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CENTRAL EUROPE: IMAGINED OR REAL?

Central Europe is a historically established region of Europe that simultaneously carries the marks of Western and Eastern historical regions of Europe. The Western European region provided the framework for the freedom of individuals and their communities. The Eastern European region, following the pattern of bureaucratic centralization, suppressed the freedom of individuals and their communities. In the societies of the small states of Central Europe, the social development patterns of both regions are present. The question is whether, as members of the European Union, the peoples of Central European small states become part of the West or continue to fluctuate between western and eastern social psychological patterns.

Keywords: authority, state, civic society, levy and credit, cooperation.

Where is Central Europe?

Where is Central Europe? It is not difficult to answer the question. Respondents agree that Central Europe lies between Germany and Russia. The empire of the Habsburgs emerged from the 13th century in this area, it was given The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as its name between 1867 and 1918. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy declared war on Serbia in 1914. The declaration of war triggered a chain reaction of war declarations of the European Great Powers on one another. It was in the second year of the war that Friedrich Neumann's *Mitteleuropa* was published, in which he defined the area as the influence zone of the German Empire. World War I was lost by Germany. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy disappeared from the map. Neumann's plans were wiped by history, but the term remained. Four Central European countries undertook to raise Central Europe in Visegrád in 1991. In that year, the loose association of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary was set up to formulate and represent common interests.

According to the distinguished Hungarian historian, Jeno Szucs, the place for Central Europe is between Western Europe and Eastern Europe, both formulated after the collapse of the Roman Empire. It was the Carolingian Empire to emerge in the western part of Europe on the remains of the Roman Empire. Its eastern border "runs southwards across Europe from the lower course of the Elbe-Saale, along the Leitha and the western border of ancient Pannonia" [10. P. 291]. The centre of the Eastern Roman Empire was Byzantium, which fell in 1453. The cultural and religious heritage of the Byzantine Empire was taken over by the Russian Empire.

Samuel Huntington quotes Michael Howard, who stated that Central Europe includes "those lands which once formed parts of Western Christendom, the old lands of the Hapsburg Empire, Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, together with Poland and the eastern marches of Germany. The term 'Eastern Europe' should be reserved for those regions which developed under the aegis of the Orthodox Church: the Black Sea communities of Bulgaria and Romania which only emerged from Ottoman domination in the nineteenth century and the European parts of the Soviet Union" [5. P. 155-158]. The western boundary of the Eastern European region is the line extending from the Adriatic Sea to the North Sea through the Carpathian Mountains and from there to the east there is no Gothic, Renaissance or Baroque style building. The last Central European city with buildings showing these signs is Lviv (Lemberg, Lvov).

Differences between the three historical regions of Europe

Although there were common grounds, following the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Western and Eastern regions of Europe developed according to completely opposed social organization principles. In the Western European region, political and religious power never coincided, the popes and emperors fought with each other. The central power was unable to subordinate the local powers, the multiplicity of which made the will of the central will impossible. The towns soon removed the bonds of the feudal powers. Space was created that allowed the development of the freedom of individuals and their communities.

In contrast, centralization in the Eastern European region had no counterweight. Political power was dominant over religious power. The workings of medieval Western Europe remained incomplete in Eastern

Europe. After the fall of Byzantium, the centre of Eastern Europe moved to Moscow (and later to St. Petersburg). The bureaucratic state organization in Eastern Europe did not leave (and did not tolerate) any freedom for individuals and their communities.

Where was the location for Central Europe during the formation of the western and eastern regions of Europe? Jenő Szűcs has the answer to this question. The Hungarian historian believes that the expansion of the West towards the East continued unbroken until the 1500s. The small peoples living beyond the eastern border of the Caroling Empire, late though but became part of the Western European region. They adopted the Western form of Christianity, founded states, and their societies were shaped by feudalism. Everything happened as in Western Europe, only considerably later.

The delayed Western-type development led to the emergence of Western social organization among the peoples beyond the eastern frontier of the Caroling Empire, but it less profoundly influenced the socially constructed reality than in Western Europe. After 1500, the peoples living in the region became the prey of the larger states one after the other. Jenő Szűcs rightly saw that after 1500 the eastern border of the late Carolingian Empire was to become a border again separating Western and Eastern Europe.

As a consequence, Western Europe lost its medieval extension and a central region emerged inserted between the Western and Eastern poles of the new Europe. The territory of the central region was divided by the Habsburg, the Ottoman, and the Russian Empires. The northern part of the region was to be ruled by the emerging aggressive Prussian Kingdom [10. P. 291-294]. István Bibó believes that the essence of the difference between western and eastern societies is based on the fact that the political and economic structures operating in the society were formulated upwards and are centered on personal liberty in the West [2]. The ever-expanding, growing personal freedom was the driving force of the unparalleled dynamism of the Western societies, which took shape in urbanization and industrialization. In contrast, in the East, social and political structures were formulated downwards, from top to bottom, and were based on hierarchical and bureaucratic principles, observing the authoritarian patterns of the current central power. As Géza Jeszenszky put it, "in the East political, social, economic and even cultural functions were mostly (albeit not always) performed by the state. Society and even the Church was expected to be obedient and to serve the common cause, the greatness of the Monarch and of the State (gosudarstvo), to carry out necessary changes from above" [6]. Economic and social development, stumbling upon these conditions, went on in a Stop and Go way. Stages of stagnation and reforms followed each other alternately. In the East, the pace of industrialization and urbanization was far slower than in the West. Agricultural production had the lion's share of the national income.

Credit and Levy

"Occidens" and "Orient" have created two distinctly different patterns of behavior of the Christian European people who share the common heritage of the Roman Empire. Jenő Szűcs vividly illustrates the difference between these two types of mentality emerging from the two types of social organization with the example of the feudal relationship. As he describes it, "in Eastern Europe a 'man of service' would bow to the ground, kiss the hand of his lord or even throw himself down and kiss the hem of his lord's garment. In the Western ceremony of homagium the vassal would go down on one knee with head erect, then place his hands into the clasped hands of his lord. The new relation was finally sealed with a mutual kiss" [10. P. 302].

The mentality of Western European people is based on credit. Loans are given to someone if there is trust. Trust is the link that connects economic, political, cultural and private actors in loose relationships in Western societies [4]. Trust is the bridge between people and institutions. In Western societies, trust has a threefold stratification. People trust in one another (social trust), trust in the institutions (confidence), and this is because they trust in themselves, positively evaluate themselves, seek success, avoid failure [9]. Credit mentality is the psychological buoyancy of market economy and political pluralism.

A mixture of democracy and authoritarianism

Central Europe showed a mixture of the democratic mentality based on credit and the authoritarian mentality based on the levy. Géza Jeszenszky is right stating that in Central Europe elements of pluralism were always to be found: there were elected Diets, towns and various ethnic groups with privileges and elected leadership, and the nobility had the right to resist the Sovereign (mainly in Poland and Hungary). The Reformation spread as far as Hungary and Transylvania; it had a democratizing influence" [6].

Modernity, however, was delayed in Central and Eastern Europe. The feudal and capitalist social transformation elements existed parallelly. In Central and Eastern Europe, modernity was delayed compared

to Western Europe. According to Yuri Shlezkine, Jews released from East European ghettos not only have better adapted than the native Hungarians, Czechs, Russians, Poles to the modern world, but they have become the carriers and examples of modern life in Prussian and Habsburg and the Russian Empires [11].

In the imperial framework, the national awakening was continually interrupted and delayed. The well-known network of Central European small states was only created after the First World War. Nationalism and anti-Semitism poisoned the lives of all the small states. Central Europe first came under the influence of national socialist Germany and then, after its fall, under the influence of the Soviet Union. Both of these amplified the influence of Eastern European authoritarian political culture and weakened the power of Western European mentality.

Values in Europe

The academically driven European Social Survey has conducted cross-national surveys focussing on values throughout Europe every two years since 2001. The results of the most recent research conducted in 2016 show that Europe's three development regions are still present in the heads. The results are shown in Table.

Values	Western Europe	Central Europe	Russia
Altruism	.83	.54	.32
Universalism	.61	.47	.32
Autonomy	.45	.25	.05
Feeling secure	.36	.61	.52
Traditions	.07	.16	.22
Hedonism	-.13	-.69	-.34
Conformity	-.29	.05	-.18
Achievement	-.50	-.29	-.20
Risk-taking	-.68	-.70	-.69
Power	-1.00	-.65	-.23

The table shows that citizens of Western Europe hold altruism, universalism, and autonomy the most important values. These values formed the foundations of the Western European social organization from the beginning. Going eastward, it is clear that the attractiveness of these values is decreasing. The leading value is security that the citizens of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia are not primarily expecting from themselves but from the state. In addition to differences powered by the past, we can observe the trend of the convergence of values, which is undoubtedly a new development. In all three regions of Europe, respondents reject conformity. It is disturbing that people in all three regions reject performance and risk-taking, which were once the fundamental values of capitalist ethics.

The cultural legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

The countries of today's Central Europe would could not deny that they were once part of the Habsburg Empire. The spiritual cultural heritage of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy between 1867 and 1918 still determines the typical locations of Central European life, railway stations, baths, hotels, cafés, theatres, the synagogues and castles that are now empty. The operetta deserves special mention, the stories of which are easy to understand through the music, dance, and vocabulary and transmit all the light, self-forgiving lifestyle of the Monarchy to the present day [3].

Great ages distinguish themselves, resulting in that later generations only see those marks, typical of the given era, in the outstanding architectural, literary, fine art and music works of that age. The last great age that created a unique, unmistakable style was the turn of the century. The fact that this style received its name from the Secession Hall built in 1897 by Joseph Maria Olbrich, who was working in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, shows the vitality of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Secession meant a break from the academism that characterized the 19th century, which had made the imitation and eclectic mix of earlier styles dominant. Instead, new forms, open to the present and the future and expressing the lively new world, have come to the fore, the source of inspiration being given by the cultures that were previously exotic. The territory of the former Monarchy is a rich repository of secessionist buildings, paintings, sculptures, and cemetery mausoleums. The controversy of the century-old, still alive Central European culture is that while in art, theatre and music, literature, science, the new has been born, the foundations that have allowed the new birth have been destroyed [1].

Conclusion

The task of Central Europe is to be a bridge between East and West. Between Germany and Russia, Central European small states can play this role if they are to break away from their historical debates and cooperate in building culture, education, R & D, economy and infrastructure. The stronger the horizontal relationships between the civil societies in Central Europe, the more likely it is for Central European citizens, as part of their national and European identity, to give the answer: "I am Central European" to the question "Who are you?"

The vision of Central Europe will then become real.

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ЦЕНТРАЛЬНАЯ ЕВРОПА: ВООБРАЖЕНИЕ ИЛИ РЕАЛЬНОСТЬ?

Центральная Европа – исторически сложившийся регион Европы, который одновременно несет отпечатки западных и восточных исторически сложившихся регионов Европы. Западно-европейский регион обеспечил основу для свободы индивидов и их объединения. Восточно-европейский регион, опираясь на бюрократическую централизацию, подавлял свободу индивидов и их объединения. В общественной жизни небольших государств Центральной Европы присутствуют модели социального развития обоих регионов. Вопрос заключается в том, являются ли народы небольших центрально-европейских государств, входящих в Европейский Союз, частью Запада или продолжают колебаться между западными и восточными социальными-психологическими моделями.

Ключевые слова: власть, государство, гражданское общество, обложение и кредит, сотрудничество.

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