the imaginary. At Bouvines, on July 27th 1214, the king of France Philippe Auguste fought the coalition forces of emperor Othon, count Ferrand of Flanders and count Renaud of Boulogne.

⁸ M. Aurell, *L'empire des Plantagenêt. 1154-1224*, Paris, Perrin, 2003.

⁹ On the Vikings, see the important works by Régis Boyer, among which: *Les Vikings et leur civilisation. Problèmes actuels*, Paris, Mouton, 1976 and *Les Vikings*, Paris, Plon, 1992. See also the catalogue of the exhibition at the Daoulas abbey: M. Le Bris et C. Glot ed., *L'Europe des Vikings*, Daoulas, Cultural center, 2004 (many articles by R. Boyer).

¹⁰ J. Haywood, *Atlas des Vikings (789-1100)*, Paris, Editions Autrement, 1996.

Bouvines is located on the doorstep of the French kingdom, in that Lotharingia so fiercely disputed by France and Germany alike. According to historian Georges Duby,¹¹ that Sunday battle day of Bouvines is part of those 30 days that made France and drew its frontiers. It is also a symbolic frontier turned into a sanctuary, one in which Bouvines played a major role.

Lotharingia and the Holy Empire

In its turn, the Holy German-Roman Empire went through a process of expansion. Its secret dream was to expand to the west, but the Lotharingian frontier was an obstacle to this project. The Empire was at the peak of glory under Charles Quintus (1519–1556), who managed to annex a large part of Lotharingia with the idea of using that area of the ancient post-Carolingian Empire as a springboard for the conquest of France. His endeavors were stopped by the symbolic town of Metz (in 1552) and the failed siege of this Lotharingian capital town put an end to his dreams. In the same Lotharingia, the attitude of the Burgundis, England's allies in the British-French Hundred Year War had already revealed the power of the old antagonisms, far from being dead. That geopolitical alliance was obviously aimed at weakening the Kingdom of France. Later, when France was occupied by the British, it is from the border area of Lorraine that a savior heroine was to miraculously appear: Joan of Arc, Joan "the good Lorraine girl" as Francois Villon called her in a famous poem.¹² Joan of Arc is a heroine of the Lotharingian

¹¹ G. Duby, *Le dimanche de Bouvines*, Paris, Gallimard, 1973.

¹² While her native village, Domrémy, was located at the frontier area between Champagne and Lorraine (today it is more in Champagne), Villon's Lorraine was in fact Lotharingia in the post-carolingian meaning of the word.

frontier area. She was the mythical support of the party of France (the Valois) against the Anglo-Burgundy claims to the throne of France. It is significant that Villon mentioned Joan in the posterity gallery of imaginary heroines that embodied epic Lotharingia: Berthe the big footed, Beatrix, Alice are all in the epic poems of the Lorrains cycle:

La royne Blanche comme lis
 Qui chantoit a voix de seraine,
 Berte au grant pié, Bietris, Alis
 Haremburgis qui tint le Maine
 Et Jehanne la bonne Lorraine
 Qu'Englois brulerent a Rouan ;
 Ou sont ilz, ou, Vierge souveraine,
 Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan.

The queen White like a lis
 Who was singing like a mermaid,
 Berte the big footed, Bietris, Alis,
 Haremburgis holding the Maine,
 And Jehanne the good Lorraine
 That Englois burned in Rouan ;
 Where are there, oh, Blessed Virgin,
 Where are there the snows of yore?¹³

This famous stanza from the *Ballad of the ladies from the times of yore* proves several things: that Villon's Lorraine is both a real Lotharingia (a geographical one) and an imaginary one and that its historical destiny is impossible to dissociate from its mythical memory; that Lotharingia was still in the 15th

¹³ F. Villon, *Ballade des dames du temps jadis* in: *Œuvres*, édition du texte et traduction par A. Lanly, Paris, Champion, 1991, pp. 106–109.

century a reality of the imaginary geopolitics, although it was present in the spirit of the intellectuals and perhaps of the commoners, if we are to judge by the astounding epic of the Orleans girl. At 19, Joan of Arc was able to become a mythical figure of her epoch only because she embodied the aspirations of a kingdom in distress and in a messianic expectation of its salvation. She fully met this mythical expectation of a liberator heroine announced by Merlin's prophecies. She was in fact the liberator coming from Lorraine's forests, the brave goddess of battles and warlike sovereignty, well known from the Celtic myths rooted in the Lorraine land.¹⁴ Through Joan's example, it is obvious the imaginary is not a mere sub-product of History. It is, on the contrary, its very driver and model, what actually makes history act and what makes it sometimes topple.

When the Hundred Year War ended, the fight between France and its rival powers for the conquest of Lotharinga continued unabated. Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy from 1467 to 1477 staged an alliance against the King of France and for a short time, he managed to restore a great Lotharinga, but he was killed at Nancy in a combat against Rene II, Duke of Lorraine. His death compromised the political resurrection of a great Lotharinga, one that might have stretched from the Netherlands to Italy. About a century later, when the King of France Henry II seized the three Bishoprics (Metz, Toul and Verdun) in 1552, he set foot definitively in that Lotharinga that opposed him. However, he did not seize all the territory of Lorraine, as a king of Poland reigned in the 18th century over Nancy, which became French much later than Metz. After Charles Quintus, Philippe II, king of Spain and ally of the British continued to fight the king of France, but he faltered in front of that same Lotharingian frontier area, whose Roman part was

¹⁴ Ph. Walter, *La mémoire du temps*, Paris, Champion, 1989, p. 739.

increasingly tilting to the French side. The case of Lotharingia is ample evidence that natural borders (imposed by geography), linguistic borders and political frontiers hardly ever coincide.

Today: Geopolitical Projection on the Present

Henri Pirenne had shown that Islam, through its hegemonic position in the Mediterranean area, has made possible the European idea.¹⁵ The *Song of Roland* had in fact linked the emergence of the European kingdom of Charles to the victory against the Saracens and Islam (we know today that the historical truth about the battle of Roncevaux is quite different), but what marked the mentalities was the *Song of Roland* version itself, not the precise military description of the Roncevaux battle fought against a couple of Basque mercenaries. Literature is a mirror of the utopias, dreams and fears storming the consciousness of people during various historical periods. The first mythical king that fought Islam was Charlemagne. His real kingdom was that of the Franks (from France and Germany). The center of that empire was a large Rhenan and Rhodanian corridor, from the Frieze Islands to Lombard and Tuscany. The Empire stretched from Brittany to Austria and from the Pyreneans to the Baltic Sea. That Empire roughly corresponds to the regions that were the founding fathers of the first European Treaty (the Rome Treaty, 1957): France and Western Germany, Italy and Benelux. The first large geopolitical European space is in fact the ancient territory of the Franks' community. The Rhine stands for its strategic axis and the Lotharingian frontier for its mainspring.

¹⁵ About Henri Pirenne, see <http://www.digitheque.ulb.ac.be/fr/digitheque-henri-pirenne/>

During the next millennium, that specific Europe reached its historical balance within the frontiers that were its own. Neither Napoleon's Empire, nor Hitler's one (an attempt of resurrecting the ancient Carolingian empire) managed to expand beyond Charlemagne's borders. Each time that the old Carolingian Europe wanted to become larger, it came up against the resistance of other geopolitical spaces, each of them based on their own historical and cultural logic.¹⁶ Today we may distinguish four European spaces that were the competitors of the Carolingian empire. They are the Danube, the Baltic, the Atlantic and the Euro-Mediterranean spaces. Carried by the Hapsburg's imperial dream, the Danube space¹⁷ came up against Serbia's and Czechoslovakia's integration and collapsed in 1918, after WWI. In present-day Europe, the former Soviet satellite countries located in that area would like to integrate the Carolingian space, but neither can Russia nor the United States agree with that integration which runs counter to their own interests. In fact the Soviet parenthesis was also a pursuit of a dream, the great Russian dream of a Eurasian empire, based on panslavism.¹⁸ The Baltic area could also have been a strong empire, continuing the Viking world, but no big power was ever able to federate the two shores of the Baltic Sea. The Atlantic space, made of Portugal and Great Britain, with their two American extensions, Brazil and the

¹⁶ A. Chauvrade, *Géopolitique: constantes et changements dans l'histoire*, Paris, Ellipses, 2003.

¹⁷ On this south-eastern Europe: M. Muthu, *Du côté du sud-est*, Cluj, Clusium, 2001.

¹⁸ H. Carrère d'Encausse, *L'empire d'Eurasie*, Paris, Fayard, 2005. At a symbolic level, it is worth mentioning that in two of the three non-slavic countries of the former Eastern bloc (East Germany and Romania), the most symbolic events of the Soviet communism collapse took place: the physical elimination of the communist leader Ceausescu and the fall of the Berlin wall, an obsolete and artificial frontier at the heart of a divided Germany.

United States would like to open the European empire to the west, that is to the Universal. But those countries of the extreme European west are pillars of "Atlanticism" being under American influence and less willing to get interested in Carolingian Europe. The Euro- Mediterranean space is the only one left, with its three peninsulas (Iberian, Italian and Greek), in other words Greece and its two main colonies¹⁹: Rome and Byzance. This Ancient Mediterranean Europe, attracted by the Orient for a long time²⁰ thinks it can find its great dream in the Israeli-American project of the large Middle East (from Morocco to the Caspian Sea), a project which wants to confound Palestine and the Arab unity in order to better control the oil reserves of the world. All these spaces are rich in various geopolitical frontiers and are able to give rise to different scenarios for the political history of the 21st century.

Europe's frontiers are the results of historical tensions that emerged between the five geopolitical spaces shaping this continent. Any frontier is imaginary. It is a phenomenon pertaining to the imaginary as well as a (quite provisory) product of history.

Historically speaking, the Lotharingian border was both a real and an imaginary geographical line, playing an extremely structuring role in the identity building of the nation-states it delimited. It is starting from that frontier that the nation states have found themselves historically at the core of the "European construction". The Lotharingian frontier was able to play that role only because it is linked to a mythical and a historical memory which is part of the identity of the peoples recognizing it.

The Lotharingian frontier has long been the sanctuary of a Carolingian Europe which has perhaps reached its geopolitical

¹⁹ F. Letoublon, *La ruche grecque et l'empire de Rome*, Grenoble, Ellug, 1995.

²⁰ We may think of Alexander's epic.

limits. Today, another Europe is in line for federation, in a common cultural project even more difficult to imagine as it does not have a known historical precedent. Carolingian Europe is no more sufficient: Charlemagne has nothing to say to a southern Slav or to a Scandinavian. Baltic or Danubian Europe is far from stirring excitement or being a dream for a French or a Spaniard. Behind any frontier, there are cultural models and identities which, everybody knows, are always acquired, never innate. All identity is a construction, at least as much as it is a cultural heritage. Today, the European identity is more than ever, in a "stand-by", calling for a thorough reflection on the cultural models that make it up.²¹

²¹ E. Morin, *Penser l'Europe*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990 (revised and completed edition)

Europe is ever a past

As a literary and philosophy scholar I am much more interested in the conceptual and imaginative depictions of Europe rather than in the geographical and political empiricism that accounts for spatial and documentary data. I prefer to deal with the conceptual borders of Europe and not with its physical and political demarcations. By that, I am not even for a second wanting to underestimate the role of the later trend in treating the problems. At the very beginning of my presentation, I would like to clarify the scope and the direction of my scientific belonging.

The title of my presentation may sound paradoxical, even strange. Everybody could take an objection to the assertion it contains. Europe in the perspective of an easy substantiation is a manifest and inevitable presence. Someone could say it is more than ever a real and vivacious entity. Nevertheless I mean the title literally. I am going to elucidate in three steps in what sense, in my opinion, Europe is ever a past.

First, let me quote a passage from Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" where he elaborates on Plato's term "idea":

"From the way in which Plato employed the expression *idea* we can readily see that he meant by it something that ... is never borrowed from the senses... Ideas, in his opinion, flowed from highest reason, from where they have been imparted to

human reason; now, however, human reason is no longer in its original state, but must laboriously recall the ancient ideas, now much obscured, through recollection (called philosophy)."¹

Following Plato and Kant I contend that Europe is only an idea in the strict philosophical sense. 1. It is a primordial idea, which lays so far-off in the historical and physical past that Plato rightly concluded that such ideas stem and descend from some higher reason. We could hope to reach for those ideas, now lost for our earthly world, not by means of the political and economical action, not by means of some empirical social experiment, but only by means of philosophical anagnorisis (remembrance and exploration). The transcendental idea of Europe was imparted to human reason at the latest when this human reason dared grasp in itself the mythical world of Gods, while interpreting the myth of Zeus and Europa²; 2. As any transcendental idea Europe hasn't been borrowed from any empirically tangible, sensually evident and historically verifiable reality. If anybody believes in the opposite, I am ready to listen. By then I will totally disagree with the supposition that we are able to build an idea of Europe, starting out of some present and now identifiable geographical, political and economical borders or some other premises. In contrast to the empirical concepts, which could be construed in this way, ideas precede every reality and supply its contradictory and incompatible components with some basic level of unity, which human

¹ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Werner S. Pluhar; Hackett, 1996, p. 362.

² Europe, according to the Iliad (xiv. 321), a daughter of Phoenix, but according to the common tradition a daughter of Agenor, was carried off by Zeus, who had metamorphosed himself into a bull, from Phoenicia to Crete. Europe, as a part of the world, was believed to have received its name from this fabulous Phoenician princess. There are two other mythical personages of this name, which occurs also as a surname of Demeter.

existence could not dispense with if it wants to be bearable. 3. As a transcendental idea Europe could never find realization in any empirically concrete, sensually evident and historically verifiable reality. This is the crucial Plato's and Kant's lesson. The last means that this idea, precisely because it precedes in a transcendental and temporal sense every reality, should be further elaborated into some conceptual and imaginative projections. They themselves could be partially realized into some present or future reality, but no reality could exemplify and verify the idea itself to the full extent.

In a word, in a transcendental and temporal sense Europe is ever a past and being idea in Plato's and Kant's sense no reality could correspond to it. There is an impassable border between the idea of Europe and the political and economical realities, in which so many people nowadays live. Just one example, there is an impassable border between the concept of political and legal equality, which is an essential part of the idea of Europe and the evident empirical inequality between, for instance, the political elites and the other citizens. So many governments of so called Old Europe, so vigorously insisting that they have turned the concept of political equality into an empirical practice, prohibited their fellow citizens to vote on the European constitution in referenda. Saying that there is a border between the idea of Europe and the reality in which many of us live, I don't mean that we should abandon the idea of Europe. We should only avoid the traps of the political propaganda persuading us that this idea is reality or is about to become reality. Ideas don't wallow in reality. They save us from the tyranny of reality in many ways I have no time to discuss here and now. If too many people abandon the concept of political equality and follow principles that issue not from this concept, but from the empirically perceivable political inequality they observe in their everyday life, I can assure you that tyranny of

reality has already arrived. Ideas don't enter reality because so they could be able only in this way to save us from becoming accomplices and proponents to the enthronement of the overt chaos and violence.

That was my first argument why I contend that Europe is ever a past. I am going now to the second one. And I am going to the distant historical past.

It is well known that with the Enlightenment, a stronger trans-confessional inclusion of Eastern Europe, which was at that time under the Ottoman rule, into the European civilization of Europe also became possible. The suggestion was that Eastern Europe should yet be included into Europe although it is Christian-Orthodox, which means that it is distinct from Catholic and Protestant Europe. The inter-confessional borders and divisions within the Christian world should be overcome and the Eastern-Orthodox peoples under the Ottoman rule should be thought as part of Europe. Only given these premises Europe could gain its homogeneity as a whole and set landmarks to Asiatic Ottoman Empire. This is yet only one side of the coin. On the other side the so called "hypocrisy" of Western Europe becomes evident.

"But at the same time, the notion of an enlightened Europe created new divisions between the Western enlightened 'civilized' – that is, the developed and modern parts and the Eastern non-enlightened 'barbarian' – that is, the backward and traditional parts of Europe (Wolff 1994³)."⁴

On the one hand, Europe was confessionally united in order to differentiate itself from the Ottomans. On the other

³ Wolff, L. *The Invention of Eastern Europe*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994.

⁴ Spohn, Willfried, Continuities and Changes of Europe in German National Identity, in Eds. Mikael Af Malmberg, Bo Stråth, *The Meaning of Europe: Variety and Contention within and among Nations*. New York. 2002, p. 288.

hand, Western Europe installs a new division between itself as "civilized" and Eastern Europe as "barbarian". I am the last man who would object to this new division. I think it was just and justifiable. "Barbarian" may sound too rude, but the implied meaning was entirely fitting the empirical reality. The Bulgarian intellectuals from the 19 c. were fully aware that in terms of modernization Bulgaria was far behind and separated from Western Europe. What I call "hypocrisy" of Western Europe concerns the double game it has been playing for two centuries. Verbally Western Europe has been persuading the Bulgarians that it regards them as Europeans at least because they are Christians. But in reality it has made everything possible to push them out of its borders leaving them to the rule of barbarity. In 1878 after virtually all Bulgarian territories were liberated 2/3 of Bulgaria were shoved back into the hands of Turkish Empire under the pressure of the Western European governments. In 1945, on the basis of the previous secret agreement between Churchill and Stalin, Bulgaria was once again stuck back into the hands of barbarism, this time – the Soviet Communist barbarism. How could the Bulgarians not have been barbarians provided Western Europe has ever pushed them out of the borders of civilization?

You can say: O.K., now finally Western Europe undertakes an epochal change. It embraced the Bulgarians and slipped them into its bosom. You can say: now finally Western Europe is ready to erase the border between itself and the barbarity, admitting so its historical mistakes. Nobody is perfect, you can add. I personally don't give credit to this.

I, in turn, will say that especially in the case of Bulgaria Western Europe does not erase the border between itself and the barbarity, giving chance to the Bulgarian citizens like me. Western Europe doesn't fight the barbarity in Bulgaria. It welcomes the barbarity in its very heart. If in the past, in 1878

and 1945, Western Europe has put the border between itself and the barbarity, outside its economical and political body; today it pulls this border inside its political and economical heart. If Western Europe has really wanted to erase this border in the case of Bulgaria, it should reject the accession of Bulgaria into the European Union before Bulgaria has cleaned and even disinfected itself from the barbarity.

The real name of the present day Bulgarian barbarism is – the economic poverty of the huge parts in our population, the existential torture on the many groups in our society (for instance on the men and women of knowledge), the total corruption in the state institutions, the symbiosis between the politicians and the mafia, which reaches every part of our society. The Western Europe governments have welcomed all this in their bosom and are going to nourish lavishly all this with the European funds. Our politico-criminal mafia is ready to help, I can assure you.

I know already these European political elites that fight so eagerly and so effectively on the borders of civilization. I know this Europe that is ready to die but not leave any single European citizen in the grip of the barbarism. I know it from the past. This Europe is for me ever a past.

This was my second argument. I would like to go to my last argument.

In my view nobody would refute that the project of modernity as modernization has reached its happy and blissful completion in the present day Western Europe.

Let me quote a brief description of the main features of modernity as modernization, which Bryan Turner draws out of Max Weber's sociology:

“(i) the differentiation of social spheres into specialized and quasi-autonomous institutions; (Religion, the state, law, the market, economy, culture... B. Z.)

(ii) The growth of abstract conceptualizations of sovereignty and power...

(iii) The extension of formal, abstract rationality...

(iv) The adoption of bureaucratic standards of procedure in all major public institutions...

(vi) The secularization and disenchantment of culture..."⁵

I am sure that in the eyes of the Brussels Euro – bureaucrats (from European parliament to European commission) and their political sponsors from the European governments Europe should be just like that. With one small correction: political bureaucracy and economical liberalism should smash the living worlds and cultures over-pushing them for specific political and economical purposes at one moment or abdicating from the obligation to protect them at another. I would say that these are the conceptual borders of Europe according to the Brussels bureaucracy. What for Max Weber was just a warning in front of the modernization advancement is for them a wishful ideal, which they strive to bring into reality. Someone could say that the political over-centralization and bureaucratization in Europe and the cleaning the way for the unbridled economic liberalism in Europe, where the protectionism is applied only for the purposes of the companies are the only way to withstand the global economic competition. And since the material well-being is the basis for all other components in the human live we should be happy with this Europe. I personally would disagree. I have lived in a world where the over-centralized politics and the overestimated economy have occupied the living existential and cultural space. If someone hopes that we can secure a blissful transition from the Soviet communist block to the new conceptual and geographical borders of a future Europe replacing the political dictatorship with

⁵ Turner, Bryan S. Max Weber: *From History to Modernity*, Routledge, 1993, p. 13.

the representative democracy and the plan economy with the liberalism, but still keeping the over-centralization and overestimation I would reply that in fact this Europe is already a past. I have already lived in such a "Europe".

I began with the assertion that Europe is only an idea that happily could not find realization into empirical reality. Empirical reality is limited while every transcendental idea is borderless. And if I am asked to hint at my idea of Europe I would quote the magnificent poetic and political fragment of 1799 by the prominent German Romantic writer Novalis:

"Those were fine, magnificent times when Europe was a Christian country, when one Christendom inhabited this civilized continent and one great common interest linked the most distant provinces of this vast spiritual empire."⁶

"How beneficent this government (of Europe – B. Z.) was, how appropriate this institution to man's inner nature is shown by the powerful aspirations of all other human forces, the harmonious development of all abilities, the immense height reached by individuals in all spheres of the sciences of life and of the arts, and by the trade in spiritual and physical goods which flourished everywhere in Europe and as far as the most distant Indies."⁷

Novalis was implicitly conscious that Europe as spiritual (religious and cultural) empire could never be a reality. Accordingly he contrives his imaginative Europe into the Middle Ages by means of poetic imagination. In this way he tries to outwit us and console us that at least then, in the past, it was a reality. Europe of Novalis is already a past, so is my Europe either.

⁶ Novalis, *Christendom or Europe. A Fragment*, in *The Political Thought of the German Romantics, 1793–1815*, H. S. Reiss, ed., Blackwell, 1955, pp. 126–127.

⁷ Novalis, *Christendom or Europe. A Fragment*. in: *The Political Thought of the German Romantics, 1793–1815*, H. S. Reiss, ed., Blackwell, 1955, p. 128.

From an Imperial Borderland to a "European Frontier:" History, Politics and the Ambiguity of Belonging (The Case of Bessarabia /Moldova)

Human agency, in its state-building hypostasis, performs multiple functions of defining the space and time categories of the polity's existence. Consequently, the "mastering of space" represents one of the fundamental challenges for empire-builders and empire-administrators, be it in the context of contiguous, continental empires, or in that of far-flung "colonial" enterprises. A purely sociological interpretation of the imperial experience, while clearly valuable in assessing the dynamics and internal nature of the functioning of the administrative mechanisms and in illuminating the stable patterns of elite interactions, is rarely, if at all, aware of the spatial dimension of imperial control. For protagonists and adversaries of the polities in question, however, the problems of confronting and appropriating space have constantly lurked in the forefront of the tactics and strategy of domination, at times even superseding concerns linked to the long-term perspectives of regime survival. This paper aims, on the one hand, to emphasize the salience and impact of spatial categories upon the self-perception and the conduct of policy both within continental

and maritime empires by discussing the problem of frontiers, borders and boundaries as markers of “territory, sovereignty and identity.”¹ On the other hand, it aims to follow a trend that recently emerged at the juncture of history, political science, anthropology and geography and which sees the interaction of “complex frontiers” as a scholarly problem in its own right, dwelling on the older notion of “border cultures,” but at the same time proposing an alternative vision of the geopolitical “Eurasian” context as most conducive to a reassessment of the pre-World War I evolution of inter-imperial contest and competition. Accordingly, the first part of this section will focus on a review and criticism of various attempts to represent and understand phenomena of “liminality,” with the ultimate aim to clarify my interpretation of the term “borderland.” The second part will discuss the opportunities and problems associated with the framework of “complex frontiers” and the new openings it offers for a re-reading of the competing visions of empire- and nation-building in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

The conceptual difficulties and terminological confusion reigning within the field of “border studies” are notorious. For our purposes, one could freely borrow from the thoughtful criticism that Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker leveled at the notion of “identity” in connection with the confusion between “categories of practice” and “categories of analysis.”² As is the case with other similar concepts (“empire” being one of the most obvious analogies), “borders,” “boundaries” and “frontiers” are often interpreted as nothing more than equivalent designations of limits between states that, though they may

¹ Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson. *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1999), p. 44.

² Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

convey certain symbolically charged messages, are essentially legal and jurisdictional linear markers of the extent of a state's territory. Though scholarly debate has generally added useful discriminations and nuances to this undifferentiated "common usage," the picture is by no means clear in all cases. As Alfred J. Rieber remarked in a seminal article, "Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the scholarly literature gradually made the distinction clearer between boundaries and frontiers by distinguishing between a linear and a spatial concept, shifting from place to process, and introducing symbol and mythology as new disciplines like anthropology and most recently cultural studies intersected with geography and history."³ The tendency towards a more complex understanding of this distinction, with a special emphasis on the dynamic, shifting and "active" character of the "frontier," as opposed to the intrinsically formal and legal nature of the "boundary," is related both to the intellectual context in which these terms appeared and evolved, and to their link with another "pair" of problematic notions, those of "border" and "borderland." On the one hand, some scholars view the difference between "boundary" and "frontier" not so much in their designation of different, if connected, aspects of the "border experience," but in different academic or even linguistic traditions of use and interpretation. In an interesting and thought-provoking article devoted to the discussion of "frontier administration in eighteenth-century China," Peter C. Perdue notes: "The term "frontier" can have many meanings, but there are basically two traditions of analysis: the European one, which stresses the creation of fixed borders between distinct states [the French *frontiere*], and the North American one, where frontier refers to

³ Alfred J. Rieber, "Changing Conceptions and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach," in: *Ab Imperio*, Nr. 1, 2003, pp. 10–11.

broad regions of interaction of multiple cultures.”⁴ The overall assessment of the author, identifying two purportedly parallel and somehow opposed “traditions of analysis,” is highly questionable. However, he does point to two important features that have influenced not only the crystallization of the terminology, but also the frames of the “frontier debate” as such. The first is the linguistic non-coincidence of French and Anglophone vocabulary that has in many ways hampered meaningful comparisons and communication between the two academic environments (though it is largely superseded at present). This “linguistic predicament” is outlined in unequivocal terms in the work of one of the most distinguished French experts in “border studies,” Michel Foucher. He asserts that “this lexical opposition [between the frontier as a “line” or a “zone”] has an Anglo-American semantic origin, the “frontier” being opposed to the “boundary.”⁵ In other words, the difference of interpretation persists, but it should not be related to a “meta-discursive” level of “epistemological incommensurability,” but to different models of conceptualization of the “border experience.” The second feature has to take into account the American context of the Turnerian “frontier thesis,” which, notwithstanding its subjection to all-out criticisms, still constructs the scholarly debate along well-defined lines. While disagreeing with Perdue’s identification of reified and discrete “traditions of analysis,” it would be a mistake to deny the differences in the French and North American interpretation of the “border phenomenon.” A. J. Rieber advances a more useful

⁴ Peter C. Perdue, “Empire and Nation in Comparative Perspective: Frontier Administration in Eighteenth-Century China,” in: *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 5, Nr. 4, 2001, p. 287.

⁵ Michel Foucher, *Fronts et frontières: Un tour du monde géopolitique* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), p. 45.

approach in his discussion of the "paradigms" of frontier studies. He argues for the envisioning of the current state of research in the field as being structured by a "triptych of Turner iconography," with Turner's controversial "thesis" serving as the base.⁶ Alongside Turner's vision of the "moving frontier," the "flanks" are represented, on the one side, by "a different spatial concept linked to the rise and consolidation of the centralized state that developed out of the French experience"⁷ while, "on the other side..., a third panel represents the symbolic geographies, that is the construction of imaginary borders on the basis of normative evaluations of the "Other."⁸ This tripartite scheme allows a clearer differentiation of the current scholarly trends and also takes into account the complicated evolution of the investigation of the "border phenomenon" during the last century. In the following pages I will focus on the discussion of the three components outlined above, but will also attempt to "bring back" the "geopolitical dimension," that structured the terms of the debate on borders in ways that ranged from reaction (in the French case) to a reassessment of some of the tenets of the German school of *Geopolitik*, while attempting to launch a debate on the relevance of a "political geography" conscious of the dimensions of "border construction," and seamlessly integrated with the burgeoning field of "symbolic geography."

Before a more detailed discussion of the models of the "frontier experience" which shape current debates, several

⁶ Alfred J. Rieber, "Changing Conceptions and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach," in: *Ab Imperio*, Nr. 1, 2003, p. 12.

⁷ A. J. Rieber, "Changing Conceptions and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach," in: *Ab Imperio*, Nr. 1, 2003, p. 14.

⁸ A. J. Rieber, A. J. Rieber, "Changing Conceptions and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach," in: *Ab Imperio*, Nr. 1, 2003, p. 16.

points should be made concerning the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century “geopolitical tradition.” The importance of this controversial intellectual current for the present topic stems from the preoccupation that its representatives shared for the conceptualization of “global space,” and, more specifically, for the “border dimension” of imperial and national space (especially in the German tradition). According to the remark of a contemporary critic, “[the] region of knowledge that would later be dubbed “geopolitics” was born in the colonial capitals of the rival empires of the late nineteenth century, within the established universities, geographical societies, and centers of learning of the Great Powers.”⁹ The critique of this author, being based on a challenging combination of Foucauldian notions of “governmentality” and the recent insights of “postcolonial theory,” proposes a comprehensive examination of the origins and continuity of the interaction between “geography” (understood in the broadest sense, as the “science of space”) and power. He identifies several ideological and philosophical presuppositions that purportedly structured the logic and the modes of argumentation employed by the “geopolitical tradition” in all its regional variations. Following the lead of postcolonial studies and their (occasionally overstated) emphasis on the constant interaction between knowledge and power, O Tuathail states that “those intellectuals associated with geopolitics before World War II (sometimes called “classical geopolitics”) were invariably imperialists of one sort or another.”¹⁰ Even if the “normative” component of this evaluation (implicitly present if not explicitly stated) should be

⁹ Gearoid O Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 21.

¹⁰ Gearoid O Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 22.

approached with caution, the important point worth retaining is the character of geopolitics as an empire-conditioned intellectual endeavor which, even if put to the use of "national" agendas in the inter-war period, cannot be severed from the context of its emergence in Western Europe at a time when dilemmas of empire were prominent. Another feature astutely observed by this author pertains to the intellectual roots of early "geopolitics." While it is commonly assumed that "Social Darwinism" is the appropriate designation for the totality of "biology-oriented" approaches to social phenomena dominant in European thought in the late nineteenth century, it is argued that "neo-Lamarckism" better defines the nature and implications of the geopolitical interpretation due to its "emphasis on design rather than randomness in the evolutionary process."¹¹ The dilemma inherent in the deterministic nature of this doctrine is related to the "racist" and "environmentalist" potentialities that are both entailed within the framework of Lamarckian biology. Consequently, the scholars who attempt to reassess the meaning of geopolitics (especially of its German variant) as a legitimate subfield of political geography tend to introduce the opposition of "environmentalism" and "racism" as an important variable in the overall equation,¹² while others emphasize the indissoluble link between the two. The third unifying criterion of geopolitical thinking, as identified by O Tuathail, attempts to gauge its philosophical presuppositions by drawing on the postmodernist deconstruction of "Cartesian rationalism." His argument is structured by an opposition to what he calls "Cartesian

¹¹ Gearoid O Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 22.

¹² Mark Bassin, "Geographical Determinism in Fin-de-Siecle Marxism: Georgii Plekhanov and the Environmental Basis of Russian History," in: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 82, Nr. 1, 1992, pp. 3-22.

perspectivalism,” or, in other words, “the Cartesian divide between an inner self and an outer reality, between an internal mind and an external world of objects.”¹³ Even if one cannot completely agree with the essentialism of this critical stance and with the pushing of the “equivalence of gazes” to its extreme, a deeper awareness of the fact that “[geopolitics] ... was not an aberration but part of the mainstream political discourse that was always conscious of the “instrumentality of space”¹⁴ would suggest a more balanced attitude towards the importance of the “geopolitical tradition” for an incipient thinking about the “frontier experience” of mankind.

The “geopolitical current” represents, arguably, the most well known approach to the problems of the conceptualization of humanity in its spatial dimension throughout the nineteenth century. This is due, on the one hand, to the “essentially contested and political nature of all geopolitical discourse.”¹⁵ On the other hand, it can be linked to the multiple uses that the “neo-Lamarckian” or “Social Darwinist” component, especially in its Ratzelian guise, has been subjected to by various imperial and national projects of space appropriation prior, during and following World War I. Nevertheless, the “frontier disputes” that emerged in the intellectual sphere of XIX century Europe, as a part of the attempt of political thinkers to grapple with “modernity” in its relation to the state, could also be placed within a wider context. A wide-ranging, if only tangentially interesting, classification of the concepts of territory and

¹³ Gearoid O Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 23.

¹⁴ Gearoid O Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 24.

¹⁵ Gearoid O Tuathail. *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 24.

"borders" in the framework of the European state system has been offered by Malcolm Anderson in his work devoted to "frontiers in the modern world" (mostly interpreted as synonyms of the concept of "boundary").¹⁶ Anderson is one of the few scholars who, while working in the field of international relations, are aware of the dynamics of the process of the construction and evolution of "frontiers" and "borders." The author clearly relates the "paradigms" he identifies within this field to the "symbolic threshold" of the French Revolution, which necessitated the envisioning of "new bases for political authority."¹⁷ The main flaw that could be imputed to this author, as to others dealing with the general problems of "frontiers" and "borderlands" within the European political system, is their concentration on the link between the phenomenon of "frontiers" and that of the nation-state. Alternatively, the territorial dimension of state building is dependent on the related concept of "sovereignty," a tendency that limits the array of potential questions that can be addressed by scholars and also severely constrains the applicability of the concepts of "frontier" and "border" to their present, legalistic usage. Still, Anderson's scheme could serve as a partial illustration of the possible constructions of territoriality in the nineteenth century and as an explanation of the reluctance of many students of the "frontier phenomena" to acknowledge the multiplicity and variety of the constructions of "borders." Anderson states that: "The four most influential nineteenth-century explanations of territorial disputes can be drastically summarized under the headings of economic determinist, liberal nationalist, social Darwinist and *Realpolitik*."¹⁸ The first three tendencies are the reflections of

¹⁶ Malcolm Anderson. *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), esp. pp. 26–30

¹⁷ Anderson, p. 26.

¹⁸ Anderson, p. 26.

the dominant ideologies of the epoch and, thus, can hardly represent “independent” theoretical contributions to the problems of “frontiers” as a discrete research problem. Moreover, the lumping together of the Marxist, liberal and “Social Darwinist” theories of territoriality does not acknowledge the dissimilar impact of spatial categories in the cases of the three currents. While one can hardly disagree with Anderson’s contention that “geopolitics” in general, and Ratzel’s work, in particular, represented “[the] most ambitious project to apply organic views of state and nation to territory and frontiers,”¹⁹ as well as with the attention he pays to Ratzel’s “biologization” of social existence, he fails to appreciate the relevance of “space” as a distinguishing feature and a primordial category of geopolitical thinking and discourse. The entanglement of “geopolitics” with politics *tout court* has proved too enduring to allow a meaningful comparison between its tenets and the presuppositions of the alternative conceptualizations of frontiers in the nineteenth-century context. Finally, the *Realpolitik*, as the author himself readily admits, “was a practice rather than a theory,”²⁰ and, moreover, could claim, as such, a much longer genealogy than the other three alternative tendencies, which were all embedded in the contemporary intellectual milieu.

Even while international relations theory, anthropology, geography and other neighboring disciplines have shaped and continue to enrich historians’ thinking on “frontiers, boundaries and borders,” the interpretations that have had the most lasting impact are more closely related to specifically “historical” readings of these phenomena. One of the most compelling and controversial among these “constructions” of the frontier has been

¹⁹ Anderson, p. 28.

²⁰ Anderson, p. 29.

proposed by the American historian Frederick Jackson Turner and is commonly reduced to his "frontier thesis." This thesis, as presented by Turner himself, argues that "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward explain American development."²¹ The main question that has to be addressed here deals not so much with the validity of Turner's scheme as an explanatory tool (which has been abundantly and convincingly challenged in the American academia), but with the reasons of its impact on the historical discipline's overall preoccupation with the problem of frontiers. At first sight, this impact seems all the more puzzling because of the thrust of Turner's argument, which was clearly aimed at emphasizing American uniqueness and its difference from European models. Turner not only argues that "[the] American frontier is sharply distinguished from the European frontier- a fortified boundary line running through dense populations,"²² he also explicitly proclaims that "The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization" and that, moreover, the advancement of the frontier "has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines."²³ Thus, the frontier (either a definite space or the process of "advancement" itself- a conceptual uncertainty that remains a puzzle for later commentators) can only be meaningful, in Turner's own terms, as long as it is not severed from the American context which engendered it. Why, then, has this idea aimed at the legitimating of the American national "project" acquired a definite relevance

²¹ *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 31.

²² *Rereading Turner*, p. 33.

²³ *Rereading Turner*, pp. 33-34.

for the general historiography of the “border phenomena”? At the most general level, one could certainly agree with A. J. Rieber that, “like many great themes in historiography, its importance lies more in the literature it generated than in its original propositions.”²⁴ However, several features of Turner’s approach as such have been fundamental for its serving as a model for any comparative scholarly undertaking in the field. Foremost among these characteristics is the agency that Turner’s concept of the “frontier” bestows on border societies. These communities emerge as active elements that not only may envisage agendas different from their respective centers, but that shape the policies of the center and eventually influence the character of the “core.” Such an interpretation involves the “over-stretching” of Turner’s concept to the point of its applicability to any border zone, but the plasticity and inconsistency of his definitions (for which he has been justly criticized) simultaneously provides an “open space” for multiple “readings” of the interactions and exchanges that a “frontier” as a zone entails. Though Turner saw a contrast between the “linear” character of European borders and the “zonal” and shifting development in the American case, his insights have been successfully applied to instances where the “nation-state” model of borders proved inadequate. One cannot entirely agree with the position of critics who emphasize that “[Turner’s thesis] has influenced scholars in many disciplines worldwide for a century” only “because of its geographical and technological determinism and its attempt to link space and time to the formation of a national character.”²⁵ It could be surmised, on the contrary, that the present applications of Turner’s ideas

²⁴ Alfred J. Rieber, “Changing Conceptions and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach,” in: *Ab Imperio*, Nr. 1, 2003, p. 14.

²⁵ Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1999), p. 49.

have proved most fruitful at the point where they supersede the "geographical and technological determinism" of their first proponent and pay attention instead to the complexity of the interaction of geography, culture and history that allows for multiple scenarios of "borderland construction."

The French conceptual model of the nature, significance and dynamics of "borders" (here used as a generic term to designate the totality of conflicting interpretations of "liminality") is both more static and more "statist" than its North American counterpart. The primacy of "place" vs. "space" is especially poignant in the work of Foucher, who attempts to offer a synthesis of the French thought on and practice of border construction. This work is clearly aimed at disavowing the view of "frontiers" and "borders" as independent objects of study and analysis. The positions under attack are not difficult to gauge, either. Foucher qualifies the distinction between "boundary" and "frontier" as being "very much influenced by an interpretation of the territorial formation of the United States" that he understandably identifies with the "over-used texts of Turner" (here prone to a reading as both dated and over-interpreted).²⁶ The presuppositions of the "French school," as summarized and represented by Foucher, are even more openly expressed in a further passage: "The Anglo-American distinction presents the inconvenience of considering frontiers [*les frontières*] as objects in their own right. In fact, they only are, in their genesis, linear phenomena which surround spatial totalities of political nature, in the framework of which it will be decided whether, according to circumstances, the frontier is open or closed, [and if] the line is porous or impermeable."²⁷ The "perspective from the center"

²⁶ Michel Foucher, *Fronts et frontières: Un tour du monde géopolitique* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), p. 45.

²⁷ Michel Foucher, *Fronts et frontières: Un tour du monde géopolitique* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), p. 45.

is, thus, an indisputable tenet for this author, while the state serves as the repository of the legitimacy of borders. The agency of the "frontier population" cannot have any place in such a scheme, and the notion itself would seem to lack any substance in this case. Foucher, of course, is not completely unaware of the multiple functions that a "border" can perform, but he is not willing to concede a dynamic component to the concept, since the "center of meaning" is located unambiguously at the polity's core. His general definition of "les frontieres" is illuminating in this respect: "The frontiers are elementary spatial structures, possessing a linear form, performing a function of geopolitical discontinuity and of marking, of a landmark, on the three levels [*registres*] of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary."²⁸ There is no questioning here of the separateness between discrete "societies" that could operate cohesively, while the "border" is only a spatial "visualization" of the limits of sovereignty. This interpretation should be connected to Foucher's larger agenda of "rehabilitating" a French tradition of "geopolitique," as an alternative both to historical and contemporary American thought on the "frontier" and, more distantly, to the discredited, but still lingering tradition of the German "geo-politicians."

The "symbolic" dimension of the "frontier problem" is the most complex "flank" of the tripartite structure presented and discussed above. However, as this paper will attempt to show, it is also an indispensable part of the creation and management of spatial structures that was one of the determinants of the functioning of imperial and national polities in the "Eurasian" context. The symbolic construction of frontiers and borders, as understood here, preserves the link with the territorial aspects of "boundary drawing," but derives its legitimacy from "mental maps" that are not necessarily congruent with the realities of

²⁸ Michel Foucher, *Fronts et frontieres: Un tour du monde geopolitique* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), p. 38.

power "on the ground" or with requirements of the *Realpolitik*. The dual nature of the notion of "borderland" (even in its more traditional meaning, as a zone situated on both sides of a border line between two states) was captured by Donnan and Wilson in their "inter-disciplinary" overview of the field of "border studies." The authors underscore this argument by unambiguously declaring that "Borderlands are sites and symbols of power."²⁹

One of the basic problems confronting an operational definition of "borders" or "frontiers" when used in a historically determined context is connected with the possibility of a "historical reading" of the "frontier experience." Historians, on the one hand, have been preoccupied with problems of "border cultures" and "border societies" for longer that the related social sciences, since "it has only been in the past half-century that anthropology, sociology and cultural studies have contributed to the widening debate over frontiers."³⁰ On the other hand, one can observe at least three weak points in the historical approaches to these complex issues that have been partially addressed above and will be discussed in what follows. First, historians have tended to under-theorize the field by lacking an adequate definitional base for distinguishing between the related, but discrete notions of "borders," "boundaries" and "frontiers." The conflation of these terms is still preventing an informed and critical attitude towards the cultural and symbolic, as opposed to the territorial and legal, aspects of the problem. Second, the preferred unit of analysis has been either the "state" as an abstract category of political organization or the "nation-state" as the privileged form of modern polity that purportedly

²⁹ Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson. *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1999), p. 1.

³⁰ Alfred J. Rieber, "Changing Conceptions and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach," in: *Ab Imperio*, Nr. 1, 2003, p. 13.

allowed an appropriate framework for analyzing phenomena of "liminality." Third, an excessive concentration on issues of "territorial sovereignty" and jurisdiction obscured the much more complex and multi-layered nature of "border interactions." The concept of "borderland" is, in many ways, a newcomer to the field of border studies that attempts to encompass varying features customarily connected to the other three notions. While it is essentially accepted that the "frontier" represents a "zone" as distinct from the "linear boundary,"³¹ it is not always clear how the two cases may relate to each other or, indeed, when they coincide. In this respect, the term "borderland" may serve as an alternative not only in that it can merge the territorial, cultural, ecological and symbolic aspects into an integrated image of a region when viewed in terms of its location in space. It can also constitute a framework for assessing the "contested" nature of the space in question. To cite once again the two critics that envisage a new interpretation of "border studies" with reference to anthropological categories: "There is a growing trend in historical studies to eschew the traditional view of borders as seen from the center in favor of a new view of borders from the perspective of a state's periphery, from the borders themselves."³² The center or the "core" from which political authority is exercised should not be left out completely from any historical analysis, but the agency of the population on a state's "margins" is clearly one of the variables that the use of the "borderland approach" helps to uncover. The most contentious point when applying such a notion is a definition that would respond to the questions of interaction, self-definition, accommodation, resistance, and, more generally,

³¹ Alfred J. Rieber, "Changing Conceptions and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach," in: *Ab Imperio*, Nr. 1, 2003, p. 17.

³² Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson. *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1999), p. 50.

"negotiation" between a state's "center" and its "periphery." One among many such possible definitions is that provided by Donnan and Wilson, who write that the "new history of borders is in fact a history of *borderlands*, the region bisected by the boundary line between states, which in comparative perspective is presumed to encapsulate a variety of identities, social networks, and formal and informal, legal and illegal relationships which tie together people in the areas contiguous to the borderline on both of its sides."³³ Such a definition emphasizes the interacting, two-way nature of "border exchanges" and also points toward the "fluidity of identity" in such social environments. In this work, however, I argue that the symbolic and geopolitical dimensions add significantly to the understanding of what the phenomenon of "borderland" meant in the case of Bessarabia, where trans-border exchange as such was insignificant and the "separating" function of the borderline clearly prevailed over the "integrating" one.

Among the many historical works dedicated to case studies of the "construction" of borders and frontiers, the study by Peter Sahlins on the Franco-Spanish frontier in the Pyrenees deserves special attention due to its theoretical and methodological insights, as well as to the broad context of his analysis³⁴. Though the author does not deny the dualism inherent in the distinction between "boundaries" and "frontiers" (he admits that "the first evokes a precise, linear division, within a restrictive, political context; the second connotes more zonal qualities, and a broader, social context"³⁵), his main criticism is leveled at the widespread assumption of "perceiving an evolutionary movement, necessary and irreversible, from a sparsely settled, ill-defined zone toward

³³ Donnan and Wilson, p. 50.

³⁴ Peter Sahlins. *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

³⁵ Sahlins, p. 4.

an uncontested, non-substantial, mathematically precise line of demarcation.”³⁶ This supposed development from a “pre-modern,” “savage,” unsettled “frontier” to a universally acknowledged and “tamed” state boundary represents, indeed, one of the most constraining assumptions in the field of the comparative analysis of the “border,” and one that is contrary to my argument concerning Bessarabia. On the one hand, the linear boundary rarely remains uncontested in areas where a competition of opposite projects of political legitimacy is present. On the other hand, the efforts at integration and unification that the construction of a clearly delineated boundary entail may lead to the ambiguous reaction of the local population toward the “streamlining” of previously informal and loose ties that may be terminated by the state’s intrusion.

Another fundamental merit of Sahlins’ work arises from the author’s preoccupation to discern the intertwining between the agency of the “center” and the “periphery” in the crystallization and consolidation of the “borderland identity” of a region divided between two states, though sharing a similar ethnic background and cultural environment. Thus, Sahlins’ study acquires a general theoretical relevance for the present project (its main insights being mostly useful for innovating perspectives in the investigation of nationalism and state-building). More importantly, it represents a narrower model of a case of comparative analysis of “border construction” similar in many respects to the Bessarabian situation. Sahlins’ analytical framework is based on a “triangular relationship” between local (borderland) society and the competing projects of the two national states that divided the Pyrenean region of Cerdanya between them. However, the central point of the narrative of the general argument is clearly situated in the “borderland” itself.

³⁶ Sahlins, p. 4.

Sahlins suggests "that both state formation and nation building were two-way processes...States did not simply impose their values or boundaries on local society. Rather, local society was a motive force in the formation and consolidation of nationhood and the territorial state."³⁷ The conclusion that the book seeks (and largely succeeds) to support is that "the shape and significance of the boundary line was constructed out of local social relations in the borderland."³⁸ One could point to several interacting (though not necessarily coincidental) common features with the interpretation of the Bessarabian case proposed here. First, the complex nature of local responses to central intentions is visible in both cases. What differs is the role of local agency in structuring these responses. Whereas in the Bessarabian case the "articulation" of local interests was passive and reactive in character, in the French-Spanish borderland discussed by Sahlins the "peripheral" communities were able to frequently impose their terms on the broader state policies. At the same time, the local actors were keenly aware of the diverging contexts of their respective states and of the different paths of nation building that these promoted. As Sahlins makes clear, "national identity... appeared on the periphery before it was built there by the center. It appeared less as a result of state intentions than from the local process of adopting and appropriating the nation without abandoning local interests, a local sense of place, or a local identity."³⁹ The "oppositional model" that Sahlins proposes is, ultimately, a variant of the "construction of the Other" not peculiar to the Cerdanya, but its heuristic value is clearly enhanced by the emphasis on the "borderland community" itself and its potential for creative

³⁷ Sahlins, p. 8.

³⁸ Sahlins, p. 8.

³⁹ Sahlins, p. 9.

appropriation of the problems of self-definition and self-representation. Second, a further point of interaction (though again not coincidence) deals with the character of the competing projects vying for the appropriation of the regions in question. Sahlin concentrates his attention upon problems of nation and territoriality, which is understandable given the character of the politics he analyzes. However, even in this case the notion of "national identity" can be interpreted as consisting of several layers, due to the complicated nature of the interaction of the Catalan national movement with the Spanish state. Bessarabia represents a no less puzzling instance because of the multi-layered structure of the legitimizing techniques of the states involved in its "intellectual appropriation" and due to the problems associated with the delineation of "national" and "imperial" ideologies as opposing categories.

One possible approach that could illuminate and further refine the multi-faceted, conflicting and unstable nature of the "borderland phenomena" has recently been proposed by Alfred J. Rieber. This explanatory framework, based on the notion of "complex frontiers," is especially well suited to the purposes of the present case study. Firstly, it serves as an alternative and, simultaneously, as a complementary theoretical scheme to the conceptualizations of the "frontier" discussed above. Second, it succeeds in encompassing and accounting for both the broader agendas of the state structures dominating the "Eurasian" landmass in the late modern period and for the local population's negotiation with the "center," thus emphasizing the dynamic and contested character of the "borderlands". Third, it allows the depiction of the "borderlands" of the Eurasian continental empires as "relational categories," that were constructed by the imperial bureaucrats (and intellectuals) in order to achieve tangible goals of space management, but also symbolic aims of legitimization of the imperial polity. Fourth,

with reference to the Bessarabian case proper, the "complex frontiers" framework provides a wholly new operational context of analysis. Whether this broader context is to be represented by the "macrosystem of Eurasian bureaucratic empires" (encompassing the Habsburg, Russian, Ottoman, Persian and Chinese Empires), or whether it can be limited to the three polities directly concerned with the competition for preeminence in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe remains an open question.

Perhaps the most important insights that emerge from this analytical scheme concern the different methods of imagining and appropriating the "borderlands" characteristic of empires as opposed to nation-states. The author is careful to point out that "there are no absolute differences in the way in which imperial and nation-state boundaries have been drawn."⁴⁰ However, several basic criteria distinguish the "imperial" type of border construction from the national one. Here a parallel can be made to the previous discussion of the possible definitions of borders and frontiers. The issues of territorial jurisdiction and sovereignty, clearly fundamental in relations between nation-states, are mostly irrelevant while discussing the processes of empire-formation and development. The essence of this difference was neatly captured by A. J. Rieber when he based his analysis on the "justification and the scale of conquest" that are specific for imperial polities. In other words, both the intrinsic process of empire-formation (overwhelmingly through military conquest) and the legitimization of imperial domination lead to the essentially unstable and volatile character of the borders thus established. One can only agree with the assertion that "If imperial boundaries have no intrinsic limitations and are solely established by force, then they are bound to be heavily

⁴⁰ A. J. Rieber, "The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers," in: Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber, eds. *Imperial Rule* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), p. 180.

and persistently contested. The universal claims of empires, whatever the practical constraints may be in carrying them out, cannot by their very nature be accepted as legitimate by either the people they conquer or their rivals for the contested space.”⁴¹ Certainly, this position does not automatically “de-legitimize” the practice of empire management as such. It only serves to underscore the different agendas and consequent imaginative techniques of the borderlands’ “appropriation” that imperial multiethnic composite states had to devise in order to reconcile their purported “universal” claims and the reality on the ground, which often defied imperial categorizations and policy goals.

Besides representing an innovative conceptual scheme relevant to “border studies” in the larger Eurasian region, the “complex frontiers” framework allows the Bessarabian case to be analyzed within a different spatial and geopolitical context. In this sense, the notion of “complex frontier regions” (CFR) proposed by A. J. Rieber not only provides the opportunity of an “operational” definition of Bessarabia as a “borderland” (as opposed to general heuristic, often reifying interpretations of the same concept), but also points to the phenomenon of inter-imperial (and imperial-nation-state) competition for dominion over these spaces that in many cases influenced the XX-century political and intellectual processes underway in the “borderlands.” On the one hand, the special emphasis on the contested nature of the CFRs is a welcome substitute for the frequently invoked “fluidity of identities” that purportedly characterizes the human collectivities inhabiting such territories. On the other hand, the issue of the “imperial legacies,” that is often explained away or simply castigated as the inevitable, but deleterious price to pay for the “colonial experience,” acquires a

⁴¹ A. J. Rieber, “The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers,” in: Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber, eds. *Imperial Rule* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), p. 185.

"long-term perspective" and certain definable characteristics otherwise taken for granted or ignored. Moreover, as the author pointed out in another important article, the management of borders is one of the "imperial legacies" with the heaviest impact on the successor national states. In effect, the notion that "the successor states were never truly nation-states but merely reproduced on a smaller scale the multicultural character of the empires of which they had been a part"⁴² deserves more credit than it is usually granted in mainstream academia. This is especially important if one takes into account the similar challenges of multi-ethnicity that the modern bureaucratic empires and their "nemesis" – the emerging nation-states – shared. Such an approach does not in any way minimize the differences inherent in the political and institutional structure or in the modes of self-representation and legitimization of "nation-" and "empire-states." However, it emphasizes the "marginality" and contested character of border zones as an independent variable that persists, even if with a functionally changed status, in the otherwise divergent contexts of multiethnic dynastic empires and homogenizing national states.

The extensive theoretical argument presented above allows the elaboration of a new interpretation of the Bessarabian/Moldavian case from a "long-term" perspective. Being a part of one of the CFRs identified by A. J. Rieber on the fault lines of the continental Eurasian empires, the region later construed by the Russian Empire as a discrete territorial entity under the name of "Bessarabia" witnessed a number of phenomena characteristic for "borderland areas." The major difference between the notion of "borderland" and its partial equivalent – "periphery" – stems primarily from the contested

⁴² Alfred J. Rieber, "Struggle Over the Borderlands," in: S. Frederick Starr, ed., *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY, 1994), p. 65.

character of the territory in question and from the unstable nature of “belonging” that precludes the definitive inclusion of such places into the ordered space of an organized state. This “ambiguity of belonging” is visible both on a symbolic and on a material level. These two levels interacted in most peculiar ways and ultimately constituted the “imperial legacy” that continues to determine the current situation in the region. The intertwining of the “material” component of imperial competition and the symbolic implications of the struggle over the borderlands was expressed, in the Bessarabian case, through several features:

1) *The process of state-sponsored and spontaneous colonization* tolerated or even actively promoted under the Russian imperial regime that radically altered the demographic structure of the area in the first half of the XIX century. Rather than signaling a concerted effort at the “denationalization” of the province, the policy of inviting foreign settlers to the sparsely populated southern parts of the area had, in the eyes of the imperial center, a pragmatic dimension. It aimed at the transformation of an “uncultivated” borderland into a productive and rationally structured space. The ensuing demographic disparity between the southern “colonized” regions and the northern-central Romanian-dominated area was less a result of a systematic policy than a by-product of the imperial design to integrate an unstable and previously heavily fortified inter-imperial “military frontier” into the polity of the Romanovs. In effect, before their annexation by Russia, both the southern stretch of Bessarabia and the lands to the East, commonly known in the epoch as “New Russia,” had been a field of contention between the various conglomerates of steppe nomads and semi-sedentary warrior formations (mainly the Cossacks) and the emerging and consolidated states to their north and west (first the Moldavian Principality and Poland, to be later joined or replaced by the Ottoman and Russian Empires). The lengthy and

active entanglement of the "eastern marches" of the Moldavian Principality into "steppe politics" (represented here either in the guise of the Nogai Tatars or the Crimean Khanate) are often dismissed or viewed in terms of military confrontations only. In fact, the prolonged cohabitation of nomadic and sedentary populations presupposed multiple tactics of accommodation and compromise while not excluding, of course, military conflict. The porous, shifting and "transitional" character of this frontier territory was in the process of being changed by the intervention of the Russian centralizing and (partially) modernizing polity. In the Ottoman period the string of fortifications lined along the Dniester and the Danube transformed the entire zone into a rough analogy to the Habsburg "military frontier" (certainly, without any involvement of the local population or the "policing" ambitions of the Habsburg authorities). However, the "pacification" brought about by Russian conquest presupposed a new vision of the recently acquired land. The "transitional" nature of the Bessarabian space is revealed by the duality of the Russian discourse concerning it. While, on the one hand, the major part of the province was to be integrated into the Empire on the terms of a "liberated" territory inhabited by a fellow Orthodox people, the former expanse of the Budjak was clearly a "no man's land" that had to be reclaimed for "civilization" and "progress." The closest parallel, in this sense, can be provided by Russian policies in the "eastern borderlands" of the empire, where the steppe grasslands played the role of an "alien environment" that had to be "tamed." Situated at the "edge of the Eurasian steppe" (in Willard Sunderland's words)⁴³, Bessarabia represented a primary area of state sponsored colonization as a part of the empire's "social engineering" projects. The Russian state never aimed at imitating the Western

⁴³ Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

concept of *terra nullius* (and certainly displayed no ambition to devise a comparable legal terminology). In practical terms, however, this region was the equivalent of a “desert” waiting to be populated and cultivated. The inherent duality of the official discourse reached its climax in the early XX century, when the “border” character of the Bessarabian guberniia acquired previously unknown meanings linked to the emergence of the Romanian national project which challenged the legitimacy of the Russian “imperial” narrative. Using the traditional historically-based arguments to prove the Russian “right” to rule Bessarabia, the officially sanctioned accounts of the province’s history emphasized at the same time the “pristine” state of the region prior to its inclusion into the imperial sphere.

2) *The (suspected or real) ambiguous loyalty* of the local inhabitants to the respective centers reclaiming their allegiance. After the “founding moment” of 1812, Bessarabia both lost its liminality (due to its “redemption” from the space of the “wild field” to which it purportedly belonged) and acquired a new kind of “frontier identity,” that was consolidated once the projects of incorporating the rest of the Romanian Principalities into the empire were abandoned. In the Romanian case, this region was also viewed ambiguously. It simultaneously belonged to the ideal “national body” and was suspect because of its century-long immersion into a politically and even “ontologically” alien space. The multi-ethnicity of the province (itself due to the transformation of the demographic landscape by the imperial authorities) was not always amenable to a neat inclusion into either of the competing (Romanian and Russian) “projects.” While in the Romanian case the problem might seem obvious, it was not so simple in the Russian one. The gradual undermining of the dynastic principle (that accepted and even extolled the empire’s multi-ethnicity as a fundamental element for its well-being and “glory”) led to the emergence of certain

projects of "radical inclusion" of Bessarabia into the "Russian core" of the empire. However, this "inclusionary" (or, rather, exclusionary) discourse was challenged all along by the "moderate" or "bureaucratic" approach of the supporters of a traditional "imperial" tactics of accommodating local diversity. The terminological uncertainty and "contest" surrounding such controversial terms as *okraina* ("periphery," sometimes with pejorative overtones) or *inorodtsy* (aliens) points to the unstable character of the loyalty of the local population to the central government. Constantly praised as a "bulwark of the throne and fatherland," the inhabitants of the province (be they Romanians or other "aliens") were nevertheless perceived as "potential traitors" once a major conflict would emerge. To give only two examples: A) the uncertain status of the Ismail district, which was ceded to Russia following the Berlin Treaty of 1878. The Russian officials were constantly preoccupied by the possible "attraction" that the Romanian state could exercise upon this region. Curiously, the argument was not framed in "national" terms (the Romanians being a minority in this area), but in economic and "pragmatic-political" ones. B) the local "war panic" caused immediately after the outbreak of World War I by rumors of an imminent Romanian "invasion" of Bessarabia. The traditional logic of "struggle over the borderlands" (even if applied this time not to a hostile empire, but to a neighboring nation-state) continued to hold its salience in the early XX century.

3) *The "strategic" considerations of the Soviet leadership* (mostly under Stalin) that shaped the spatial and ethnic configuration of the Moldavian SSR after Bessarabia's annexation by the Soviet state. This is one of the most complicated points that this paper aims to argue. The recurring theme of "Soviet expansionism" that purports to (and partly does) explain the creation of the MASSR and the role that the "Piedmont principle" played in this case fails to grasp the

impact of traditional imperial patterns of thought upon the minds of the Soviet elite. The understanding of the “western borderlands” as a contested space influenced the geopolitical imagination of the Moscow decision-makers both before and during World War II. The extent to which such “imperial legacies” mingled with utopian revolutionary or purely “pragmatic” considerations in the Soviet leaders’ (and particularly Stalin’s) visions of space is debatable. Nevertheless, A. J. Rieber’s argument that what he calls “the civil wars in the Soviet Union” during this period in fact reflected long-standing patterns of imperial “borderland politics” is worth a close scrutiny. Stalin was clearly more attuned than most of his potential and actual rivals to the subtleties of “mastering the borderlands” (of which he was himself a representative), and his notorious involvement in the elaboration of the Soviet “nationalities policy” is the corollary of his interest in such matters. His constant apprehension regarding the “permeability” and vulnerability of the (western) borderlands of the USSR cannot be properly assessed without taking into consideration the long-term patterns of Russian imperial “frontier policy.” Thus, the “War scare” that characterized the often paranoid atmosphere within the Soviet leadership in the late 1920s (and which is often invoked as an explanation for the oscillation between “hard” and “soft” policies of the center) cannot be reduced to the single trope of “capitalist encirclement.” The “western borderlands” (including Bessarabia) were viewed as hotbeds of resistance or objects of rival claims by various “projects” antagonistic to Russian empire-building at least starting from the second half of the XIX century. Aside from the aims of “exporting the revolution” that had their impact in the calculations of the Bolshevik leadership, the traditional “imperial” perspective held its sway over important elements of the Soviet elite. This argument does not aim at postulating a

straightforward "continuity" between the imperial and Soviet policies in the borderlands that had as many differences as there were similarities. It simply points to certain recurrent patterns or policy trends that shaped the "inner circle" of Soviet geopolitical interests within the multi-layered structure of Soviet foreign policy agendas in the inter-war period.

4) *The widespread practice of mass population displacements (deportations)* that was especially characteristic for the period of World War II and post-war years. The question that arises here involves the exact character of the deportations undertaken by the central authorities. The problem of "ethnic cleansing" is, by itself, a huge area for debate that I will not touch upon here. The specifically "borderland" character of Bessarabia/the MSSR stems from the "unreliability" of the local population that was one of the main presuppositions and policy determinants of the Soviet authorities. Such practices of forced population resettlement are customarily linked with the "totalitarian" nature of the regimes that dominated Europe for a large part of the XX century. Indeed, the mass scale of such atrocities, as well as their class or racist justifications, lend credence to this view. However, what is often omitted are the antecedents that made collective categorizations based on ethnic (or other socially bound) criteria possible. In fact, the Eurasian continental empires were pioneering agents of (limited) "ethnic cleansing" long before the emergence of totalitarian regimes. Matters of military security or political stability overrode ideological factors in this initial period. In the Russian case, two instances of state-sponsored "ethnic cleansing" stand out. The first is connected to the forced resettlement of the "Circassian" inhabitants of the Black Sea coast to the Ottoman Empire. This partly voluntary, but mainly forced resettlement took place at the behest of the Russian authorities, who feared the

possible “subversive” actions of the Muslim population in the probability of a prospective war with the Ottoman or British Empires. The loyalty of the empire’s Caucasian subjects was suspicious “by default” due to the allegiance they owed to the caliph (i.e, the Ottoman sultan). The experience of the Crimean War, during which certain Caucasian tribes were perceived as collaborating with the British and French invading forces, strengthened the intolerance of imperial officials and secured the endorsement of the “resettlement” plan. The second, more systematic example refers to the policies of the Russian government in the Western borderlands during World War I, when the Poles and the Jews became “unreliable elements” that needed to be removed as far as possible from the theater of military operations. Despite the somewhat “exceptional” character of this measure, it pointed to a tendency of directly linking ethnicity to “degrees of loyalty” to the empire. The contest for the borderlands thus acquired an additional impetus, since the control of the peripheries was crucial for the survival of the imperial regime. In the Soviet case, issues of class and “political loyalty” somewhat displaced ethnicity as the dominant category. However, in the deportations of the 1940s ethnicity and issues linked to the “reliability” of different “nationalities” played a prominent part. The ambiguity of the loyalty of the local Romanian population proved an important incentive for the repressive policies of the Soviet authorities. “Population management” in the borderlands was complicated by the “fluidity of identities” that these areas traditionally exhibited.

5) *Transnistria as a legacy of the “unsettled frontier”* that was characteristic of the Black Sea CFR during the imperial period. The present situation in the region is determined primarily by the specific post-Soviet context,

including the success of the "Sovietization" process and the wrangling between local elites and the Chisinau government in the 1990s. Other fundamental causes are to be found in the interests of the Russian establishment and military-industrial complex in keeping hold of the strategically important area or the economic benefits that they acquire thereby. However, on the rhetorical level the "borderland" nature of the region is constantly emphasized. Either under the form of its peculiar blend of "multi-ethnicity" with a distinctly Russian flavor (heavily overlain with Soviet-type internationalist terminology), or through emphasizing its "organic" unity with Russia and its antagonism to Western values, the Transnistrian propaganda machine posits its belonging to a liminal region situated on a "civilizational divide." Aside from this "symbolic" dimension, the emergence of a unique "Transnistrian identity" is linked to the Russian colonization and settlement of the steppe and to the creation of the "New Russia" region in the late XVIII and early XIX centuries. The inclusion of Transnistria into the "Russian space" is effected through the invocation of the foundational character of the 1792 Russian conquest of the area or through direct reference to one of the "frontier communities" dominating the region for a long time- the Cossacks. Ironically, the present "Cossacks" lack all resemblance to their forbears, with the exception of a "paramilitary" character. This instrumental approach to the "liminal" character of Transnistria cannot conceal the fact that the "pseudo-state" at the prospective border of the EU emerged in a region historically contested by rival empires and nation-states. Like its counterparts on the "post-Soviet" scene, Transnistria's placing in a "Eurasian" context should not be strictly contemporary. The historical legacy (or stigma) of empires continues, through its "unintended consequences," to shape the reality we live in.

This paper sought, first, to chart the field of “border studies” and to assess its applicability to the Bessarabian case. Secondly, it aimed at showing how a new “reading” of Bessarabia’s history in a “Eurasian” context could be fruitful and innovative for the students of the region. Finally, it highlighted the areas in which further investigations along these lines would be welcome. My overall goal was not to offer a new interpretation of the history of the “borderlands.” Rather, I intended to reconsider the “spatial” dimensions of the imperial legacies that continue to beset present intellectuals and policy-makers.

Collective identities and diversity of history. How Poles remember the past

Borders have been a part of social life since the beginning of human history. They sometimes take on the shape of a line or zone dividing territories of neighboring groups, at other times however, they are far more symbolic. Borders, their role and dimension, have become the subject of much sociological research. Some researchers concentrated on their physical aspect, on relations between neighbors and on borders created between groups (Polk, 2000; Kurczewska & Bojar, 2005). Others, such as Frederik Barth, focused their interest on borders which emerge in everyday human interaction and therefore have a symbolic nature (Barth 1969).

Regardless of whether they are physical or symbolic, borders are an important part of group life: they are useful in settling the issue of group membership and thus of singling out strangers. They help to categorize and organize the environment the group lives in. Due to their existence group members can constitute a community which excludes strangers, who are situated beyond the borders and with whom there is the need to interact. Strangers however, can be fitted into two categories: they can be either familiar or unfamiliar (Sumner, 1995; Simmel, 2005). Familiar strangers have different customs, history and traditions, they live in a separate social community,

and their territory is discernible as soon as one crosses the border. Unfamiliar strangers, on the other hand, do not live outside the borders but try to settle within them, „invading” the group territory. Nothing or very little is known about them. Such strangers, as W. G. Summer and G. Simmel have noticed, can be encountered within all groups.

Borders are important because group members are within them, whereas strangers can be safely located beyond their limits. With time, inter-group bonds become stronger and group unity grows. If borders do not change for years, the separation between groups becomes consolidated and the division into “us” and “others” becomes institutionalized (Nowicka, 1990:5–53). The feeling of being *d i f f e r e n t* (having a distinct cultural identity) slowly becomes transformed into the consciousness and conviction of being *s o m e o n e e l s e*. In such a case the persistence of group borders is an important factor contributing to the growth of group identity. This process however, has a different dynamic in the case of particular group members. First, it usually affects the elite, then gradually the remaining group members become aware of differences. The awareness in turn strengthens inter-group bonds. The collective identity is thus a result of development of the individual identity and this process can largely be shaped/created by the elite. Historians and sociologists studying ethnic and national groups are not unanimous in answering the question whether particular groups are the product of such a creation or of the social differentiation process. Therefore, both the idea of Eric Hobsbawm’s invented tradition (Hobsbawm 1983) and of Benedict Anderson’s imagined communities (Anderson 1983) function besides Edward Shils’ primordial conception (Shils, 1957). It has to be underlined however, that irrespective of its origin the feeling of group unity is universal. Yet, in spite of that we are often

shocked by conduct which can hardly be interpreted unanimously.

Contemporary Poland is a good example. Until recently it seemed that all Poles have a similar way of thinking about themselves and their nation. In 1918 Poland regained independence and since then a certain model of national identity has been formed. In the middle of the 20th century it could be said that all Poles had a common national identity and they only differed in their opinions about the system they lived in. They could either be its adversaries or supporters: they treated it either as the symbol of social justice or as the undemocratic form of enslaving the nation, imposed by invaders.

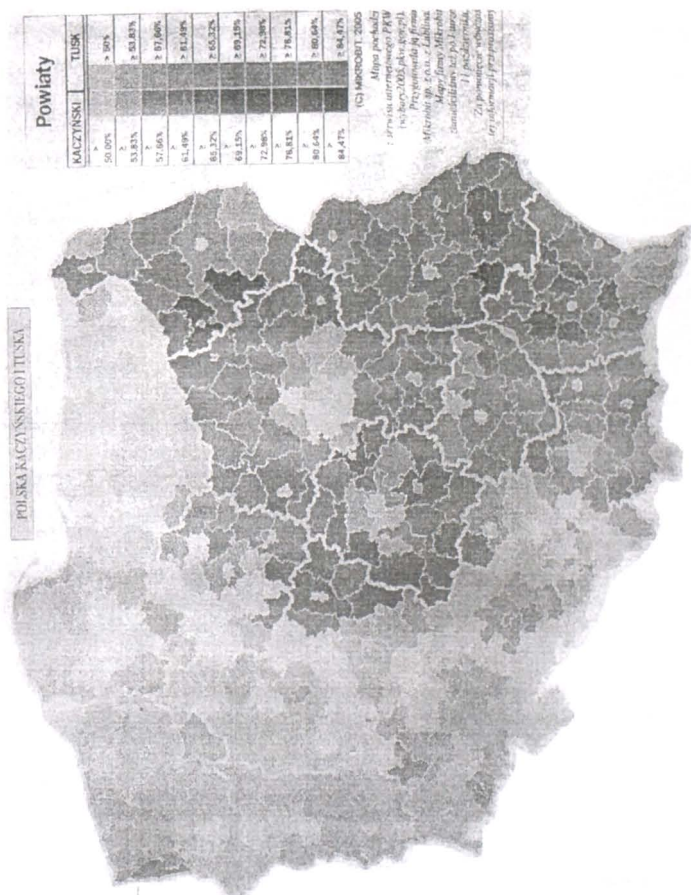
It seemed that after the transformation when Poland regained its sovereignty, Poles would all express their national identity in a similar way. It was assumed that the majority of Poles, after having lived between the Oder and the Bug Rivers for half a century, would promptly identify themselves with that territory. It also seemed that the reference to some facts important for Poland's history would not become a source of division or animosity. However matters took a different course. Not only do the Poles remember the past in a different way but they also refer to it in quite a different manner. These distinctions are noticeable both in their conscious conduct and unconscious reactions.

It turned out that the borders set during the partitions at the end of the 18th century still linger in the consciousness of Polish people and are reflected in their way of thinking and reacting to social and political events. One would have thought that twenty years of independence during the inter-war period and forty five years of socialism, independence after 1989 and joining the European Union would blur old differences. However, that has not happened.

The map below shows for example how Poles voted in the EU referendum in the year 2003. The division, the borders within the Polish society, are clear. The red line marks the pre-war borders of Poland, and the white one - the division of Poland during the partition time. Thus those people who had the most frequent contact with the Western Europe, were least "frightened" by the entrance to the EU (it, to some extent, concerned people living close to the eastern boarder but only in the areas of intensive trade exchange).



Source: Polityka 2005 nr 44 (2528)

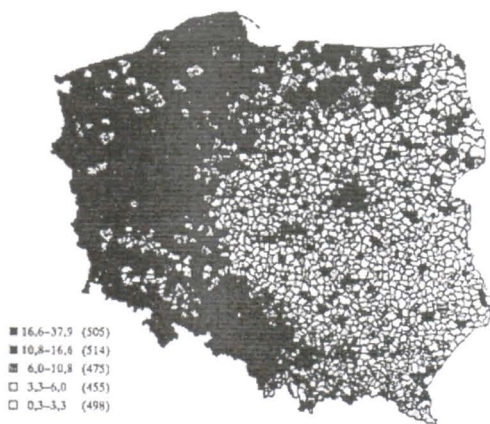


Source: Gazeta Wyborcza 25 października 2005 – Presidential election in 2005 – blue colour voters for L. Kaczyński, orange colour – voters for D. Tuska

A similar kind of division can be seen in the presidential election in 2005: the areas which once belonged to the Russian partition are definitely more conservative than those which used to belong to the Prussian one.

In the 1990 presidential elections, the former Prussian partition region voted for Tadeusz Mazowiecki, whereas people from the former Russian partition area voted for Lech Wałęsa –

who at that time was much more populist than the pro-European Mazowiecki.



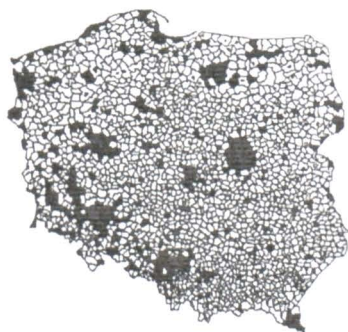
Voting for Mazowiecki
 source: Gorzelak 2000
 pp. 742–750

The differences in other areas are also very informative. The map below shows Poland's poorest and richest communes¹ in 1998.



source: Gorzelak 2000 pp. 742–743

The poorest communes in Poland in
 1998



The richest communes in Poland in
 1998

¹ The smallest administrative units of Poland.

How can that be interpreted? What explanation can be given to the persistence of such artificial divisions created in such a distant past? Historians often quote the following anecdote to elucidate the problem.

After the loss of independence at the end of the 18-th century, the territory of Poland was divided between three countries: Austria, Russia and Prussia. The authorities of those countries intended to build a new modern state. These states were built based upon different cultures. The best example is a real story, often recalled by historians to elucidate the problem: In the middle of the XIX c. a peasant – Michał Drzymała in the Prussian part of Poland wanted to build a house. His request was rejected because according to the law only a person who himself received land directly from a landowner could build a house. This peasant had inherited land but himself had not been granted this land by landowner. For that reason he decided to live in a wagon (carriage), like a Gypsy. The law said nothing about living in a carriage, so he was able to live in it for the rest of his life. The German officials hated him but could do nothing because this was not against the law.

Imagine the same situation in other parts of partitioned Poland. In the Russian part Cossacks would have come and whipped him to death or taken him to Siberia.

In the Austrian part he might have bribed officials and in this way the situation would immediately have been solved.

This story often repeated by historians, shows the different attitudes towards the law, the state, private property, other people, and moral values, which dominated in the different partitions. These attitudes influenced people for several generations (123 years) and formed the collective mentality of those societies.

The most surprising is the fact, that nowadays people are proud of differences developed in those times. They stress their

differences from Poles who live in other regions. For example, people whose family lived in the German part emphasise that there always was and still is respect for the law, that private property was respected and individuals were respected as human beings.

People from the Russian part – are proud of their permanent opposition to the state: the first socialist parties and trade unions were organized there. They also stress that Polish culture was preserved there, that all famous Polish writers and intelligentsia lived in this part of Poland. In the Austrian part people talk about a multicultural society, tolerance, about the peasant movement and some of self – government. Differences still exist, and the process of effacing them has not yet finished. As is shown on the enclosed maps, the poor communities in Poland are located in the former Russian part of Poland, and the richest communities are in the former Prussian part of Poland. In 1990 people in the western part of Poland voted in for a more European non-populist politician.

Poland remained under partition for 123 years only regaining independence in 1918. The Polish State attempted then to efface the differences between the three parts. The administrative unification of education, communication and law become a priority and the procedure of erasing differences was carried out regardless of financial problems. The material aspect turned out to be the easiest one though the civilization abyss between the former Prussian part and the Russian one had lingered on for generations. It was much more difficult in the sphere of Poles' consciousness which been shaped by three different state structures. Different attitudes towards the state, the law, private property, other people, and a different system of values, or life goals were not easily unified or modified.

Currently, 88 years later, the former political and social structures are still part of the Poles' consciousness. In the

inter-war period these differences were silenced by the official version of history, which was to form a strong bond and unity of all the Poles. After World War II the authorities of the Polish People's Republic used propaganda so as to form the socialist Polish nation. History at school and in scientific publications was ideologically correct. Therefore, several generations of Poles were sure that, as a group, they participated in similar social events. This persistence of artificial borders is really a baffling phenomenon. One could attempt to explain the situation by saying that after 1989, in the democratic Republic of Poland, the Poles not only learned new facts from their history, but they also had to re-interpret. They then turned to oral history. The official historians' elaboration lost their former importance: Polish People decided to return to history transmitted directly within groups. It then turned out that the history of particular regional groups is distinct from general history, that partition borders are very much alive in the Poles' consciousness. People not only remember the partition their family lived under but they can say a lot about conditions and way of life there. This knowledge seems important for the formation of both their individual and group identity.

One may therefore say that group memory functioning within local communities has outlasted both the politics of the Polish State at the beginning of 20-th century and the socialist propaganda. The current interpretation of history since the time of partition is different. It yields much antagonism, contributes to the continuance of stereotypes and ill-will between various groups.

Historians and sociologists are neither unanimous in their explanation of the reasons which brought about this state of affairs nor in the research methods they implement in studying the links between the past and the present. Sociologists and historians are not convinced to accept convergence of sociology and history. There are two path of reflection in sociology on that problem:

1.a. Michael Hechter and Edgard Kiser argued that the boundaries between these disciplines are of a nomothetic and idiographic approach, induction and deduction, particular description and general theories. In their opinion, the theory of rational choice is the only one, which fits the sociological history approach. This theory is basically ahistorical, it does not address the specific historical dimension of theory or explanatory process. But, this theory leaves unexamined the presuppositional historical claims that inform it.

1.b. John Goldthorpe also seeks a proper theory, as he dislikes historical sociologists who are inappropriately blurring the boundary between history and sociology (as T. Skocpol does). He said "sociologists have little business doing historical research/.../ because historical research is poorly suited to generating the observations needed to advance general theory by providing empirical refutations and confirmation for its propositions."

2. Arthur Stinchcombe argues that "there in no theory of whole events or even historical processes". Than more useful is detailed comparison of some events (like T. Skocpol study on French Revolution). He seeks procedures well suited for identifying casual mechanisms. This approach is similar to R. K. Merton's theory of middle range (Calhoun 1998: 860).

The discussion between sociologists and historians will continue, but some problems have been situated on the edge of both disciplines.

The fact that most people are deeply concerned about their past, be it their individual or group history is beyond doubt. They often resort to reinterpretation of the past or a biography to present it, for example to strangers, in a more favourable light. Studies of "oral history" or collective memory, which have recently been rapidly developing, try to explore these issues.

Life within a definite social structure fills the majority of people with a sense of rootedness and cultural safety (this fundamental issue has often been disregarded in many historical analyses). The common past is also vital for the formation of a group ideology, and it helps to build national unity. The way history is being evoked and past events interpreted often forms the basis of national/ethnic or simply group identities.

In the literature similar problems have widely been discussed in several researches of collective memories. The most popular one refers to the memory of World War II. Many researches were conducted in Germany on the memory of the Third Reich and the private life of people at that time. Others were involved in the memory of the Holocaust. As a result some general rules have been implemented.

Alon Confino who was involved in a topic on German war memory argued that each generation chose to build its identity on selected themes and symbols within the framework of the developing memory tradition. The power of the state, ideology and nationhood regulate behaviour and codify memory (Confino 2004:393). It is what M. Halbwachs has argued – collective memory is complementary to the memory of school textbooks, state ceremonies and is time more tangible than the abstract memory of national representations (Confino 2004:407–8). Memory is used as a leading term for interpreting history. Collective memory is commonly conceived via historical sites, buildings, museums, monuments, films or novels with the aim of exploring cultural and political representations in the public sphere. Notion of memory has been important in articulating the unease in historical interpretation. But ordinary people interpreted it in the most convenient way for them. Moreover, people think about the past using contemporary values and beliefs (Paris 2001).

Peter Burke argued that people recall the past in particular situations. This happens when:

- they feel uncertain,
- they experience rapid social changes and need a support from their background,
- they seek new sources of identity,
- they want to understand a new situation.
- How people transmit the past:
 - using a specific language,
 - recalling some particular cases,
 - recalling myths (Peter Burke, 2000).

M. Halbwachs presented the mechanism of remembering the past. In his research he discovered that people remember because:

- other members of their group talk about the past (it is repeated),
- the social context remains in the past. All events had to be located and connected with other events,
- there are social frames of collective memory. There is a social way of classifying, localizing and connecting memories. People do not remember just past, it is always the past, which evidently has to be connected with other people, groups, places, dates the language used in the group to which a person belongs.

When people recall the past:

- they start from presence, the present situation is responsible for recalling the past. People recall the past, because they need it for a certain purpose,
- they use contemporary language which often causes misunderstanding. People do not know the historical meaning of words, so they often interpret a described situation in wrong way,

- it is not a rule that oldest events are more easily forgotten. Usually the most recent events are better remembered. H. Bergson claimed that people remember things existing in collective memory. People easily forget things when social frames of events have disappeared. It means that every event has to be located in a social consciousness
- old people are responsible for preserving group memory because they have time to put things in order. Group respected them, because they created social frames of memory.

Dominant remembering is always present, it is never forgotten. (Halbwachs 1969).

Being in a difficult social situation, people not only interpret history, but they also invent some evidence. It is because the interpretation of history or just invention of tradition is often crucial for both group unity and its existence. The evocation of certain facts from the past and their appropriate combination can not only support the formation of imagined communities, but may also strengthen the sense of group unity. People feel that they belong to a group which has its own history. Philip Abrams was right when he said “society must be understood as a process constructed historically by individuals who are constructed historically by society” (Abrams 1982:227) The social world that surrounds us is unquestionably historical, but what people make of this facts is equally important.

I personally have no doubt that inner borders and divisions are present in almost every society, that abolishing former borders (as has taken place in the EU) will not make the distinctions between people vanish. The smaller groups, depending on their place in macro societies (local society, national community and European community) will tend to use

history in a different way and they will remember it differently. Barbara Misztal, after E. Durkheim, points to the fact that that memory has a social localization and that there is no objective past as such. The past is shaped and reshaped so as to serve the dominant interests of the present. She also claims that collective identity precedes memory and determines it (Misztal, 2005).

It is thus important to analyze the factors that contribute to the lingering of borders and divisions in apparently homogenous societies.

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Articles:

„Polityka”, 2005, no. 44 (2528) pp. 6–10

„Gazeta Wyborcza”, 2005, 25 października p. 4

Central Europe in the Czech Geopolitical Discourse¹

The definition of Central Europe has been a favorite and frequented topic for discussions especially in the twentieth century. The main reason has been not only controversy between geographical and geopolitical, cultural, economic and political definitions but the politicization and ideology surrounding the approach. Particularly, the flexibility of the term was caused by political changes in the region. Definitions of Central Europe developed in relation to these changes.² The term was not so frequently used during the nineteenth century, because Central Europe was mechanically associated with the Habsburg Empire and Germany as well as their German culture. The subsequent rise of national movements representing smaller nationalities that were characterized as rural ethnic groups transformed into modern nations with a full-fledged social structure cast doubt on the dominant German character and created an axis of nationalities conflict between dominant and non-dominant nations respectively.

¹ The paper has been written as a partial output of the grant of the Grant Agency of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic „Plans of Democratization and Cooperation in Central Europe: Mid-European Union“, Nr. IAA8104401.

² Okey R., *Central/Eastern Europe: Behind the Definitions, Past and Present*, 1992, No 137, pp. 102–133; Sinhuber K. A., *Central Europe – Mitteleuropa – Europa Centrale, Transactions and Papers*, Vol. 0, Issue 20 (1954), pp. 15–39.

The pronounced politicization associated with modern nationalism in the twentieth century resulted in the distinct identification of Central Europe and a recognition of its distinctness from Western or Eastern Europe. The problems surrounding a precise definition of Central Europe were caused by the heterogeneity of the region. When speaking of Central Europe, one speaks not of a peculiar political region, but rather of a region composed of many small nations and their states, which tended to be the object of great power politics and only rarely active political actors. The region lacked a unifying force and national conflicts as well as the inability to offer a promising integration policy acceptable to nationality groups resulted in the collapse of multinational monarchies and the subsequent division of the region into national states. The region was also economically diverse with differing levels of economic and social development. Western areas of the region were more economically developed because of the greater influence of the Western economic centers, whereas levels of development in the east and south stagnated. Central Europe represented the economic and cultural periphery (semi-periphery) of Western Europe. Eastern influences played a role thanks to ethnic and linguistic similarities, pan-Slavism, and the Orthodox religion. Some parts were directly incorporated into tsarist Russia (Russian annexation of a big part of Poland). When Central Europe came under Soviet influence after the Second World War, the region came to be identified politically as Eastern Europe, but the Western factor still dominated culturally. Cultural fragmentation, which resulted in strong cultural emanation tends to be positively viewed in discussions as a positive individual contribution to Western culture. The in-between position as well as efforts by stronger powers to dominate this space as a springboard for further expansion led to the politicization of the term Central Europe. The political

content of the term began to fulfill a function in political argumentation. This function from a regional perspective entailed a defense against interference by outside powers both from the West and the East. This defensive function needs, I believe, to be emphasized to the highest degree.

The problem was, however, that, in light of diverse national interests, the great powers made alliances with nations and states and certain nations used the powers to satisfy their demands vis-à-vis neighboring rivals. Sometimes, "In-between Europe" (a pre-war Polish concept of "Międzymorze", the Third Europe) is sometimes used as a technical term, which is related to the concept of a defensive line of Western Europe against Turkish (originally) and later in the 20th century German and Russian (Soviet) threats.³ Mutual rivalry was an accompanying trait of political fragmentation. Nationality, political, and economic fragmentation as well as rivalry and various forms of dependence forced the question of whether this was a region at all and some authors therefore deny the peculiarity of the region. The Cold War divided Europe into only two parts, but, in spite of this, the concept of Central Europe was revived in the 1980s as a negative reaction to the identification with the Soviet orbit and Eastern Europe.⁴

In their search for the nucleolus and borders of Central Europe, the authors focused predominantly on their own countries. This national approach influenced Austrian, Czech, German, Polish, Hungarian, Lithuanian, and Slovak conceptions.⁵

Distinct interpretations of the source of terms are apparent in the difference between Czech and Polish terminology. The

³ Międzymorze, *Polska i kraje Europy środkowo-wschodniej XIX–XX wiek*, Warszawa 1995.

⁴ Wandycz P., *The Myth and Complexes of East Central Europe*, Polish Foreign Affairs Digest 2001, No. 1.

⁵ Kłoczowski J., *East Central Europe in the Historiography of the Countries of the Region*, Lublin 1995.

term Central Europe has dominated the Czech discussion, but the shift to the East in Polish historiography has been reflected by the term East Central Europe.⁶ The discussions, in which definitions have been determined by authors' national and political identities as well as by periods, provide a huge inspiration for a one-semester course or a book containing several volumes, but not for a conference presentation. With regard to the diversity of conceptions, the following contribution will be limited to a short outline of the main Czech ideas concerning Central Europe.

The Czech scholar semiotician V. Macura, in the stimulating proceedings from the Prague symposium on the Czech understanding and image of Europe that took place in October 1996, recalled how the category Central Europeanism, just like Europeanism and Slavism, was among the important attributes of Czech self-definition and self-evaluation, which changed over time. Self-centered approaches were not only part of the Czech perception, but can be found in the self-definition of other nations as well.⁷ By the end of the twentieth century, Central Europeanism ceased to be so much a demarcation line against Germany, but more so against Russia.⁸

Austro-Slavism and the Czech Liberal Conception

The regional context in which the modern economic development of the Czech Lands was placed by Czech historians

⁶ Sukiennicki W., *East Central Europe during World War I: from Foreign Domination to National Independence*, ed. M. Siekierski, Vol. I–II, New York 1984.

⁷ Macura V., *Znamení zrodu*, Praha 1995, pp. 170–177; Rak J., Bývalí Čechové, in: *České historické mýty a stereotypy*, Praha 1994.

⁸ Macura V., *Sémiotika Evropy*, in: *Evropa očima Čechů*, Praha 1997, pp. 9–24.

defined Central Europe as being bordered to the west by Bavaria and Saxony, and to the east by Poland.⁹ Economic parameters measured by the degree of industrialization thus did not overlap with political parameters. The concept of Central Europe in the Czech political consciousness in the nineteenth century was associated immediately with the multinational Habsburg Empire. Czech politicians defined a concept of Central Europe for the first time in a discussion on the unification of Germany during the „spring of nations” in 1848. Czech historian and politician, František Palacký, in April 1848 refused in his famous open letter an invitation to take part in the German parliament in Frankfurt and explained his point of view. According to Palacký’s idea, Central Europe was based on the alliance of small nations of the Habsburg monarchy, which would guarantee their independence from united Germany or from the Russian Empire. The Russian Empire was seen as a universal monarchy, which posed a threat to small nations. Palacký presented resistance to Russia as a motivating factor for a new Austria. “Imagine an Austrian Empire divided into a number of smaller states and even smaller republics – what a nice contribution to the universal Russian monarchy!” The Habsburg Monarchy was supposed to provide an alternative to the vision of a Central Europe based upon national states comprising historic nations with Germany at its head. The rejection of the idea of being integrated into Germany was based upon the fear that the small Czech nation would be diluted. Palacký’s idea was not inherently anti-German. He saw Germany as a partner of the Habsburg Monarchy.¹⁰ A constitutional

⁹ Hroch M., *Das 17. Jahrhundert – Krise der feudalen Gesellschaft*, Hamburg 1981, pp. 126–196; Horská-Vrbová P., *Kapitalistická industrializace a česká společnost*, Praha 1970, p. 11.

¹⁰ Křen J., *Konfliktní společenství: Češi a Němci 1780–1918*, Praha 1990, pp. 97–101. Urban O., *Česká společnost 1848–1918*, Praha 1984, pp. 34–35.

monarchy would provide an equal opportunity for the free development of all nations concerned. Palacký as a member of the Austrian parliament suggested an ethnic federation composed of eight lands: German, Austrian, Czech, Polish, Illyrian (South Slav), (North) Italian, Hungarian, and Romanian (Transylvania). His proposal from January 1849 was an alternative to centralizing tendencies that provided for German domination. No nation should be dominant and the whole federal construction would lose its justification without this basic premise.¹¹ It is obvious that Palacký's idea sought an ideal organization of the multinational Habsburg Empire and did not respect the national processes abroad, namely the German, Italian, Romanian, and Polish national movements along with their plans for the creation of national states. Only the Czechs, Slovaks and Slovenians of the Habsburg monarchy were concentrated inside the state and had no relatives abroad. As they had no relatives outside their borders and no irredentist claims, the Czechs remained loyal to monarchy in 1848 and based their development within the framework of the monarchy as the best guarantee of their national existence. Their change of status was possible only within the context of the monarchy, which they firmly associated with further national progress. Palacký's pro-Austrian constructive position was, despite its demonstration of Slav solidarity, a feasible construct for Czech society, firmly embedded in the Habsburg monarchy up until the early twentieth century.¹²

The defeat of revolutions in Austria, Germany, and Hungary along with the subsequent introduction of neoabsolutism resulted in a postponement of the discussion in

¹¹ Kolečka J., *Národy habsburské monarchie v revoluci 1848–1918*, Praha 1989, pp. 335–339.

¹² Kořalka J., *Tschechen in Habsburgerreich und in Europa 1815–1914*, Wien - München 1991, pp.175–200.

the 1860s. The Dualism, which divided the monarchy into Austrian and Hungarian parts in 1867 satisfied only the Hungarian political representatives, but not other nations. Czech objections were not respected and, after a short time, Czech politicians resigned themselves to ineffective opposition and perceived Austria (Cislaithania) as a base for further national development. The integrity of Austria- Hungary was considered to be indispensable to the stability of Europe.

There was no alternative in the minds of Czech politicians to a Central European space identical to the Habsburg Monarchy. Slavic sympathies and solidarity, which no doubt existed among the Czech population, were exaggerated primarily by German and Hungarian political opponents. The issue of Pan-Slavism has been often mentioned in relation to the Slavic congress and revolution in Prague in 1848 or the dissatisfaction of Czech politicians in the 1860s, which resulted in demonstrative journey of Czech politicians to the ethnographical exhibition in Moscow in summer 1867. Despite some mention of Slavophilism, their activities were not given serious consideration. They were intended as demonstrations or ominous appeals to solve the Czech question through Vienna and not by joining the tsarist empire. Slavic solidarity was more expressed in terms of culture than out of a desire to join the tsarist empire. Russian Pan-Slavism combined the cultural and political vision of Pan-Slavic unity with a vision of Russian messianism and the subordination of Slavs to the Russian Orthodox Church. The absolutist Russian Empire could not have been politically attractive to Czech liberals, especially following the intervention of 1849. The brutal suppression of Polish uprisings frightened European liberals and democrats regardless of nationality. However, it would be inaccurate to claim that the Slav factor did not find some political support. From 1846,

Czech politicians formulated a concept of Austro-Slavism on the basis of the consciousness of the majority of Slavic nations in Habsburg monarchy.¹³ Austro-Slavism was not a coherent ideology, but rather an instrument to achieve political influence within the framework of the Habsburg monarchy. It united nationalities against centralism, but did not manage to have a long-term systematic impact on all non-dominant ethnic groups. It was impossible to realize political aims within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy on the basis of Slav cooperation because of conflicting interests of representatives of nations with varying degrees of social and economic development, which, on the one hand, permitted coordination ad hoc, but not among all Slavs in the Habsburg Monarchy.

Russian Pan-Slavism associated with an expansionist foreign policy looked to Orthodox nations primarily in the Balkans, whereas Western Catholic Slavs (with the exception of the Poles, which were a part of the tsarist empire) were not the object of immediate political interest. Slavophiles argued that Catholicism was the result of negative Western influence and culture and this was a reason why the integration of Western Slavs was considered impossible.¹⁴

Pan-Slavism became more popular after the outbreak of the First World War. The outbreak of the war meant a strong impact for Czech policy and brought about reorientation of traditional policy. A part of politicians at home chose the policy of adaptation to the war unfavourable conditions and defensive minimal program, a few leaders challenged to fight against the Central Powers and started to prepare an alternative project of the Czech independent national state. At the beginning of the war,

¹³ Doubek V., *Česká politika a Rusko (1848–1914)*, Praha 2004, pp. 51–58.

¹⁴ Vlček R., *Ruský panslavismus – realita a fikce*, Praha 2002.

the Czech liberal Russophile, K. Kramář, designed a plan for a federal Slavic empire with the Russian tsar as its ruler. Russophilism became popular and even Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, a critic of tsarism, did not reject the notion of having the Russian ruler serve as the head of an independent Czech state.¹⁵

Masaryk's Vision of a Central Europe of Small Nations

During the First World War, the issue of the reorganization of Central Europe appeared in a new form, namely the German conception of *Mitteleuropa*, which involved German hegemony. Two types of German hegemony emerged, namely military and liberal. The latter was articulated in a book by Friedrich Naumann. Naumann's book (*Mitteleuropa*) emphasized the integration of Central Europe under German economic and cultural hegemony. Naumann also recognized the cultural peculiarities of other Central European nationalities and was not as hostile to them as the Allied war propaganda had indicated. The realities and bipolarity associated with the war led to a perception that Naumann's theory was connected with German expansionism, and became unacceptable not only for Czech and other Slavic politicians, but also for many Hungarian politicians in Budapest.¹⁶ The reception in German public was not also unambiguous. Naumann's conception was rejected by the Pan-Germans. They blamed Naumann for making far-

¹⁵ Lemberg H., *Masaryk and the Russian Question against the Background of German and Czech Attitudes to Russia*, In: T. G. Masaryk (1850–1937), Vol. 1 *Thinker and Politician* (ed. by S B. Winters), New York 1990, pp. 283–301; Galandauer J., *Czechs and the Notion of the National State*, in: *Citizen-Nation - State*, Praha 1996, pp. 17–27 (also in Czech and German version).

¹⁶ Kopyś T., Oszkár Jászi: *Z dziejów federalizmu w Europie Środkowej w latach 1900–1920*, Kraków 2006, pp. 148–150.

reaching concessions toward Slavs. On the other side, German public in Bohemia, Moravia nad Silesia and in the Baltic provinces welcomed Naumann's Mitteleuropa. They considered it as a liberal perspective of Central European integration under German domination.¹⁷

Naumann's conception of Mitteleuropa was later quoted among the Allies as an antithesis of American president Woodrow Wilson's vision of Europe; conception how Germany should absorb the Habsburg monarchy with its decreasing political, econom and military potential and and small Balkan states as well. The war had changed the position of the Habsburg Empire, which had become more and more dependent upon Germany. German hegemony signified the end of the Czech notion that the monarchy as an institution served to protect small Central European nations, and would result in the realization of Czech aims based upon the democratization of the monarchy keeping in mind the preponderance of non-German nations. The fact that this initial Czech concept was placed in doubt resulted in a reevaluation of the Czech concept of Central Europe by professor and parliamentary deputy, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Masaryk, who had been criticized by Czech nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century for his pro-Vienna views, went into exile and concentrated his efforts on achieving the collapse of the monarchy and the creation of a national state.

Masaryk was conscious that the Czech question was not to be solved in isolation from other problems. From the very beginning of his political activity in exile, he tried to draw the Entente's attention to the process taking place in Central Europe.

¹⁷ Meyer H. C., *Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action*, Den Haag 1955, p. 213; Schubert M., *Die Mitteleuropa- Konzeption Friedrich Naumanns und die Mitteleutopa-Debatte der 80er Jahre*, Sildelfingen 1993, pp. 15–17.

His main political goal during the war was to internationalize the Czech question as part of the complex of problems in the zone between Germany and Russia, where many small nations resided, and he associated the issue of their emancipation with democratization and the struggle of democratic Western powers against conservative autocracy (monarchy). An obvious weakness of the concept, namely the presence of Russia in the Allied camp, was eliminated by the Russian revolution of 1917. Masaryk's ideological interpretation of the war was similar to that of American president, Woodrow Wilson. Masaryk explained his opinions concerning the new structure of Europe and the place of small nations in it in his book *The New Europe* written during his stay in revolutionary Russia from the summer of 1917 until the spring of 1918.¹⁸ In that programmatic brochure, he responded to the German occupation of the Baltic countries and Ukraine, and to the German efforts aimed at creating imperial German-controlled states in that area. His work was a sharp polemic against Friedrich Naumann's liberal conception of Mitteleuropa under German hegemony.¹⁹ Masaryk understood Central Europe more widely than the traditional Czech concept that basically identified Central Europe with the Habsburg Monarchy. Masaryk defined Central Europe as a sphere of small nations from Finland to Greece, from the Baltic to the Adriatic, and as a space between two large powers,

¹⁸ Masaryk T. G., *New Europe: the Slav Standpoint*, London 1918. In Czech translation *Nová Evropa: stanovisko slovanské*, Praha 1920.

¹⁹ Jaworski R., Tomáš G. Masaryk versus F. Naumann: *Zwei Europavisionen im Ersten Weltkrieg*, In: *OCCURSUS SETKÁNÍ BEGEGNUNG* (eds Z. Pousta – P. Seifter – J. Pešek), Praha 1996, pp. 123–134; Kovtun J., *Masaryk's New Europe": The History na the Purpose of the Book*, Czechoslovak and Central European Journal 8, 1989, 1/2, pp. 81–89; Hahn E., *Masaryks Konzept eines „Neuen Europa“ – ein alter Hut oder Rezept für heute?* in: *Identität, Integrität, Integration* (ed. R. Kipke), Münster 1997, pp. 17–53.

namely Germany and Russia. Masaryk's idea of post-war Europe was based upon the thesis that the war, which ended the existence of three multinational monarchies, namely Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, had destroyed antiquated and undemocratic autocracy as well. Masaryk rejected pejorative claims of a post-war Balkanization of Eastern Europe, but instead he predicted cooperation and synthesis because the effect of atomization in newly-established states would result in efforts to create supranational ties on a new, democratic basis. "Europe strives to achieve balance between forces of centralization and those calling for autonomy. This harmony will be based on the uniformity and unity of Europe. However, unity is not synonymous with monotony. Europe is ethnically and culturally diverse. Europe developed this diversity over thousands of years and therefore its unity must be organized on historic principles and also according to natural nationality and other differences."²⁰

At the end of his stay in the United States, Masaryk founded the Mid-European Union together with other exile representatives. The union anticipated the postwar cooperation of Central European countries and was meant to serve as a forum for the discussion of common problems and also disputes before the peace conference. The representatives of American Czechs and Slovaks (T. G. Masaryk), Poles (Ignacy Paderewski, T. M. Helinski), Southern Slavs (Hinko Hinkovič, Boguslav Vosnjak), Lithuanians (Jonas Šliupas, Thomas Naruševičius), Ukrainians (Miroslav Sichynski, Nicholas Ceglinski), Rumanians (Vasil Stoica), Ruthenians (Grigorij Žatkovič), and also Italian irredenta (Charles Tomazolli), Albanians (Christo Dako), Greeks from Turkey (Christos Vassilakakis), sionists (Itamar Ben-Avi) and Armenians (G. Pasdermadjan) took part in the union to

²⁰ Masaryk T. G., *Pomoc Rusku Evropou a Amerikou*. In: T. G. Masaryk, *Otevřít Rusko Evropě*, Praha 1992, pp. 12–13.

demonstrate the promise of future cooperation of Central and East European nations. The MEDU activity culminated in the euphoric „Declaration of Common Aims“ of 26th October 1918, symbolically adopted in Philadelphia's Independence Hall, by which the Union addressed the American and European public declaring universal democratic goals in the spirit of American President Wilson's program. The Mid-European Union was welcomed with euphoria by the American and Allied public as a hopeful beginning for a future European federation – a United States of Europe imitating the United States of America.²¹

It was symbolic that the vision of cooperation proclaimed in exile did not survive longer than a few weeks as soon as nationalist ideas in Europe started to materialize. Masaryk remembered that he had functioned as a mediator in conflicts between Lithuanian and Polish, and Polish and Ukrainian representatives in the United States. The fight between Poles and Ukrainians for Lvov in November (other conflicts were between Serbs and Croats and Slovenes, Italians and Southern Slavs, Albanians and Greeks) were the immediate cause of the erosion and failure of the very fragile union, which was considered rather to be a product of pro-American war propaganda designed to win American public and government support and eliminate rebukes of Balkanization than a seriously-intended premise of the new democratic, but also national Europe. It fulfilled its main propaganda purpose, and its influence was marginal in future developments. On the other hand, it represented the first attempt to articulate principles of cooperation among most Central European nations on a more democratic basis. It was based too

²¹ May A. J. , *The Mid-European Union of 1918*, in: *The Immigrants' Influence on Wilson Peace Policies* (ed. by J. O'Grady), University of Kentucky Press 1967, pp. 250–271; Kovtun J., *Masarykův triumf*, Praha 1991, pp. 402–410; Zahradníček T. , *Jak vyhrát cizí válku: Češi, Poláci a Ukrajinci 1914–1918*, Praha 2000, pp. 142–158.

much on anti-German, anti-Austrian, and anti-Hungarian war propaganda to be able to provide a permanent perspective for the whole region. The main interest focused on the destruction of Austria-Hungary and a new arrangement of East Central Europe as well as the Balkans and the Russian borderlands. The unstable political and social situation and antagonistic territorial demands reduced the possibility of cooperation to general principles and rendered any other concrete steps impossible.

Masaryk's conception can be attributed to the wartime period, namely the fight of the Entente against the Central powers. Masaryk's concept of Central Europe represented a doctrine for the liberation of oppressed nations as well as a vision that automatically presumed post-war cooperation and that a pro-agreement triangle between Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania would provide a basis for regional stability to which the defeated powers would gradually reconcile themselves. It was one-sidedly anti-German, connected with the Allied struggle and unrealistically counted on future Russian support for the region (after the expected fall of Soviet regime). Czechoslovak attempts to achieve stability both on a regional and multilateral basis proved unsuccessful. Hitler's successful advance was made possible by a lack of serious interest on the part of the Western powers, whose very temporary and limited assistance had resulted in the interwar system in Central Europe. Temporal interests at the end of the Great War, and the lack of strong ties (especially economic ties) linking France and Great Britain to Central Europe led in a definite loss of interest. Absorbed by own colonial and over-seas problems and West European security problems, they were not agreeable to resist Germany by economically and military means and sacrificed Czechoslovakia like a mere pawn in a game.²²

²² Sládek Z., *Malá dohoda – 1919–1938: její hospodářské, politické a vojenské komponenty*, Praha 2000.

The new Europe lacked the time for stabilisation. The interwar period, characterized by a division between victors and vanquished, supporters of the status quo and revisionists, external and internal instability, and serious economic problems cast the region in a bad light. Formerly oppressed nations fighting in the name of humanity were accused of becoming oppressors themselves. The newly-installed German hegemony in the late 1930s and early 1940s signified the collapse of the Versailles system of national states. Diverging interests of the keepers of the status quo as well as those of revisionists and differing priorities between east and west facilitated the devouring of most of Central Europe by Nazi Germany. The eastern part of Central Europe was swallowed up by the Soviets on the basis of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Soviet gains from cooperation with Hitler were supplemented by other smaller, territorial adjustments, which resulted in nearly the entire region being placed within the Soviet orbit.

The Central European model experienced only a brief renaissance as a concept of a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe after the Second World War. Illusions of a bridge and of a third way between Western capitalism and Soviet state-run economics, which had been popular among the Czech public and were articulated by Czechoslovak president, Edvard Beneš, were too dependent on the constellation of international forces and their will to cooperate rather than on the wishes of Central Europeans themselves. In fact, the results of the war divided Europe into two parts. The outbreak of the Cold War and the thorough Sovietization of the region by Stalin ended any illusions of a "bridge." Central Europe was swallowed up by Soviet Eastern Europe. Only intellectuals in exile continued to discuss the notion of Central Europe, this time keeping a distance from Russia. The most significant

accounts are by the Polish historians Oskar Halecki²³ and later Piotr Wandycz.²⁴ Hungarian historians also contributed significantly to the discussion by recalling the issues of modernization and backwardness.²⁵ However, the concept that became predominant was the division of Europe only into two parts, East and West.

Central Europe as Sentiment: The Rejection of the East in the Intellectual Discussion of the 1980s

Discussions of Central Europe defined on the basis of shared or very close cultures were revived in the 1980s. Milan Kundera initiated the concept in his famous treatise *The Tragedy of Central Europe*.²⁶ The Czech concept of Central Europe diverged from Masaryk's idea of being between Finland and Greece back to the Habsburg Monarchy. In the eyes of exiles, Central Europe signified a new world in which national conflicts were marginalized in favor of the shared cultural inheritance of the Habsburg Monarchy. The discussion among Czech historians and other intellectuals was associated

²³ Halecki O., *The Limits and Divisions of European History*, London – New York 1950.

²⁴ Wandycz P., *Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*, Routledge 1992.

²⁵ Berend I. – Ránki G., *Economic Development in East Central Europe in 19th and 20th Centuries*, New York 1974; Berend I. – Ránki G., *Central and Eastern Europe 1944–1993: Detour from Periphery to the Periphery*, Cambridge 1996; Bibó I., *Bída malých národů východní Evropy*, Brno – Bratislava 1997; in French *Misère de petits états de l'Europe de l'Est*, Paris 1986; Szűcs J., *Les trois Europes*, Paris 1985.

²⁶ Kundera M., *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, *The New York Review of Books*, 26 April 1984.

with the discussion on Czech-German relations and blank spots in Czech historiography.²⁷

Central Europe has returned in a somewhat idealized form as an intellectual challenge. It expressed of the negation of the eastern stereotype. It was also a protest against the simplistic identification of Central European countries and cultures with the Soviet East. It characterized Central Europe as a historical component of Western European culture, which was separated from it by force after the war. In spite of the term Central Europe, the gravitational center was the West. The discussion paved the way for the extrication from the Soviet Bloc and the slogan of the 1990s "Return to Europe." The effort was made to support dissent based on the traditions of civil society, but also to find a unifying theme among the Polish, Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian dissidents, emmigrés and some German and Austrian scholars and politicians.²⁸ The discussion had moments of fatefulness, the tragedy of sacrifice, and criticism of the West's past behavior. The emphasis on the relation between ethnic diversity and culturally-strong potency as a result of this ethnic heterogeneity offered an attractive perspective between commercialized Western Europe and the totalitarian Soviet system as well as an impetus to pan-European intellectual discussions. The effectiveness of the revival of Central Europe and its timeless tragedy is apparent in T. G. Ash's brilliant essay of October 1986, in which Ash defined George Orwell as a Central European and in which Ash expressed his support for Central Europeanism, in a manner similar to the Berlin statement of President Kennedy.²⁹

²⁷ Schulze M., *Střed je na západě: Střední Evropa v české diskusi osmdesátých let*, in: *Evropa očima ...*, pp. 73–93.

²⁸ Schubert M., *Die Mitteleuropa-Konzeption...*, pp. 26–47.

²⁹ Ash T. G., *Středoevropán volbou*, Praha 1992, p. 35. *Original essay Does Central Europe exist?*, New York Review 9 November 1986.

From Discussion to Reality: The Baby Steps of Visegrád

After the demise of the Soviet Bloc, the discussion continued and acquired a rather heated tone with the reemergence of certain national conflicts. The pro-Habsburg sentiment often associated with the religious notion of Central Europe quickly faded away. The newest account conceptualizing Central Europe has been presented by Czech historian, Jan Křen, in his book *Two Centuries of Central Europe*, which expands the traditional Czech conception (Czech Lands, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Austria) to include East Germany and the history of Central Europe in a wider European context (German and Soviet). Křen mentions the cultural, scientific, and political influences of the German and Soviet periods and their impact upon the region as a whole.³⁰

Developments in the 1990s caused disillusion with the idea of Central European distinctness, which, in its extreme form, became messianic in nature with visions of some third way between Western European capitalism and post-Soviet chaos. The diversity of the region, which brought rich cultural advantages, proved to be an obstacle for politicians. The most significant attempt to achieve greater Central European cooperation on the practical political level was the formation of the Visegrád Group in 1991, which contained Czechoslovakia (later its successor republics), Poland, and Hungary. This basically signified the heritage left by the tatters of the Habsburg Empire without Austria.³¹ The primary impulse for Central European cooperation was common problems in dealing with the Soviet Union. After

³⁰ Křen J., *Dvě století střední Evropy*, Praha 2006.

³¹ Vykoukal J. (ed.), *Visegrád: možnosti a meze středoevropské spolupráce*, Praha 2003; Vykoukal J., *Kernschmelze oder Kernspaltung? Mitteleuropakonzepte und regionale Integration*, *Osteuropa Osteuropa*, Vol. 56, 2006, Nr. 10, pp. 15–25.

the collapse of the Soviet Union, cooperation in Russian policy issues began to lose their significance. On the other hand, a package of issues regarding relations with eastern and southern neighbors emerged. There was some cooperation in that matter. However, insofar as Czechoslovak and later Czech foreign policy was concerned, the significance of relations with the Polish and Hungarian neighbors at the beginning of the 1990s was third on the list of priorities after that of relations towards Germany and the Soviet Union (Russia).³² The common goal of integration into the west became a factor in the cooperation, but instead of bringing people closer together, it provoked rivalries. Czech policy in the era of prime ministr, Václav Klaus, rejected the institutionalization of cooperation and did not want to hamper the main goals of joining the European Union and NATO by discussing problems of less dynamic neighboring countries. Declining interest in cooperation was influenced by EU accession, but a number of problems between the EU core and peripheral new members as well as the idea of multitrack integration has rekindled desires for cooperation in a united approach towards Brussels. Efforts to coordinate policy towards eastern and southeastern neighbors were not always successful. On the other hand, predictions of the demise of the Visegrád Group did not materialize. However, very limited cooperation (expressed more in proclamations than in actual cooperation (one of few practical results was foundation of the common fund for cultural and scientific activities) that would jointly articulate problems on the periphery of the EU were a far cry from the visions of intellectuals in the 1980s.³³

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³² *Máme národní zájmy?* (ed. J. Valenta), Praha 1992.

³³ Růžička J. – Kořán M., *Totgesagte leben länger: die Visegrád Gruppe nach dem EU-Beitritt, Osteuropa*, Vol. 56, 2006, Nr. 10, pp. 27–39.

The Czech conception of Central Europe was not an unchanging, comprehensive or consistent one, but rather it developed in reaction to external factors according to which the region was defined. From the first announcement of the Czech political program in 1848 onward, the Czech idea was not purposeless. Instead, the definition was designed as an instrument to define the Czech role in the region. There were two versions of the Czech conception of Central Europe. The first was connected with the Habsburg Monarchy separate from Germany, whereas the second as defined in T. G. Masaryk's new conception of the Czechoslovak state. The first concept rejected the Greater German idea, which included the Czech Lands in the German unification process, but instead insisted on the uniqueness of the Habsburg Monarchy apart from Germany. Masaryk's conception was a reaction to the integration of Germany and the Habsburg Monarchy and was radical because it aimed for the complete destruction of Austria-Hungary. Achieving independence of the Czech Lands was impossible without the destruction of Austria-Hungary. In order to assure Western politicians, who harbored worries about potential Balkanization, Masaryk formulated his vision of a liberated, democratic Central Europe comprised of national states.

A narrower approach to Central Europe was revived by Czech intellectuals in the 1980s (who appealed to the memory of the Habsburg Monarchy), in order to separate Czechoslovakia and its neighbors from Eastern Europe. The true political and economic separation of the region survived after the Cold War ended and the Soviet Bloc disappeared. No political integration of the former states of the Habsburg Monarchy occurred. Instead disillusion prevailed. The border between economically-advanced Austria and post-Communist countries was maintained. Central Europe as an heir of Habsburg times exists in the sphere of culture, mentality, and the similarity of national

cuisines. In the political sense, the region has moved further eastward and is commonly referred to as East-Central Europe.

Cooperation between post-Communist countries represented a pragmatic minimum emanating from common problems following the collapse of Communism and shared interests among three (later four) Central European countries. This cooperation was not and could not be an alternative to joining the European Union, but rather (thanks to Western pressure) it provided a forum for common preparation for European Union accession.

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A Historical Perspective on Serbian Occidentalism

In almost all Eastern European countries the integration in the European Union encountered severe opposition that could be attributed to the political views and ideologies usually termed as anti-Western. Serbia is one of the countries where the process of integration was least successful but the opposition voiced there was not unique in its character and had many commonalities with discourses used elsewhere. Whereas the essentialist discourses on “West” and “East” were definitely established in the twentieth century, ideological and cultural divisions, false assumptions and perceptions of the Other, rendered by alleged geographically firm, cultural and civilizational distinctions have already existed for long. Larry Wolff showed beautifully how Southeast Europe as geographic but also as cultural entity (Morlachismo) was discovered and put on the mental map during the Enlightenment, similar to the concomitant encounter and developing idea of difference between Western Europe and Eastern Europe, while Maria Todorova elaborated the development and specificity of Balkanism as a value loaded discourse.¹ In Eastern Europe,

¹ Larry Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs: The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001) and *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (Oxford University Press, 1997).

especially among Russian thinkers, criticism of the West was maturing during the nineteenth century.² Playing off Edward Said's landmark *Orientalism*, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit in their recent book popularized the term Occidentalism for nationalist and essentialist demeaning of the Occident, the interpretation used in this article as well.³ Buruma and Margalit demonstrated that they mostly replicated responses to forces of modernization that have their roots in Western culture itself. The nationalist resistance to the West and its practice of political, economic and cultural imperialism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere often translated into anti-democratic and anti-modernist campaign and allied with the most reactionary political forces. This kind of Occidentalism was cemented in Europe in the interwar period under the influence of the then prevailing sentiment of "the Decline of the West". Looking for anti-Westernism among Serbian authors, one also finds the most prominent ones in the interwar period, when basic ideological patterns were set according to which opinions are still being formed and which included views about the position of Serbs and their country in Europe and the World, the features of Serbian character and the parameters of Serbian history.

Some of the key Serbian interwar anti-westerners were churchmen.⁴ In addition to ideological currents of the period, the

² For the conflict between Westerners and Slavophiles among Russian intelligentsia see Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile controversy: history of a conservative utopia in nineteenth-century Russian thought* (translated by Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) and Alain Besançon, *Les origines intellectuelles du léninisme* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1977).

³ Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: the West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

⁴ Thomas Bremer analyzed the writings of bishop Nikolaj Velimirović and theologian Justin Popović, the two most celebrated figures of the Serbian church in the twentieth century and at the same time the most representative of its anti-Occidentalism in *Ekklesiale Struktur und Ekklesiologie in der Serbischen*

interwar and contemporary anti-westerners have drawn argumentation from the historic experience of the Serbian Church and people under foreign rule. Similarly to the much better studied Greek or Russian cases, Serbian anti-Westernism has its predecessor in anti-Catholicism.⁵ It developed during the centuries of oppression and discrimination to which the Orthodox Church and people were exposed in the Habsburg Empire and in Dalmatia ruled by Venice. Especially the attempts of the Catholic Church to bring the Orthodox into the union with Rome generated relentless hostility. This fierce historic anti-Catholicism was later integrated in the modern Serbian Occidentalism. Having sketched the content of my article let me stress that it does not attempt to offer a determined historical pattern or explanation of contemporary widespread Occidentalism in Serbia, in the way the obsessive invoking of the past became a norm in matters pertaining to the Balkans. As any ideological current in the East and in the West for that matter, Serbian anti-Westernism has concrete and present day causes and a multitude of political, social and economic reasons. Yet unlike many of its imported concepts, anti-Catholicism was the one that claims longer history, certain authenticity and specificity. The modest contribution of this article will be to elucidate its development and importance for Serbian Occidentalism.

Orthodoxen Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1992) See also Klaus Buchenau, *Orthodoxie und Katholizismus in Jugoslawien 1945–1991. Ein serbisch-kroatischer Vergleich* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2004), R. Chrysostomus Grill, *Serbischer Messianismus und Europa bei Bischof Velimirović* (+1956) (St. Ottilien: EOS-Verlag, 1998).

⁵ Angelos Giannakopoulos, "Antiokzidenalismus und ostkirchliche Tradition" in *Zeitschrift für Religionwissenschaft*, 10 (2002), pp. 119–129 and Vasilios N. Makrides and Dirk Uffelman, "Studying Eastern Orthodox Anti-Westernism: The Need for a Comparative Research Agenda" in: Jonathan Sutton / Wil van den Bercken, eds., *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, Leuven: Peeters, 2003, S. 87–120.

Serbian Anti-Catholicism

Although there were disputes about ecclesiastic jurisdiction in the Middle Ages, there is little evidence that these conflicts left any trace in people's memory or in the tradition of the Serbian Orthodox Church, compared to what the devastating pillaging of Constantinople in 1204, did among the Greeks. The big change occurred in the sixteenth century, when fleeing the Ottoman invasion, many Balkan Orthodox natives settled in Habsburg and Venetian territories.⁶ During first two centuries, the Orthodox settlers in Habsburg territories were not permitted to have their own Church organisation and hierarchy and Venice refused to accept Orthodox bishops throughout its existence so that Orthodox clergy maintained more or less clandestine contacts with the Serbian Patriarchate in Peć, which was under the Ottoman rule. The erection of Orthodox churches was hindered and until the middle of eighteenth century only wooden churches were allowed. In economic and educational terms the Orthodox Church was heavily discriminated and could neither count on public funds nor state support until well into the nineteenth century.⁷ Finally, the history of the Orthodox settlers and their Church in the Habsburg Monarchy was particularly marked or, to be more precise, marred by attempts of the

⁶ For Habsburg Empire see Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Austrian Military Border in Croatia 1522–1747* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960) and for the later period his *The Military Border in Croatia 1740–1881* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966). For first migrations to Venetian Dalmatia see Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic* (Ithaca, Ny.: Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁷ Karl Kaser showed how confessional differentiation and discrimination determined Serbian and Croatian national integration in Habsburg border areas in his *Freier Bauer und Soldat* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1997), esp. pp. 599–617.

Catholic Church to win them into union with Rome and consequently their resistance to these attempts. They began after the first mass migrations and continued well into the nineteenth century, although they were less intense after the Toleration Act of Joseph II in 1781, and Napoleon's abolition of Venice. Eventually, despite strenuous efforts of Roman curia, the local Catholic clergy and occasionally civil authorities of the Habsburg Monarchy or Venetian Republic to negotiate or press the Orthodox into the union, nothing similar to the famous Unions of Brest (1595), Uzhorod (1646) or Alba Julia (1700) ever took place in the Balkans. Today, if one disregards the Ruthenians and Ukrainians colonized among South Slavs, there is no more than three thousand 'Uniates' left in the hilly villages of Žumberak, Croatian border region with Slovenia. They are the only descendents of almost two century of existence of the Uniate diocese of Marča, established in 1612 in the Habsburg Military Border in Croatia.⁸ For long after, bishop Simeon, who accepted the union, and his successors were "propter obedientiam" Uniate and "propter populum" Orthodox, pledging allegiance both to Rome and the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate of Peć. Any attempt to implement the union in practice resulted in eruptions of violence; Marča monastery was burned down and

⁸ Žumberak (Sichelburg), the only region where the Union of Marča eventually materialized was a small military enclave with a total population of only six thousand, where pressure against the Orthodox could be brought with relative impunity. In 1750, Austrian military commander Baron Scherzer began a systematic campaign to oust the Orthodox clergy and enforce the loyalty of local folk to the Uniate bishopric. In a flagrant violation of ancient privileges, Maria Theresa permitted the military to proceed. Under severe pressure and isolated from the rest of their co-religionists the Sichelburger Grenzer had by the mid-1760s largely acquiesced to the Uniate clergy. For details see Johan Heinrich Schwicker, "Zur Geschichte der kirchlichen Union in der kroatischen Militärgrenze" in *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* vol. 52 (Wien, 1875).

several rebellions ensued. Elsewhere, extremely violent outbursts were recorded as late as 1820, when Dalmatian bishop Kraljević allegedly sided with union plans of local Habsburg officials, which he also used as means in power struggle against his superior, Metropolitan Stratimirović of Karlovci.⁹ This caused furor among the Orthodox in Dalmatia, who in their letter to Stratimirović declared that they would rather give up their lives and all the property they have than change their faith and embrace union with Rome. Indeed the revolt soon transformed into action and in 1821, the dean of the newly founded seminary, a Ruthenian Uniate priest, was murdered in Šibenik. The Habsburg authorities reacted with for that time usual brutality sentencing twenty one Serbs for plotting, only three of whom saw their sentences to the end. Several years later, two other Serbian priests accused of adultery, joined the union in order to avoid defrocking. Despite the support from local administration and the Catholic Church, which saw that two Uniate churches were built in record time, one priest was shot dead and the other faced several murder attempts.

The chief hindrances for the spread of union among South Slavs in Habsburg Empire laid in the fact that Orthodox settlers, most of whom received the status of frontiersmen (*Grenzer*), were relieved from paying feudal dues and were allowed a certain degree of autonomy and the freedom of religion in return for their military services. However, this policy of the Habsburgs toward their Orthodox subjects was thoroughly opportunistic. Concessions granted to the followers of the “non-Uniate Greek rite” were determined solely by the reasons of state or more precisely it’s military. As long as the services of

⁹ Kosta Milutinović, “Karlovačka Mitropolija i borba protiv unije u Dalmaciji” [Karlovci Metropolitanate and Struggle against Union in Dalmatia] in his *Vojvodina i Dalmacija 1760–1914* (Novi Sad, 1973), pp. 17–50.

the Orthodox *Grenzer* were needed, their religion was respected; but when the need had passed, the throne did little to restrain the efforts of the Catholic hierarchy and clergy to convert the Orthodox or at least to coerce them to accept the union with the Catholic Church.¹⁰ Whereas military interests more often than not restrained the Habsburgs from supporting the union, the Catholic Church and local notables led the efforts. Besides pressing ecclesiastical concerns, which forbid doubling of Christian hierarchies and soteriological worries over the souls of the non-unified fellow Christians, the Catholic Church had other less noble-minded reasons for its engagement. Being the greatest proprietor of lands incorporated in the Military Border, Catholic hierarchy joined local estates in their strategy of enserfing the settlers, which was only possible if they lose privileges based on their Orthodox religion and *Grenzer* status.

The negotiations led by Vatican envoys and missionaries also extended to the hierarchs of the Serbian Patriarchate in Peć under the Ottoman rule, and they were targeted again after 1690, when they moved to the Habsburg Empire, after the unsuccessful attempt to drive the Ottomans out of the Balkans. None of these attempts bore fruit and instead they bred bitterness and mistrust between the Catholics and Orthodox, which accumulated over centuries. After Ottoman advances in the sixteenth century, war-waging between two empires was often reduced to armed conflicts between South Slavic peoples, divided by religion and imperial borders. In peacetime kinship, neighbourly and trading ties reined in religious intolerance. Still frequent wars and diverse socio-economic status at the juncture of foreign empires had built barriers between the same-language population of mostly common moral and existential credos and customs and popular, non-codified culture. The profound

¹⁰ Rothenberg, *The Military Border in Croatia 1740–1881*, p. 29.

intolerance between the Slavic populations of different confessions was well described by foreign travellers already in the eighteenth century.¹¹ At the same time, one of the first Serbian enlightened thinkers, Dositej Obradović wrote that South Slavs are most divided and alienated by churches, the Greek and the Latin one.¹² German geographer and traveller Johann Georg Kohl, who visited the region in the middle of the nineteenth century made an interesting comparison from the "European" perspective: "The overall impression is that Catholics and Orthodox people live like in a permanent state of conspiracy against each other and they hate and despise each other like Jews and Christians."¹³ For the Orthodox it was the experience of the union pressure which produced long lasting suspicion, mistrust and contempt of the Catholic Church and states that condoned it. In a letter dated 1788, Dositej Obradović described his encounter with Uniates in Zagreb in 1761.

...I am horrified at what an awful thing prejudice may become. Those same lads, boys of my own age, whom a bit earlier I had gazed on with ineffable joy, just as if they were my dear brothers and kinsfolk, now, when I had heard that they were Uniates, appeared to me in a different light; they had become terrible enemies, who desired and sought my destruction.¹⁴

Metropolitan Stratimirović, who headed the Serbian Church in the Habsburg Monarchy for almost half a century

¹¹ Alberto Fortis, *Viaggio in Dalmazia* (Venezia: 1774) is one of the most famous of such travelogues.

¹² From his Letter to Haralampiye, translated and published in George Rapall Noyes, *The Life and Adventures of Dositej Obradović* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), p. 135.

¹³ J. G. Kohl, *Reise nach Istrien, Dalmatien und Montenegro II* (Dresden, 1856, Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1987), p. 340.

¹⁴ *The Life and Adventures of Dositej Obradović*, pp. 227–228.

(1790–1836), saw himself as the chief defender of the Orthodoxy against the Catholic “union threat” and left two treatises in German entitled: “About the difference between Greek Catholic and Orthodox church or renunciation of the claim that Russia supports hate against Catholics” and “About Pope as the principal obstacle for the Unity of Western and Eastern Church”. On the pretext that they would bring Serbs into union, he rejected any language, cultural or calendar reforms attempted by secular intellectuals.¹⁵ For Metropolitan Stratimirović, the archaic Church Slavonic language was nothing less but “the anchor of Orthodoxy” and Vuk Karadžić not a language reformer as he is celebrated now but a traitor of Orthodoxy and Serbdom.¹⁶ Dalmatian bishop Stefan Knežević accused one of the liberal Orthodox priests, collaborator and correspondent in many South Slav political and cultural endeavors, Jovan Sundečić, for spreading Uniatism by using Latin script. Sundečić responded bluntly:

You object me using Latin script and I tell you if I knew that the Orthodoxy really dwells on this or that script, believe me I would reject you and your Orthodoxy this very moment.¹⁷

On the other hand, resistance to reforms and suspicion to the influence from the West within the Orthodox Church was also nourished by perceptions which Enlighteners and modernizers cherished about the Orthodoxy. In his pioneering

¹⁵ For Stratimirović’s arguments for the rejection of the translation of the Bible to vernacular see Peter Kuzmič, *Vuk-Daničićovo Sveto pismo i biblijska društva na južnoslovenskom tlu u XIX stoljeću* [Vuk-Daničić Holy Bible and Biblical Societies on South Slav Soil in the XIXth century] (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1983), pp. 226–229.

¹⁶ Miodrag Popović, *Vuk Stef. Karadžić* (Beograd, 1964), pp. 96–112.

¹⁷ Quoted in Milutinović, “Karlovačka Mitropolija”, p. 47.

study on the Orthodoxy and Enlightenment, Larry Wolff described how the influential image of Orthodoxy as inevitably eastern and barbaric evolved during the Enlightenment together with the notions of civilization, nationhood, citizenship and sovereignty as conceptual frames of identity.¹⁸ While Orthodoxy was not alone perceived as backward and superstitious Wolff showed the almost unanimous disapproval of the Orthodox Church in the accounts of the period, especially as far as its images, rituals and the alleged ignorance of its clergy were concerned. For the Orthodox clergy the Enlightenment and all later secular ideologies stemming from the West seemed to continue to boost the self-proclaimed superiority that stood behind many an attempt of the Catholic Church to draw Orthodox into union or convert them to Catholicism.

The intensification of anti-Catholicism and general suspicion against everything new and foreign within the Serbian Orthodox Church is also to be seen in the prism of its waning authority in face of modernizing and secularizing trends. Habsburg imperial privileges and regulations for Orthodox settlers framed their Orthodox religious identity in a context similar to that of the Ottoman *millet*, fusing religious and political allegiance. Due to the status of the Serbian Church as the sole recognized Serbian institution in the Monarchy, the Orthodoxy became cultivated and identified in an emerging national context, an elusive space that cut across earlier, shifting ethnic, class and regional boundaries. Starting from the end of the eighteenth century, the hierarchy of the Serbian Church, which enjoyed privileges and close ties with the Court and later Hungarian government, strove to retain their power within

¹⁸ Larry Wolff, *The Enlightenment and The Orthodox World: Western Perspectives on The Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe* (Athens: Institute for Neohellenic Research – National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2001).

institutions of the Serbian Church autonomy, which secular intellectuals and emerging Serbian political parties wanted to turn into institutions of nascent modern nationalism.¹⁹ Loosing its grip over the people and especially over the intelligentsia, the Church found in the experience of union threat a unique weapon to emphasize and exaggerate its authority and role in the defense and preservation of people and their identity. This was ever more intensified with mass falling away of Orthodox Serbs to neo-Protestant sects as well as with the spread of new ideological trends of rationalism, atheism and socialism at the end of the nineteenth century.²⁰ Needless to mention, all these “threats” were coming from the West, as once attempts at union did. The catalyst in this process, whereby the Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church were essentialized and positioned against the West and the Catholic Church, were those same “ignorant and barbarous” *coloyers*, who Voltaire infamed in the eighteenth century. In other words, the Orthodox Church and its clergy were willy-nilly turned into “subversive” nation builders not the least by the Catholic Church and Habsburg imperial policy. The historical memory and models that stemmed from and exploited religious divisions and discrimination of the past were redeployed to build a new secular national identity.²¹ Thereby, the experience of union pressure and aversion against the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century became one of the

¹⁹ For debates around the administration of the Church and Serbian autonomy see Bremer, *Ekklesiale Struktur*, pp. 13–105.

²⁰ See mine *Religious Dissent in the Age of Modernization and Nationalism: Nazarenes in Hungary and Serbia 1850–1914*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, *Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen* Band 43, pp. 133–179.

²¹ For a comparison with Greek case see Victor Roudometof, “Invented Traditions, Symbolic Boundaries, and National Identity in Southeastern Europe: Greece and Serbia in Comparative Historical Perspective (1830–1880)” in *East European Quarterly* Volume XXXII Winter 1998, Number 4, pp. 429–468.

reference points for the understanding of past, national identity, sense of belonging and the relation to one's neighbors and the world beyond. Numerous treatises, historical works and press articles written by Church authors established the impression that the Serbian history in Monarchy was nothing more than suffering for the Serbian nationality and Orthodox faith and the resistance to Uniatism became a mirror against which all personalities and events were judged. The nascent Serbian historical scholarship accepted most of the Church "union threat" discourse.²² Its schematized view is exemplified in lines drawn by famous Serbian historian Stanoje Stanojević:

Without scruples and considerations, and contrary to law and justice, Catholic propaganda was operating forcibly and cruelly... Notably Jesuits attempted forcibly and by deception to impose union on Serbs.²³

All actors behind union pressure were often uncritically limped as enemies striving to destroy the alleged and fixed Serbian national individuality whereas the Catholic Church was singled out as especially importunate, intrusive, aggressive, violent and obsessed with hatred against Serbs and their Church.²⁴ Due to such tragic circumstances, Serbs were always, as summarized by church historian Slijepčević, "on alert and in self-defence, using all their force to keep their religion and nationality alive."²⁵

²² See mine "Adamant and Treacherous: Serbian Historians on Religious Conversions" in Pål Kolstø, ed. *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe* (London: Hurst & Co, 2005), pp. 158–190.

²³ Stanoje Stanojević, *Istorija srpskog naroda* [History of the Serbian People], (Belgrade: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1926), p. 288.

²⁴ See works of Slavko Gavrilović, Nikola Žutić and Veljko P. Đurić.

²⁵ Đoko Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve* vol. I [History of the Serbian Orthodox Church] (three vol., Belgrade: Bigz, 1992 second ed.), p. 386.

Although not a pressing issue any longer and certainly not a matter of the salvation or damnation of souls the union experience became an argument in the hands of Croatian and Serbian party politics in Austria-Hungary in the second half of the nineteenth century. While the elites of both peoples embraced the powerful ideology of nationalism, the Ausgleich of 1867, which reformed the Monarchy, assigned them a different status.²⁶ Exploiting the historical memory of religious divisions and conflicts of the past in order to foster their interests was common to both. In Croatia, Croatian nationalists led by the leader of the Croatian Party of Right Starčević envisaged an autocephalous Croatian Orthodox Church, asserting that the Serbian Orthodox Church “serbianized” the descendants of Orthodox Croats or Vlachs. The Catholic authors researching the history of the union among the Orthodox in Croatia discarded any notion of their forced or opportunistic acceptance of union.²⁷ The Serbian nationalists responded with the claim that the Croats had been Christianized as Orthodox and only later, through a decision of their rulers and contrary to the will of the people, were converted to Catholicism. Another theory denied Croatian ethnicity and presence claiming that all Croats

²⁶ Numerous studies analyzed the origins of Serbo-Croatian conflict. See Vasa Bogdanov, *Historijski uzroci sukobu između Hrvata i Srba* [Historical Roots of the Conflict between Croats and Serbs] (Zagreb: Rad JAZU, vol. VII, 1957); Mirjana Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije* [The History of the Ideology of the Party of Right] (Zagreb: Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1973); Milorad Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije 1790–1918*. II vols. [The Creation of Yugoslavia] (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1989); Mato Artuković, *Ideologija srpsko-hrvatskih sporova* [Ideology of Serbo-Croatian conflicts] (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1991); Vasilije Krestić, *History of Serbs in Croatia and Slavonia 1848–1914* (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1997); Nicholas Miller, *Nation and State. Serbian Politics in Croatia Before the First World War* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997).

²⁷ See for example Nicolaus Nilles, *Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam Ecclesiae orientalis in terris coronae St. Stephani I–II* (Innsbruck, 1885).

are in fact Serbs who accepted the union.²⁸ Whereas the Serbian historiography treated the population, variously identified in Venetian and Latin sources as Morlacchi, Valacchi, Scismatici, Illirici, Greci scismatici, etc., as ethnic Serbs, Croatian historians have ever since insisted on their different, namely Vlach ethnic origin.²⁹ The denial of Serbian ethnicity reached even comic dimensions when Friar Dominik Mandić claimed that Serbs were descendents of African blacks that Romans brought from Mauritania to their legions stationed in Pannonia and who besides their dark skin color also possessed murky moral features.³⁰

Austria-Hungary's occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, provided additional if not the most significant rift in Croatian-Serbian relationship since this former Ottoman province was on the way of natural expansion of both nationalist projects.³¹ In its own right, Austria-Hungary's patronage of the

²⁸ An analysis of the early period of Serbian and Croatian Nationalism and their arguments is Charles Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Cleveland: Ohio State University Press, 1990).

²⁹ For the Croatian view see works of L.v. Südland (pseudonym for Ivo Pilar), Janko Šimrak and Mile Bogović. For the Serbian perspective see works of Nikodim Milaš and Marko Jačov.

³⁰ Dominik Mandić, "Postanak Vlaha. Nova Povijesna istraživanja"[The Origin of Vlachs. New Historical Research] in *Rasprave i prilozi iz stare hrvatske povijesti* (Rome, 1963), p. 537 and *Hrvati i Srbi. Dva stara različita naroda* [Croats and Serbs. Two Old Different Peoples] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1990), pp. 191–195. For the origin and use of terms Vlachs and Morlachi and their transformation over time see Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs*, pp. 173–181.

³¹ For confessional conflicts in and over Bosnia during this period see Tomislav Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini 1882–1903* [Kallay's Regime in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1882–1903] (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1987); Robin Okey, *Cultural and Political Problems of the Austro-Hungarian Administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina 1873–1903* (Unpublished Phd Thesis, Oxford University, 1972), and Tomo Vukšić, *I rapporti tra i cattolici e gli ortodossi nella Bosnia ed Erzegovina dal 1878 al 1903* (Rome: Pontificio Collegio Croato di San Girolamo, 1991).

Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina and especially the efforts of Sarajevo archbishop Stadler, whom Pope Leo XIII named the Apostolic Commissioner for fostering union in Balkan Orthodox countries furnished new evidence to Serbian nationalists to activate their doubts of the Catholic "anti-Serbian conspiracy".³² Although the vocabulary of the papacy changed and the Orthodox were not treated as schismatics and heretics any longer, pope Leo XIII's motto *Fiat unum ovile et unus Pastor* (Let it be one flock and one shepherd) and a big campaign to strengthen the religious and ecclesiastical adherence of Slavs through the newly established cult of Cyril and Methodius, "the Apostles of Slavs", were seen by the Serbian Church as the continuation of the old violent Uniatism.³³ In response Serbian bishop Ružičić published the history of the Serbian Church wholly denying Croatian nationhood and claiming Cyril and Methodius were Serbs.³⁴ The stance taken by the Serbian Church is best illustrated in the message sent by the bishop of Upper Karlovac in Croatia, Teofan Živković, to Leo XIII at the end of nineteenth century responding to Catholic rapprochement initiatives:

It is more likely that the Velebit Mountain will crumble into the Adriatic Sea than my Orthodox Serbian people accept your calls and convert.³⁵

³² For Uniatizing aspiration of the Catholic Church on the Balkans at the turn of the century see Alois Hudal, *Die serbisch-orthodoxe Nationalkirche* (Graz, 1922).

³³ For the campaign promoting St. Cyril and Methodius see Geert van Dartel, *Ćirilometodska ideja i Svetosavlje* (Cyrillo-Methodian Idea and Svetosavlje) (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1984).

³⁴ Nikanor Ružičić, *Istorija Srpske crkve I* (Zagreb, 1893).

³⁵ Quoted in Tomo Vukšić, "Katoličanstvo i pravoslavlje na prelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće" [Catholicism and Orthodoxy at the Turn of the Century] in *Crkva u svijetu* 36/3 (2001), pp. 280–306, here p. 294.

After the turmoil of the Great War and the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy many hopes were laid in the newly formed common state of South Slavs. Yet instead of rapprochement the inter-war Yugoslavia saw the advocacy of solid and unbreakable ties between one's nationhood and confession, and hostility toward the Other became particularly manifest.³⁶ As tensions between Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats grew the "union threat" as a topic gained ever more prominence. Serbian historical scholarship and political pamphlets condemned the Catholic clergy for their ongoing "uniatism". To counteract the Serbian writing on Catholic forcible Uniatism, friar Krunoslav Draganović claimed Orthodox Church engaged in forced conversions of the Catholics during the Ottoman period.³⁷ Another author and cleric Carolus Nežić insisted that union was actually the return of the Orthodox to the Catholic faith, which they abandoned with the Ottoman onslaught.³⁸ Strikingly enough, on the Croatian side almost all authors of works dealing with the history of union or the Orthodox Church were Catholic prelates, headed by the interwar Greek Catholic bishop Janko Šimrak.³⁹ While the mutual confrontations of churches and scholars in the inter-war Yugoslavia cemented the blending of religion and nationalism of Serbs and Croats, the World War Two saw the

³⁶ For the inter-war church frictions in Yugoslavia and the ensuing war horrors see Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkand idols. Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 17–31.

³⁷ See Krunoslav Stjepan Draganović, "Massenuebertritte von Katholiken zur 'Orthodoxie' im Kroatischen Sprachgebiet zur Zeit der Tuerkenherrschaft" in *Orientalia Christiana periodica* 1937, vol. III, pp. 181–232 and 550–600.

³⁸ Carolus Nežić, *De Pravoslaviv Jugoslaviv saec. XVII ad Catholicam Fidem Reversis* (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1940).

³⁹ See Zlatko Kudelić, "Srpska pravoslavna crkva u dijelima hrvatskih i inozemnih autora između dva svjetska rata" [Serbian Orthodox Church in Works of Croatian and Foreign Authors in the Inter-war Period] in *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 30/3 (1998), pp. 547–574.

antagonisms between the two peoples transforming into violence of genocidal proportions. Refraining from detailing the World War Two experience in former Yugoslavia, for this article it is important to note that some circles in the Catholic Church saw the war as an opportunity to revive the old policy of forced conversion or union of the Orthodox Serbs. Draganović became the senior official of the Ustaša committee that handled the forced conversion of Orthodox Serbs, which he advocated in the official Catholic circles.⁴⁰ At the same time and apparently in a move to restrain terror of his troops against Orthodox Serbs, Ustaša leader Pavelić reactivated the old project of the Croatian Party of Right and established the short lasting Croatian Orthodox Church. Destined for extinction, the Serbian Church and people in Croatia underwent the most gruesome and tragic period in their entire history.

After a relative calm brought about by the victory of Yugoslav Communist-led Partisans, which lasted for almost forty years, the revival of Serbian nationalism in the nineteen eighties resuscitated the old fears and hate of Catholics and claimed never ending Catholic conspiracy against the Orthodox. The main argument laid in the fact that, except for a single bishop, the Catholic Church in Croatia never assumed responsibility for conversion of Serbs during the Second World War and continuously minimized the proportions of crimes committed by Ustašas.⁴¹ Union attempts from the seventeenth

⁴⁰ In his report to Rome "Le diocesi croate" in *Croazia Sacra* (Roma, Officium libri Catholici, 1943, Con approvazione ecclesiastica Zagabria, 22 ottobre 1943, n. 10899/43) on p. 195 Draganović wrote: "Nel risorto Stato croato di nuovo fiorirono le piu belle speranze anche pel la diocesi di Križevci. Numerosi ortodossi dei quali parecchi già erano stati una volta uniti a Roma, cominciarono a ritornare alla Chiesa cattolica."

⁴¹ See Buchenau, *Orthodoxie und Katholizismus in Jugoslawien 1945–1991*, pp. 339–340.

century and twentieth century fascism of Ustašas were equated and time-span between them suppressed as illustrated by the recent statement by Serbian bishop Atanasije Jević: "Uniate attacks of the Roman Catholic Church on Orthodox Serbs eventually resulted in the bloody genocide over the Serbian people and its Saintsavaian church."⁴² Serbian historians flooded the market with books on the role of Catholic Church in Ustašas' crimes.⁴³ In the nineteen nineties, the anti-Catholic and anti-Croatian campaign in Serbia was joined by historical revisionism in Croatia, which positively re-evaluated the role of Pavelić and Croatian Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac in conversions or establishment of the Croatian Orthodox Church and denied massacres and forced conversions.⁴⁴ The former dean of the

⁴² Bishop Atanasije Jević, "O unijaćenju na prostoru Srpske pravoslavne crkve" [Pressure into Union in Lands of the Serbian Orthodox Church] in *Pravoslavna crkva i Rimokatolicizam* (Gornji Milanovac: Lio, 2002), p. 345.

⁴³ See Veljko Đurić, *Ustaše i pravoslavlje: Hrvatska pravoslavna crkva* [Ustašas and Orthodoxy: the Croat Orthodox Church] (Belgrade: Beletra, 1989) and *Prekrštavanje Srba u Nezavisnoj državi Hrvatskoj: prilozi za istoriju verskog genocida* [Conversion of Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia: contributions to the history of religious genocide] (Belgrade: Alfa, 1991); Milan Bulajić, *Misija Vatikana u Nezavisnoj državi Hrvatskoj: 'Politika Stepinac' razbijanja jugoslovenske države i pokatoličavanja pravoslavnih Srba po cijenu genocida* 2 vol. [Vatican's Mission in the Independent State of Croatia: 'Stepinac-style' policy of breaking up the Yugoslav state and conversion into Catholicism of Orthodox Serbs at the cost of genocide – 2 vol.] (Belgrade: Politika, 1992); Sima Simić, *Prekrštavanje Srba u Drugom svetskom ratu* [Conversion of Serbs in World War II] (Belgrade: Kultura, 1990, first ed. 1959). The old books about union saw reprints.

⁴⁴ See Juraj Kolarić, "Alojzije Stepinac i Pravoslavlje" in *Croatica Christiana periodica* 22 (1998), 41, pp. 161–17; Ivan Mužić, *Pavelić i Stepinac* (Split: Logos, 1991); Petar Požar, *Hrvatska pravoslavna crkva u prošlosti i budućnosti* [Croatian Orthodox Church in the Past and Future] (Zagreb: Pavičić, 1996); Ljubica Stefan, *Srpska pravoslavna crkva i fasizam* [The Serbian Orthodox Church and Fascism], (Zagreb: Globus, 1996).

Theological faculty of the Catholic Church in Zagreb Juraj Kolarić re-launched the idea of the Croatian Orthodox Church. Furthermore, the Catholic Church in Croatia still denies pressure upon the Orthodox or the fact that the union in Žumberak ever occurred.⁴⁵ In this attitude, the Serbian Orthodox Church detected renewed Catholic conspiracy and once the war erupted in the fall of 1991, eventually declared in its communication with international mediators that “the victims of the genocide cannot live together with their past and perhaps future executioners,” thus justifying armed upheaval and violence perpetrated by Serbs in Croatia and supported by the Federal Army.⁴⁶

Anti-Catholicism and Occidentalism

Early Serbian anti-Catholicism could be hardly described as anti-Western in its outlook. Its staunchest proponent Metropolitan Stratimirović was one of the most enlightened men of his period and his anti-Catholicism evolved in the struggle for the recognition of equal rights for his Church in the Empire. His treatises and those of his followers focused on dogmatic and most of all ritual differences between the Churches and recalled history to show Catholic animosity and pretensions against the Orthodox. Similarly, the secular intellectuals, which adopted

⁴⁵ See the book of the actual Greek Catholic bishop in Serbia, Giorgio Džudžar, *La chiesa Cattolica di Rito Bizantino-Slavo in Jugoslavia* (Romae: Pontificium Institutum Orientale Facultas Iuris Canonici Orientalis, 1986); the speech of the actual Greek Catholic bishop in Croatia, Slavomir Miklović in *Žumberački krijes* (1995), p. 107; and renowned Greek Catholic priest Živko Kustić in an interview in *Vjesnik*, 8.7.1990.

⁴⁶ Radmila Radić, “The Church and the Serbian Question” in Nebojša Popov (ed.), *The Road to War in Serbia*. Budapest: CEU Press, 2000), especially pp. 255–262.

this anti-Catholicism in the nineteenth century, studied at German or other Western though mostly Protestant universities, read literature stemming from the West and were very susceptible to Western influences. Yet the collective “memory” and attitude cultivated toward the Catholic Church could easily mobilize them against the West, which they identified with the Habsburg Monarchy, the greatest obstacle in the achievement of the Serbian national project. Not surprisingly, the Slavophiles’ view of Roman Catholicism as the epitome of all that is soulless and corrupt in the West coming from Russia was enthusiastically accepted by many. The relentless anti-Catholicism provided historical argumentation for the acceptance of Occidentalism ideas even when these two were worlds apart knowing the resistance of the Catholic Church to all things modern or “Western”. As a result, identifying the Catholic Church with Europe or the West created the false image of the West as homogenous, eternally inimical entity, which only further contributed to the already essentialist dichotomy West/East and could in no way provide for one’s own agency and subjectivity.⁴⁷

“The union threat” traversed from religious to secular discourse and became the constituent element of Serbian nationalist paradigm just like more widely known Kosovo myth. It was featured by victimization, selective approach to the past and mystification of the role of its own people and naturally of the Church as an institution. History was viewed from the perspective of the Christian symbolism of suffering and sacrifice, and

⁴⁷ The article of the most renowned Serbian historian Milorad Ekmečić, “Susret civilizacija i srpski odnos prema Evropi” [The Meeting of Civilizations and Serbian Relation to Europe] in *Letopis Matice srpske* (1996), 2–3, pp. 274–331 is the typical example of this line of thinking. Encyclopaedic in scope it gives an illusion of a homogenous, Orientalist and anti-Serbian Europe and the West.

translated into a story of unique martyrdom, popular resistance, and the heroism of Serbian people and its Church. The Catholic union pressure was evidence of this sorrowful history and has been invoked time and again acquiring all the features of a martyrological discourse, so central to Christianity. In addition to martyrology, the union discourse also shares features of demonology. Unlike martyrology, demonology is not addressing an individual but damning a system, in this case the Catholic Church, Catholic peoples and Catholic states. Demonology acts as a very powerful discursive strategy because targeting opponents raises the hope that once the repressor is identified and exposed reversal is possible. It is a discourse that externalizes the problem, extending the moral demand to outsiders. Stressing that the Serbs have suffered for centuries from an aggressive conversion campaign, it was expected that the world should recognize this and acknowledge their present aspirations.

The "threat" motive has remained the central moving force in the Serbian nationalism.⁴⁸ In the recent nationalist revival in Serbia the "union threat" discourse was invested with new forms, building a framework of reference that has been used for all kinds of danger for the "Serbian national being", especially the ones coming from the West. So was the allegedly never ending Uniatism of the Catholic Church accused for schisms within the Serbian Church in Macedonia and Montenegro. Moreover, Serbian Orthodox Metropolitan of Montenegro Amfilohije Radović newly discerned the union of modern type which is "being forced upon us through secularized way of thinking and life."⁴⁹ Other authors extended the list to include

⁴⁸ Florian Bieber, *Serbischer Nationalismus vom Tod Titos zum Sturz Milosevics* (unpublished dissertation, University of Vienna, 2001), p. 564.

⁴⁹ Amfilohije Radović, "Nije lako s Bogom ratovati" [It is not Easy to Fight with God] in *Glasnik Kosova i Metohije* (Beograd) 51, (25–31. 3. 2001).

any change of religion, the acceptance of atheism and Yugoslavism; having children in mixed marriages, and even moving to other countries in search of education or employment. While the contemporary allusions to the “union threat” remind of the classic scapegoat mechanism, notoriously revamped in times of crisis and uncertainty, they testify to how popular and well established this notion is. The legacy of the “union threat” reached far beyond the confines of the regions affected and became deeply ingrained not only in the writings of nationalist ideologists but in the consciousness and collective psychology of the people. Any serious investigation into political culture, propaganda or popular leanings in Serbia can not neglect this legacy. Unfortunately despite amassing abundant historical material and intense study Serbian (and Croatian) historiography has not yet produced a critical comparative assessment of the history of union among South Slavs in the context of the relations, ecclesiological teachings, and principles of religious tolerance prevailing in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Bringing up Serbian anti-Catholicism in a volume dedicated to anti-Western discourses in Southeast Europe, this article pleads that when confronting attitudes towards the West the first step must be to try to disentangle them from history. Otherwise the past will continue to act as a self fulfilling prophecy of impossibility of any rapprochement.

Le passage par l'écran : ou l'émergence de nouvelles frontières

Où commence et où s'arrête l'Europe ? Où se situent les frontières de l'Europe ? Ces questions sont devenues de plus en plus confuses. D'une part, au fur et à mesure que l'élargissement de l'Union Européenne progresse et que l'espace Schengen s'installe, on assiste à l'abolition des frontières à l'intérieur de l'Europe¹, d'autre part, on voit le renforcement des frontières extérieures. Plus elles se déplacent à l'Est plus elles se durcissent. Le processus de la construction européenne qui porte en lui-même l'opposition des souverainetés nationales ne serait-il pas, à ce titre, à l'origine de la réinvention d'un nouveau ordre territorial, voire même de « la fin des territoires »² ? Ou au contraire, s'agit-il d'une organisation territoriale de type stato-national à une échelle plus grande, où la frontière garde ses fonctions de marquage et de protection, ce qui distingue l'intérieur de l'extérieur, ce qui est « étranger » de ce qui ne l'est pas.

Éternel acteur des frontières et des passages, le migrant est invoqué chaque fois qu'il est question de « tester » les transformations que vit notre société. Suivant ses pratiques

¹ Bien qu'on puisse aussi constater que, pour l'instant, celles-ci continuent de servir de repères à l'identité nationale et qu'elles conservent dans la pratique à la fois des fonctions politiques, stratégiques ou économiques.

² Bernard Badie, « La fin des territoires », Paris, Fayard, 1997.

circulatoires et les politiques migratoires qui lui ont été consacrées nous considérerons qu'on est encore une fois devant un excellent révélateur de la nature des frontières et du processus d'intégration dans l'UE.

Les frontières informatiques de l'Europe

"Ils (la police de frontières n.n.) m'ont cherché sur l'écran, ils ne m'ont pas trouvé et je suis passé", nous raconte un migrant roumain son entrée dans l'espace Schengen. Etre absent sur l'écran, c'est être présent de l'autre côté.

J'ai voulu faire cette entrée en matière avec cette citation parce qu'elle résume bien la genèse d'une autre frontière. Ce migrant qui se prête à traverser cette frontière incarne à la fois une expérience individuelle et un avenir collectif.

Dans son étude consacrée à l'habîtele, Dominique Boullier (1999) part du constat que l'équipement de notre environnement a toujours épousé les formats de nos appartenances. Aujourd'hui ces attachements entrent en résonance avec la portabilité et la plasticité de nos équipements fondés sur le numérique. Cela a conduit à la prolifération des différentes technologies d'identité portable (cartes bancaires, passeport biométrique, téléphone portable...) et à la multiplication des statuts (client, citoyen, habitant...) que chacun peut incorporer ou posséder (porter sur soi) simultanément. En conséquence, on assiste à un changement dans les pratiques d'appropriation de l'environnement et de son « traversé ». Concrètement, cela se traduit, d'une part, par des régimes et droits d'accès différenciés (immédiat/à distance, légal/illégal, espace physique/territoire numérique, etc.) et, d'autre part, par le pouvoir d'être entre-deux, à la fois de l'un et de l'autre, et de rendre ainsi vivante la force du lien.

Ces transformations, apparues dans des territoires équipés pour différentes formes de flux, sont porteuses d'un nouveau regard sur les frontières.

Le migrant est aujourd'hui à l'origine d'une culture de contrôle qui, grâce aux technologies de l'information et de communication (TIC), s'étend largement au-delà des territoires nationaux, et cela aussi bien dans sa variante « hard » (centre de rétention) que dans sa variante « soft » (surveillance électronique des individus par des bases de données, comme c'est le cas avec le fichier des étrangers demandeurs de l'asile politique, EURODAC, ou le Système Informatique Schengen, SIS). La « technologisation » du contrôle aux frontières a conduit à la transformation même de leur nature. D'une zone de barrière à une zone différenciée de filtrage électronique (zone de ralentissement et non plus d'arrêt), les frontières quittent aujourd'hui les cartes d'une géographie physique.

Ubiquistes et en forme des fichiers, elles ont soudain fait leur apparition dans les différents consulats, dans les préfectures, sur l'ordinateur portable des agents de contrôle à côté d'un banal péage autoroutier, dans les banques de données de différentes compagnies de transport. Si l'on s'accorde avec Robert Sack³ qui soutient que le territoire fait sens sur le plan politique en tant que mode de contrôle sur les personnes, le processus ou les relations sociales, on peut avancer que ces nouvelles frontières informatiques, qui déploient une logique de réseau extraterritorial, élargissent, en effet, les territoires nationaux ou communautaires au-delà de leurs frontières d'Etat.

Leurs mise en fonction a ouvert la voie à d'autres mutations. Dans un premier temps une autre gestion à distance et en réseau des pesanteurs territoriales. Depuis 1986 le visa est

³ R. Sack, *Human Territoriality*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 19.

l'instrument essentiel de dissuasion de la circulation migratoire clandestine, à l'encontre des pays de la liste noire, pays comportant un risque migratoire. Le contrôle des frontières s'exerce donc à distance, les autorités consulaires devant interroger, pour chaque personne qui se présente, les fichiers de délivrance des visas. Ces fichiers, dénommés "fichiers d'opposition" peuvent également être consultés par les services de la police de l'air et des frontières. Ils contiennent un traitement automatisé d'informations nominatives ainsi que des informations relatives à la nature du visa demandé (visas de court et long séjour).

Un autre changement apparaît dans la configuration des passages. Désormais c'est par "l'écran" qu'on devra passer et tout comme dans la nouvelle "Devant la loi" de Franz Kafka, chacun par sa propre porte. Ainsi, nom, date de naissance, nationalité, sont devenus des codes précieux d'installation dans la mobilité. Tant que ceux-ci feront partie d'un algorithme d'opposition à la circulation, le marché de la fabrication d'une "identité de voyage" (documents, relations, passeports ou mot de passe) prospérera.

Depuis toujours les frontières et la fuite rendent débrouillard. Il n'est pas de risques et périls dont on ne vienne pas à bout, car la résistance d'un obstacle engendre l'invention d'une autre solution, elle même porteuse d'un nouveau stratagème, qui, une fois compris par les autorités légales, est abandonné pour d'autres procédés aussitôt mis en place. Il y a toujours des béances dans les dispositifs sécuritaires que seules les "victimes" de ces dispositifs peuvent repérer pour mieux s'y engouffrer. Il y a et il y aura toujours des passeurs et des migrants qui jouent avec les mécanismes d'opposition de la frontière, avec sa discipline et ne s'y conforment que pour les contourner. Il suffit de parcourir le musée *Checkpoint Charlie* de Berlin où des dizaines de tentatives de fuite de l'est à l'ouest

sont archivées. Des fuites qui ont réussi, d'autre qui ont tragiquement fini. Trouver une voiture assez basse pour pouvoir passer sous la barrière de la frontière, ou une autre très petite pour ne pas permettre aux jauges munis de miroirs de passer sous la voiture et de découvrir ainsi les réfugiés cachés à l'endroit où se trouvent habituellement la batterie et le chauffage; à partir d'un vélo à moteur d'occasion, construire un sous-marin qui a aidé à passer de la mer Baltique au Danemark; confectionner des télésièges et des ballons à l'air chaud ; creuser des tunnels. Bref, le musée s'est constitué comme un centre de ce que James Clifford⁴ (faisant référence à une autre frontière entre les Etats-Unis et le Mexique) appelle l'histoire marginale de la culture de passage.

Ces arts du passage qui resteront anonymes (dont on ne peut pas faire référence sans prendre en compte le paradigme des "tactiques populaires" de de Certeau) constituent un véritable patrimoine de la mobilité d'aujourd'hui.

Les frontières informatiques ont aussi conduit à une "professionnalisation informatique" des passeurs ainsi qu'à l'apparition "d'emprisonnement informatique", sorte de centre moderne de rétention tel qu'est le Système informatique Schengen. Le SIS traite les données relatives aux étrangers interdits d'admission dans l'espace Schengen. Les décisions de non-admission peuvent être fondées sur le fait que l'étranger a commis des actes de délinquance, ou a fait l'objet d'une mesure d'éloignement, de renvoi ou d'expulsion non rapportée ni suspendue, accompagnée d'une interdiction d'entrée, ou, le cas échéant, de séjour, fondée sur le non-respect des réglementations nationales relatives à l'entrée ou au séjour des étrangers.

Les frontières informatiques ont contribué aussi à la modification des stratégies de départ et de la composition du

⁴ James Clifford, *Routes*, (1997), London, Havard University Press, p. 247

capital de mobilité. Dans les pays d'accueil s'instaurent ainsi un style d'échanges sociaux, un style d'inventions techniques et de solidarité (en crise), une éthique de la ténacité (mille manières de manipulations de l'espace imposé, de refuser à l'ordre établi le statut de loi, de sens ou de fatalité). Tel est en France le mouvement de parrainage des Sans Papiers ou le *Réseau éducation sans frontières*. Artistes et activistes, hackers et clandestins, mènent une lutte avec les mêmes moyens que les services de contrôle en réseau. Pour ne citer que la fameuse "liste pajol" (voir : <http://www.bok.net/pajol/>) le plus important réseau de mobilisation politique à la faveur des sans-papiers et le groupe "kein mensch ist illegal" (<http://www.deportation-alliance.com> <http://www.contrast.org/borders/kein/>). Emprisonnés dans le SIS, les Sans Papiers sont invités par l'artiste Marion Baruch à circuler librement dans le net (<http://www.moneyations.ch/cartographes>) et à affranchir cette fois les frontières virtuelles. Ces pratiques du détournement de la frontière informatique font le retour de la sociopolitique dans la vie culturelle.

Aujourd'hui, l'administration électronique et, particulièrement les systèmes d'identification biométrique, intéressent autant les pays d'accueil que les pays d'émigration. Si leur intérêt est convergent quand il s'agit de la sécurité publique, de lutter efficacement contre la fraude documentaire et informatique, la constitution de bases de données à partir de « technologies propriétaires » peut aussi avoir des raisons différentes.

Les pays de destination étudient ces techniques dans l'espoir de trouver un instrument de contrôle et de lutter contre la mondialisation des flux migratoires ; les pays d'origine, conscients du profit économique et politique qu'ils peuvent tirer de leurs communautés transnationales, par l'introduction des cartes d'identités multifonctionnelles, tentent d'accroître leur influence géopolitique et d'accumuler le capital social et financier provenant de ses populations disséminées dans le monde. Pris

entre deux (ou plusieurs) politiques administratives, devant vivre et se mouvoir dans un monde où le déséquilibre économique existe, où les frontières nationales perdent leurs sens, devant éprouver le temps de la mondialisation, partager les fichiers des étrangers et en même temps le destin anonyme et informatique de monsieur tout le monde⁵, le migrant semble incarner l'idéal-type de la gestion de tout un monde en mouvement.

La traçabilité migratoire et les nouveaux tracés de la frontière

Testée et appliquée dans le domaine de l'économie marchande, la notion de *traçabilité* a fait irruption dans le domaine de la mobilité des personnes. Il s'agissait, au début, dans le commerce, d'une chaîne logistique/emballages⁶ qui prend en charge la collecte des informations de la marchandise et trace l'historique des différents moments d'enregistrement stockés sur un support informatique. Aujourd'hui, après le 11 septembre et de manière croissante, la *traçabilité* est devenue un organisateur des différents dispositifs d'archivage (dans l'espace privé et public) et un objectif central dans le déploiement des technologies de la sécurité du territoire⁷. De simple concept logistique d'emballage, la traçabilité devient aujourd'hui une ingénierie de l'identité sociale et une obligation juridique.

⁵ Cette *culture de contrôle*, directement inspirée par les immigrés, commence à s'étendre au-delà du monde des migrants, à tous ceux qui se déplacent, quel que soit le type de leur mobilité.

⁶ Marquage par étiquettes électroniques, codes barres ou étiquettes RFID (d'identification par radiofréquence).

⁷ Lire Ayse Cehan, « Sécurité, frontières et surveillance aux Etats-Unis après le 11 septembre 2001 », in *Culture & Conflits*, N° 53, dossier Surveillance politique : regards croisés, 2004 www.conflits.org.

Concrètement, des identifiants électroniques (étiquettes RFID) vont être utilisés, dans le cadre de tests, pour “automatiser l’enregistrement de l’arrivée et du départ des voyageurs à pied ou en véhicule.” Ces tests, qui ont débuté le 31 juillet 2005, ont été effectués essentiellement dans des villes-frontières avec le Mexique, ou avec le Canada. Cet identifiant pourrait être ajouté au passeport et l’étiquette restera active après l’entrée sur le territoire. Ce système de surveillance est complémentaire d’un autre concernant les compagnies aériennes. *Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System* (CAPPSII) est un dispositif de préfiltrage par ordinateur des passagers qui empruntent les voies aériennes à destination des Etats-Unis. Ce système, explique Ayse Cehan⁸, porte sur l’échange des fichiers entre différents services des Etats, la collecte et l’exploitation à distance des données à caractère personnel livrées par les compagnies aériennes⁹ et la création de profils types de personnes à risques. Plus récemment, la Commission Européenne a proposé que les 27 Etats membres de l’UE se dotent, comme aux Etats-Unis, d’un système de stockage des données personnelles des passagers aériens dans le cadre de la lutte contre le terrorisme et le crime organisé.

Selon une copie du texte¹⁰, les compagnies aériennes devront, comme aux Etats-Unis, transmettre 19 catégories de données fournies par les passagers lors de l’achat de leur billet, allant de l’e-mail du voyageur à son numéro de téléphone ou de carte de crédit en passant par son itinéraire de voyage.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid* ; « ces données stockées dans le fichier PNR (Passengers Name Recorder) sont en nombre de 39 et portent essentiellement sur les itinéraires, les modes de paiement, les goûts alimentaires, les services demandés à bord, des services associés comme une location de voiture, etc. » .

¹⁰ cite dans une dépêche AFP du 4 novembre 2007.

Ces données (dites PNR, Passenger Name Record), transmises à une "Unité d'information sur les passagers" établie dans chaque Etat, pourront être utilisées et échangées par "les autorités en charge de la lutte contre le terrorisme et le crime organisé" des 27. Les compagnies devront transmettre ces données 24 heures avant le décollage, puis une deuxième fois après la fermeture de l'embarquement. Cette mesure qui s'appliquera à tous les vols entrant et sortant de l'UE ne concernera pas les vols intra-européens.

C'est une situation préoccupante pour toute la société, pas seulement pour les migrants, car la préservation de certains droits fondamentaux de la personne (le droit à l'anonymat, le droit de ne pas être surveillé, le droit de maîtriser la diffusion des données qui nous concerne) semble être menacée.

Contour vs. détour

Pour les Roumains, la fréquentation des frontières informatiques est aujourd'hui inévitable.

Bilie est un migrant roumain originaire du Nord de la Roumanie, du Pays d'Oas, et son histoire paradoxale en font un cas exemplaire. Ancien saisonnier, Bilie tente sa chance sur le marché du travail au début des années 90 dans un premier temps en Autriche, avec un passeport de service. Il s'est professionnalisé dans le ramassage des différents biens abandonnés dans les rues viennoises qu'il réparait et revendait ensuite en Roumanie. Il s'est acheté un microbus et a transporté des villageois installés dans la mobilité tout comme lui par la création d'une SRL qui produisait ensuite un passeport de service. En 1994, l'Autriche rompt avec la Roumanie l'accord sur la libre circulation des visas pour les détenteurs d'un passeport de service et Bilie commence à transporter ces

villageois par l'Oder, cette fois d'une manière clandestine, dans l'espace Schengen et notamment en France où ils découvrent tout le profit qu'ils peuvent tirer de la vente des journaux de rue¹¹. Deux ans plus tard, il se fait arrêter en Allemagne et il est emprisonné à Moabi, un centre de rétention à Berlin. Ici, il rencontre parmi les autres détenus trois anciens officiers Stasi, emprisonnés eux aussi à Moabit pour avoir condamné et tiré à leur tour sur les migrants de l'est ayant voulu franchir le mur de Berlin avant 1989¹². En effet, pour les Roumains le rideau de fer n'est pas tombé avant 2007, lorsque la Roumanie a intégré l'UE. Il ne s'est pas dissout, il s'est simplement déplacé et a acquis une autre configuration. Car si Bilie a quitté Moabit et l'Allemagne, s'il est rentré chez lui, il est tout de même encarté dans le SIS et est donc repoussé aux frontières informatiques. "Moi j'ai une interdiction pour 5 ans en Allemagne, raconte-il, mais ça ne m'intéresse pas maintenant, ce qui m'énerve c'est que je ne peux pas partir à l'étranger. Avant d'avoir trouvé un travail, je suis rentré de prison avec une idée en tête : divorcer, formellement, et vivre toujours avec ma femme, me remarier avec une autre femme et changer mon nom, prendre celui de ma deuxième femme, comme ça j'aurais une autre carte d'identité, un autre passeport, et de nouveau un visa, pour pouvoir circuler. Je vivrai toujours ici, dans mon village, avec mes parents, ma fille et ma vraie femme. Maintenant, je pourrai circuler en Autriche, Italie, France avec mon propre nom, mais si je pouvais changer mon nom, j'obtiendrais un autre passeport, le droit de

¹¹ Diminescu D (avec RM Lagrave), (1999), "Faire la saison. Pour une anthropologie des migrations roumaines en France", in *Migration Etudes*, n° 91/nov-dec., p. 16

¹² Plus de 60000 personnes ont été condamnées pour avoir tenté de fuir la RDA ou seulement pour avoir fait les préparatifs. La peine moyenne a été de 16 mois de prison. Dans le cas d'aide à la fuite, la peine a été de 4 ans. Dans le cas de fuite, les coupables ont été condamnés à la réclusion à vie.

circuler librement ; je devrais juste éviter l'Allemagne, car si on me voit en Allemagne, je risque de purger à nouveau ma peine. J'ai divorcé et maintenant P. me dit "allez, je t'ai trouvé quelqu'un pour te marier",..."¹³

Pour la libre circulation, il faut alors jouer avec les ressources patronymiques ou les nominations résultant de l'alliance matrimoniale. Les prêtes-noms fleurissent, empruntés à l'épouse, à une épouse virtuelle, à une ancienne épouse.¹⁴ Ces noms de passe parviennent à trouser le tissu de la forteresse informatique. Les divorces sur papier sont un moyen parmi d'autres d'installer la libre circulation. Se doter du nom de l'épouse, divorcer, se remarier ne suffit pas toujours, car changer de nom ne garantit pas un moindre risque ; il faut également jouer savamment sur l'âge, pour échapper aux fichiers informatiques. En effet, la France a mis en place une nouvelle gestion informatique des dossiers des ressortissants étrangers en France, (AGDREF), testée dans sept préfectures en 1991, et généralisée entre 1992 et 1993 sur tout le territoire. Les services des préfectures ont donc complété la base de données initiale de l'AGDREF au fur et à mesure de l'accueil des étrangers à leurs guichets, pour changer leur état-civil, leurs adresses, s'informer sur le refus de séjour, etc. Ce fichier de gestion administrative exclut, en principe, les mineurs de moins de 18 ans. "Je suis propre dans l'ordinateur" vient de s'exprimer un jeune migrant. Dès lors, l'absence de mineurs dans les fichiers est cause

¹³ Entretien, D. Diminescu

¹⁴ Les catégories de données dans les fichiers sont généralement les suivants (prenons le cas du SIS): les personnes signalées, les noms et prénom, les alias éventuellement enregistrés séparément; les signes physique particulières, objectifs et inaltérables, la première lettre du deuxième prénom, la date et le lieu de naissance, le sexe, la nationalité, l'indication que les personnes concernées sont armées ou violentes, le motif du signalement et la conduit à tenir. En fonction de fichiers d'autres données à caractère personnel sont traitées automatique: l'empreinte digitale ou la signature dynamique.

de rajeunissement des candidats au départ. Des parents ont ainsi envoyé ou laissé à l'étranger leurs enfants mineurs. La tendance est de prolonger le séjour jusqu'à l'âge de la visibilité informatique.

Passages physiques et géographiques clandestins des frontières, ou nettoyage sémantique des listings de l'ordinateur, les migrants jouent sur toutes les formes de détournement. Les informations obtenues dans les interviews sont peu nombreuses et les réponses ont apporté plutôt des interprétations que des données très précises. Ce sont les attributs de passage qui comptent, en premier lieu ceux liés à sa fonction "qui approche les bords" mais aussi les attributs subjectifs: une pression nerveuse, une intensité du vécu temporel, sans mémoire, qui lissent l'espace parcouru.

Alors que l'Europe démantelait en 1989 ses défenses contre le communisme, elle commence à se croire menacée par un ennemi intérieur, souvent identifié au migrant. Le danger extérieur – explique Monica den Boer¹⁵, s'est transformé, et, dans ce glissement des périls du régime communiste à l'immigration et au crime organisé, ont été entraînés, sans exception, tous les pays candidats à l'élargissement de l'UE.

Pour entrer en Europe, passage obligé, comme dans le cas de chaque pays PECO, il faut d'abord créer une frontière sûre, qui devient la nouvelle frontière extérieure à l'Est de l'Europe. Cette frontière sûre est avant tout à présent une frontière informatique. Créer une frontière pour mieux circuler, voilà un des plus grands paradoxes de notre époque. La Roumanie, à côté des autres pays de l'Europe de l'Est, apprend à la fois la construction idéologique d'un étranger commun à tous les pays du vieux continent et les pratiques institutionnelles de l'hospitalité européenne.

¹⁵ Crime et immigration dans l'Union Européenne :

http://www.multimania.com/police_nationale/immigration_ue.htm

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