

A Central/Eastern European international society?

by Péter Marton

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Péter Marton

PhD student

Corvinus University of Budapest;

Scholarship holder,

Hungarian Institute of International Affairs

pmarton@gmail.com

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Introduction

What follows in this paper is essentially a look at the sub-global level, enquiring about the possibility of a particular regional society of states there, and, should we find it present within the examined subset of states, the variance in its institutional structures over different eras—all the while following in Barry Buzan’s footsteps, as traceable in his book *From International to World Society?* (mentioned as *FI2WS?* from hereon), conforming to the research agenda outlined within there (Buzan, 2004). In serving that purpose I will try, however, more to provide here raw material, along with some concrete suggestions, for the fine-tuning of the basic conceptual repertoire of New English School theory, as well as to demonstrate the latter’s usefulness in describing and structuralising questions and research about the history of a region, and I won’t try to draw up exact lists of primary and derivative institutions of the given regional society of states in the limelight here to thus show how exactly an interstate institutional structure of that sort might have evolved over the course of the history of this region. Nevertheless while I will, fitting the purposes of the different sections within this paper, surf back and forth to a degree in the Central/Eastern European region’s history, even the contours of such institutional structures and their variance over time I will hope to make at least vaguely visible.

The object of research – Is it there?

A very basic question that should be asked first of all, regarding whether a given subset of states is worth one’s attention in this sense, is to ask if one can immediately see a notable difference in patterns of interaction between elements of the given subset, compared to what one finds outside the subset in relations between elements without the given subset, and also in the relations between any element without and any element within. (A kind of ‘othering’ in the works there, carried out by the interested scholar, in defining what falls within, and what falls without.)

The essence of this whole paper is about demonstrating that one may indeed have found peculiar patterns of interaction within a Central/Eastern European subset throughout its history. But while we may provisionally regard that test as passed, there are several other basic questions that can also be asked. Does a peculiarity of interaction seem sufficient indeed to justify talking about a distinct regional society of states? And where exactly does the nature of difference lay? In this regional society of states' being *thicker*, more densely organised than the one encompassing the wider environment it is embedded into? Or in its being *thinner*?

For someone like me who is determined to grab such an elusive object for research as that of a Central/Eastern European society of states, the answer to the above questions may vary depending on the given era one is looking at, and on the way the examined subset of states is delimited. In advance one may already hypothesise, however, that in an overview of the region's history the evolving outcome to be explained will at times be rather a certain 'thinness': the absence of strong ties and the absence of a rich institutional structure amongst the region's states in the face of their having a number of common interests. Paradoxically, it is partly that very factor, and accounting for it, that may help us in further elaborating the New English School's conceptual framework of analysis.

Naming and delimiting the subset – Where problems begin

Since regions, in terms of which humanity tends to think, cannot easily be delimited in an objective sense, or, in other words, justified by, say, geographical arguments, from historians through social scientists to politicians all sorts of influential actors attempted over the course of history to influence the social construction of 'regions', looking to inform inter-subjective consensus about the right way to delimit and name such entities. Border delimitation in the case of a region serves a kind of othering, as pointed out before, similarly to the othering taking place in the formation of national identities. Naming a region can attach certain concrete expectations to the idea of a region, expectations such as, for example, ones regarding what political, cultural, and economic orientation a group of states might preferably elect to follow, especially when new names are sought in reaction to major historical events, just as I'll soon demonstrate this in the case of Central/Eastern Europe.

In the title of this paper I have therefore deliberately attempted to come up with a term that can be described as *neutral/non-constructive* in the sense of not directly siding me with anyone among the participants in this polemic, be they figures of the past or the present. Note the importance of my not having written 'Central-Eastern Europe' with a dash connecting the

two adjectives, but ‘Central/Eastern Europe’ instead. A dash instead of the slash would already put me in the company of people whose ideas I may or may not share, but definitely don’t wish to represent in a paper of this kind.

So the formula I’ve chosen is free of certain logical implications other formulas might have, that I wish to avoid. To point out my most important objectives with the term I’m using: 1) It is all-inclusive; it allows for the widest possible interpretation, and thus doesn’t side me with anyone looking to exclude specifically one state or a group of states (e.g. the Balkans or post-Soviet states) for any kind of ideological or other reason; 2) (Unlike some interpretations of the term ‘Central Europe’ do) it doesn’t take sides as to whether the states of the region should ‘naturally’ turn more to the West (and particularly towards Germany), and thus it doesn’t side me with advocates of pro-German policies for example; 3) (Unlike some interpretations of the term ‘Eastern Europe’ potentially do) it doesn’t exclude Russia from Europe, leaving the possibility, that to the east of this region we may still be in Europe, open, even if one doesn’t count Russia (or even a part of Russia) to be part of the ‘Central/Eastern’ region of Europe.

It is still not an altogether unambiguous algorithm for delimitation, as I will soon show (though it is nearer to that objective than anything else I could think of). It does, however, give us the panorama of a wide pool of currently existing states that people from within their territory have in the past tried to construct their ‘region’ from, including certain states in the process, excluding others, carving in certain territories from states of the past or the present, or disposing of territories, in order to let the region’s borders better fit their ideas.

Before I would provide here a short overview of how conceptions of a region within the Central/Eastern European subset have evolved, and by whom such concepts were developed, I’ll briefly refer to those currently existing states that I said one could be using as the pool of states/territory for coverage of the evolution of the idea of the region. Originally I wanted to include here a concrete list of states, but I gave up in the course of attempting to draw it up, having found it inevitably controversial at least in certain details, and thus clashing with my original endeavour to remain neutral. A better strategy might therefore be to only vaguely define my ‘pool’ then, pointing to some potentially (but not necessarily) problematic issues in connection with it. So, territories that constitute this pool on the basis of having been picked from by thinkers to be presented soon in this paper, include currently existing countries *from Germany to Russia*, with the exclusion of Nordic countries such as Finland, Sweden and Norway. I’m saying ‘from’ Germany to Russia, and not ‘between’, to take

account of those who looked, or are looking, to include any or both of these two countries, too, in their concept of the region.

From points of view other than mine outlined above, interesting ‘border cases’ are, for example, Austria, which can be attached to the region on the basis of all sorts of historical arguments, but arguably distanced itself from the ‘Eastern Europe’ of the Cold War too much for comfortable inclusion today (although judging by the willingness of at least some circles in Austria to be included in a way fitting their conception, there may be no such problem at all). At the other end of the West–East spectrum one may point to Moldova, the inclusion of which may not be more easily justified on the basis of current political considerations, than the inclusion of, say, a currently pro-Western state like Georgia (which of course isn’t included in the pool). And there is also Turkey, with only about five percent of its territory falling inside what can arguably be regarded as the widely accepted geographical boundary of Europe—although that five “European” percent should be enough for me to list Turkey, given how that small part of its territory is certainly *part of the pool of territory* that I set about describing above. Anyway, my principle is to opt for the widest possible inclusion in the area ‘from Germany to Russia’, and therefore neither Austria, nor Moldova, nor even Turkey shall fall without. Still, this doesn’t leave us with a clear answer regarding Cyprus, so, as I pointed out, even this isn’t an altogether unambiguous way of delimitation, either.¹

Imagining a region (and a regional society of states)

While, for the sake of a more unambiguous interpretation of the term ‘state’, I would like to look at the evolution of the different concepts of the region from only the 19th century, or rather from just before the break-up of the four multi-ethnic empires, at the end of World War One, that for long had between themselves divided up most of the lands of the current ‘Central/Eastern European’ subset of states, I can’t go past several needed references to the more distant past. That is because within the current Visegrád 4 countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), the popular historical imagination of a region mostly connects to the somewhat-more-than five centuries between the official taking up of Christianity in the area (in the 9th century) and the Ottoman Empire’s intrusion into the

¹ Perhaps even Nordic countries might deserve more attention than merely a single, excluding remark from me. In particular it is Finland that may be relevant here. On the one hand there is the fact that Finns and Estonians, and more distantly even Hungarians, are related to each other as Finno-Ugric peoples; on the other hand Finland had quite a special status during the Cold War (the basic terms of which were set by the Finno-Soviet FCMA Treaty), and Finland of course was even made to associate with the COMECON to a degree.

Hungarian Kingdom (following the Hungarian defeat at Mohács in 1526), which was then followed by Archduke Ferdinand of Austria becoming King of Bohemia, with Bohemia thus becoming a constituent state of the Hapsburg Monarchy. Prior to that, the Bohemian Kingdom, the Hungarian Kingdom and the Polish Kingdom existed in relative harmony with each other, with at times one or the other dyad (Bohemia with Poland, or Poland with Hungary) in this triad existing in personal union even. That era is the origin of the to-a-degree mythical Visegrád idea, with the latter focusing on how kings of these lands were able to come together in 1335 at Visegrád, coming to agreements over the need for jointly developing alternative commercial routes to bypass the staple port of Vienna (thus motivated by commercial interests). Less often mentioned is that later on George of Podiebrad, king of Bohemia between 1458 and 1471, was the one who outlined perhaps the most ambitious plan for a regional society of states, in promoting the idea of a pan-European Christian League, which would have consisted of a western and an eastern part, or half, with the whole existing in a confederation, with several common political organs and a common army. (George of Podiebrad had mostly the threat of an imminent Ottoman Turkish intrusion deeper into Europe in mind.)

One cannot fail to take note of the importance of religion of course, behind this era's having such a strong mark on current popular historical imagination in the region, especially in Poland and Hungary. Catholic/Christian nationalism does tend to see Christianity as the defining link between states of today that are inheritants of the Visegrád legacy, and thus gives stimulus to, and on the other hand diversifies thought, as well as creates discord about, the ideal form of cooperation in the region, mostly by attempting to influence the quality of the 'inter-human society' within this potential regional society of states. Catholic/Christian nationalism can be said to be more ambitious in desiring a stronger common identity between people of common (Catholic or Western Christian) faith in the region, but at the same time it is *potentially* quite detrimental in being *possibly* compatible with excluding people of other faiths, Jews, Orthodox Christians, or Muslims, as well as atheists and others, more or less, from the inter-human society that could, in its view, interweave the states of the region.

But since I'm starting the main part of my account from the 19th century, one first of all has to note that the state of play in the region was affected at that point in time by altogether different dynamics (so I will get back to the role of religion again only later on).

By the end of the 19th century four multi-ethnic empires, Germany (multi-ethnic e.g. by way of controlling part of the lands of partitioned Poland), the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire ruled over most of the area of Central/Eastern

Europe (the Ottoman Empire was already in retreat, and there had appeared new states in the Balkans by this time). That rule was threatened increasingly by expanding nationalist movements not just in the Balkans by this time, but actually more so in the historical territory of the late Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the *Rzeczpospolita*) [the latter was partitioned in the 18th century by three of the above mentioned empires].

Polish and Hungarian nationalism needed less of an awakening phase than other nationalist movements did, given how their ideology could be built on the idea of the merely disrupted existence of the national state (even though such ideas of course required the projecting back in time of concepts not really fitting the distant eras remembered; with these constructed anachronisms blinding some followers of Polish and Hungarian nationalism to the diverse character of the population of the lands concerned by their ideas). Poles had a long struggle to wage still; Hungary by 1867 got a good compromise deal with Austria that Romsics defines as a ‘real-union’ (a term constructed in analogy to *Realpolitik*) between the two largest and most influential national groups (Germans and Hungarians) of the Hapsburg empire (Romsics, 1997). The latter compromise came about on the heels of the Hapsburg Monarchy’s decisive defeat at the hands of Prussia in the battle the two had been waging for the leading role among German states prior to that.

It was in this period, when a more unified German centre emerged in Europe, that the North-South axis predominantly used in thinking of European regions at the beginning of the 19th century (and according to which Russia was often-times qualified as a ‘Northern’ state), slowly gave way to an Eastern/Central/Western differentiation (Bariska and Pallai, 2005). From then on, as long as Poland hasn’t regained its independence, many German thinkers comfortably looked at all areas inhabited by Germans, or whom they saw as related to them more closely, from the Netherlands to the Baltics and to Transylvania, as a natural wider ‘Central European’ political unit to think in terms of. Although already the 19th century saw the emergence of the sort of thinking which regarded the territories all along downstream the Danube as an area to be naturally dominated by Germany, with the latter potentially compensated this way for having had to unevenly share in colonisation, and although the people subscribing to such ideas have already used rather derogatory labels for Central/Eastern Europe at times, such as ‘Germany’s Wild East’, it was only the period towards the end of World War One that saw more aggressive versions of these ideas surface (Romsics, 1997). Towards the very end of the war Germany even managed to decisively defeat Russia, with the latter already in turmoil at the time of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and thus Germany gained control of a large swathe of land—in fact it can even be said that it

gained control over most of my 'Central/Eastern European pool of territories', if one thinks of how the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was politically more and more under the control of Germany at this time, even while it was at this point of the war that the Monarchy managed to occupy even Montenegro (the Monarchy was actually seriously challenged in the latter area in facing a guerrilla war there).

So Poland came into being with several of the most aggressive strains of German geopolitical thinking already revealed, and thus at a time when seeing the use of the term 'Central Europe' as a tool to legitimise German domination of much of the region that Poland found itself in felt natural to a degree. Poland thus seemed to have a reason to fear Germany, having gained lands from Germany in effect (even if Poles saw that as justifiable by historical arguments and arguments concerning the ethnic make-up of the areas concerned). Worse than that, they also had the emerging Soviet Union to look at rather worryingly. Lenin and the dominant fraction of the Red Army's leadership had already attempted to march through just-reborn Poland all the way to Berlin, imagining it the most natural thing that the majority of the population to be encountered in the process would join them in their march towards the West which in their view was about to be decisively shaken by the revolution. The Red Army and the Soviet leadership was thus largely insensitive to Polish national sentiments and ironically "forgot" about Marx' warning that Poles would first of all have to have independence, and only then could they be expected to turn towards socialism. So it happened that it was a socialist, Marshal Józef Piłsudski, who stopped their advance towards the West (Davies, 2003).

Polish thinkers thus looked for an alternative term to describe the space in which Poland existed. They needed to find an alternative to 'Central Europe' (thus excluding Germany) that at the same time also excluded Russian lands somehow, though not necessarily the eastern parts of Ukraine and Belarus, which now belonged to the Soviet Union (and which areas Poland tended to regard as parts of an historical Polish state, based on the legacy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth).

Polish historian Oskar Halecki was the most influential from a string of historians from Poland, who looked to do this the simplest way. By saying Russia/the Soviet Union wasn't part of Europe even, because it was so different. Because it was more backward. Because for centuries its lands used to be under Mongol rule. And so on. So while there was such a region as 'Eastern Europe' for Oskar Halecki, he saw no place for Russians in it (Romsics, 1998: 18).

Excluding the possibility that Russian lands could have belonged to the same region as the new post-WWI states of Central/Eastern Europe wasn't exclusively an aim of Polish thinkers. Czech historian Jaroslav Bidlo used the argument of religion to the same end, thus getting to a different taxonomy of regions, however. For him there was the West, and there was the East (Western and Eastern Europe), with a clear dividing line between Western and Eastern Christianity separating those (the division lately reproduced in Huntington's thinking of the boundaries of Western civilisation [see his map; on page 258 in the Hungarian edition; Huntington, 2001]). Hence for Bidlo there was no urging need for delimiting Eastern Europe's distant eastern reaches (Romsics, 1998: 20). By consequence though, he cut historical Polish lands in half where his West met his East, disposing of areas with a predominantly Orthodox Christian population that Poles couldn't simply dispose of.

Looking at the pair of Halecki and Bidlo is thus instructive. Here are two people who probably wouldn't have denied belonging to some identical wider entity in principle. Yet coming to an agreement over whether they belonged to the same region or sub-region, over the proper name for that region/sub-region, and over how to delimit that region/sub-region, would have been mighty difficult indeed, given such widely differing negotiating positions to start with. And this all stemmed from their different perspectives, which in turn stemmed, to no small degree, from the different national-historical context they were coming from, which thus worked as a disintegrating factor between them.²

And we haven't yet spoken of Hungary, where the times of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were looked at with some nostalgia in the wake of the perceived national catastrophe of the Trianon peace treaty, and where Germany wasn't feared as it was in Poland or Czechoslovakia. Germany was looked at, as it began its resurgence as a significant power, as an 'opportunity' rather, a country to get assistance from in taking back the ethnically predominantly Hungarian territories, or even the 'historical Hungarian lands' that were given to neighbouring countries by the peace treaty at the end of WWI. (Earlier on Hungary turned towards Italy for an ally against generally hostile-looking neighbours, and then towards forming an allied threesome with Italy and Austria, in the wake of political changes in Austria that created opportune climate for that.) Therefore in Hungary the idea of 'Central Europe' didn't evoke the antagonism that was inherently coded into Polish thinkers' thinking.

Then, however, as along came the rise of Hitler in the 1930s, the worst expectations regarding what the German concept of *Osteuropa* could potentially mean for the area

² Even though Bidlo, for example, would have probably claimed Oskar Spengler's view of civilisations to have had more of an influence on his ideas.

concerned were more and more vindicated, and then even exceeded, as Germany did occupy (getting to the vicinity of Moscow even) practically the whole of Central/Eastern Europe once again.

In the place of German occupation then came Soviet occupation, which then gradually gave way to a complex regime of Soviet domination. Especially with the division of Germany, the idea of Central Europe became largely irrelevant – as some have put it, it was relegated to the status of a ‘meteorological notion’ (Bariska and Pallai, 2005)³. Europe’s history was now defined by an East/West distinction, in the formula of which one no longer even needed to mention Europe, given how it was the confrontation between the U.S. and the physically as well as militarily mighty Soviet Union that gave birth to this narrative principle (the former of the two projecting its power from beyond its oceanic shield, and the latter stretching eleven time zones to the east, far outside any conceivable boundary of geographic Europe). Ironically, this actually created a situation for scholars in which they tended to look for more complex judgements: to look for a more diverse differentiation of sub-regions, and also to found that differentiation on more solidly scientific arguments, based more on facts of historical patterns of development (yet not altogether without ideological inclinations of course, and thus usually hand in hand with one or another form of emphasising difference from Western Europe). Without going into details introducing milestone works that were published in this process, it is perhaps enough, for the purposes of this paper, to just point to one notable way in which confusion regarding the naming and the delimiting of the region was further added to. More clearly than before, the terms ‘East-Central Europe’ and ‘Central-Eastern Europe’ could have been distinguished—however, some people, up till today, have been using these two terms interchangeably, while others have been using them non-interchangeably but at times inconsequentially. Thus a typical source of confusion arising out of inconsequentiality was, and is, when texts by ‘indigenous’ scholars were/are translated to foreign languages; in such cases it tends to happen that a scholar, for whom the two terms may mean clearly different things, may have even the title of one’s book translated using the term theoretically non-preferred by the given author (see Romsics, 1998: 25).

What played a part then in the formation of a new concept of the region was the need, felt by some, for ideas with the potential of emphasising Europe’s unity, an undeniable link between its two ‘halves’ (although the Cold War dividing line has actually never really been that clear anyway, arguably). Reviving the idea of Central Europe could function serving the

³ Although in military strategists’ mind ‘Central Europe’ did of course exist: it was the area where NATO and Warsaw Pact troops were to fight the conventional part of a potential ‘hot war’ in Europe.

above end, and, supported and represented especially by dissident thinkers residing in the West, that endeavour did gain momentum from the 1970s onwards. As György Konrád stated: ‘Central European is the one who is offended, disturbed, disquieted, unnerved by the division of Europe’ (cited by Bariska and Pallai, 2005; my translation). It is in this sense that Milan Kundera wrote in 1984 of the ‘tragedy of Central Europe’, declaring Central Europe a ‘kidnapped Occident’—or Eastern by accident, as we could paraphrase this (“a piece of the Latin West which has fallen under Russian domination”, as Kundera said) [Kundera, 1984: 33-38].

Getting to the end of my narrative here, then came the end of the Cold War, bringing about the possibility that this ‘kidnapped’ part of Europe might indeed ‘go/return home’. Both NATO and the EC at the time were puzzled to a degree by the multitude of states suddenly wishing for Euro-Atlantic integration, including such states that became independent upon the break-up of Yugoslavia, as well as for example the Baltic states. A bit of a Europe-in-between was recreated by these processes, reminiscent in a sense of the *Zwischeneuropa* of the period between the two world wars, with a lot of small or relatively small states dispersed between a geopolitically retreating Soviet-Union/Russia and the about-to-be deeper integrated European Communities (with just-reunited Germany one of the countries at the lead in the latter process) that gave birth to the European Union. As we might call it, what came into being was, and with a part of it remaining it still is, a kind of *Europe-in-transit* (mentioned by me as such from hereon). With many states from this Europe-in-transit having by now left this transit area behind, the European Union’s expansion has reached a stage where it has enclave neighbours in the Western Balkans and further new neighbours to its east that it has to communicate to, regarding their future prospects.

In a sense the latter paragraph might be deceiving a little bit in suggesting no search for a meaningful regional identity and a hasty jump to join wider European structures by states in Europe-in-transit. And in fact there was, after all, the revival of the Visegrád idea, the ambition of enhancing cooperation among the V4 countries directly connected by historical legacy to that idea, and then continuing working together with other interested countries that were willing to join e.g. through joining CEFTA (the never-too-successful Central-European Free Trade Agreement). The most ardent optimists saw this as an opportunity for meaningful cooperation in the EU accession negotiations, as an opportunity to negotiate as a bloc of countries with the Union, to thus achieve better results thereby. In a sense, that in itself shows a weakness of the Visegrád idea. It was cooperation among a group of states created with the function of helping in getting into the rank of another group of states. As such it was bound to

fail with the above ambition of helping in the negotiations. As the most critical views would have it, 'Visegrád' was never really more than a 'brand', created because it pleased politicians in the West by reassuring them of a sufficient level of political maturity in the countries member to all or any of the Visegrád-connected forms of cooperation, with all of these states aspiring to be members of the EU in the end. And yet, the Visegrád idea hasn't been altogether emptied by the eventual accession to the European Union. Cooperation has been largely confined to the cultural realm, but even political cooperation is continuing, even if erratic-as-ever it may be. If any, the Visegrád group is a thin society of states, cooperating with some countries outside the EU, too, thus being in overlap with other interstate social structures as well. Beyond the officialdom of the cooperation of states, there are of course some regional trans-national actors as well, youth and other cultural NGOs' networks for example, that work at least with the nominal conviction of the need for strengthening the inter-human society basis of this Visegrád society of states; working with an at least nominal conviction of the need for a stronger Visegrád identity. But it's nothing sure, as yet.

The situation is similar with the idea of Central Europe. Even certain Austrian political circles, with a leading figure among them being Erhard Busek (former Vice-Chancellor of Austria), show much enthusiasm for the revival of the idea, and for filling it with as much content as possible, within the wider EU framework. There is receptivity to the idea in Hungary and elsewhere, too.

But still the Europe-in-transit formula (and thus the absence of a specific and strong regional identity) seems to be the most fitting for the purposes of accurate description. Arguably a good illustration of that might be how CEFTA, the *Central European* Free Trade Agreement, transformed over the years. With Bulgaria and Romania joining the EU on January 1, 2007, only Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were left as members. Although earlier there was talk of potentially scrapping CEFTA altogether, CEFTA essentially became a tool of EU foreign policy, by serving as the framework for a free trade agreement covering the entire Western Balkans. With a series (a 'matrix') of bilateral free trade agreements between the region's states the foundations for the latter have now been laid, and, following all necessary ratifications, the multilateral trade treaty is expected to enter into force by the end of 2007, leading to fully liberalised intra-regional trade in the Western Balkans by 2010.

Whereas 'Central Europe' in the latter example seems to have done a bit of a pilgrimage in moving from the Visegrád-centred grouping of countries to the Western Balkans, another trend to note is how some countries have changed the preferred adjectives of

the European region they regard themselves as part of. A case in point may be Estonia. As Merje Kuus notes: “Estonia, for example, has dropped references to Central Europe, and has been marketing itself as Northern European. From the point of Estonia’s international image-making this makes sense: Northern Europe is unquestionably European, while Central Europe is still learning the craft” (Kuus, 2007: 157). This factor, mentioned by Kuus, is having its effect on other countries of Central/Eastern Europe, too. Seeing how being within the EU doesn’t qualify one for a status that is entirely equal to that of older EU member states in every possible aspect, there is the aspiration within these countries to become simply European, moving beyond being just, say, Central European, and so that actually works to weaken the idea of Central Europe for now.⁴

To sum up all key points then. 1) The existence of a regional society of states and its quality is affected by how significant social actors attempt to inform inter-subjective consent about the ideal way to name and delimit the actual region it shall cover. 2) By means of the choice of name and the way of delimitation the inclusion of certain states, and the exclusion of others, as well as the carving out or carving in of certain territories may be the aim. 3) National and state interests and the national-historical context of a given influencing actor lead to diverging views regarding the ideal outcome, and might thus fundamentally undermine agreement over the naming and delimiting of a region, and that might even work as an obstacle to regional cooperation. 4) Finally, as it was, or is, the case within Europe-in-transit, the main point of agreement between cooperating, and even politically integrating, states may be the wish to be included in another highly integrated group of states, thus leading to a kind of cooperation for the sake of cooperation.

The asocial, the quasi-coexistent, the quasi-asocial, and the quasi-solidarist in a society of states

At times, as I pointed to this before, the outcome to be explained in the case of a Central/Eastern European society of states seems to be rather a certain thinness, given how Central/Eastern European states have very often barely managed any more thickness than that of the global society of states (meaning, in the case of the latter, the Western European-

⁴ As Kuus aptly writes: „Ironically, since Central Europe’s chief reason for being is to be distinct from the East (of Europe), evoking Central Europe also evokes the East. It both reaffirms a country’s Europeanness and simultaneously places it on the margin of Europe. It therefore functions to reproduce the Eastness that supposedly lies just east of it. Being a half-way house to Europe, it is never as good as Europe. Unsurprisingly,

dominated global society of states, which covered large colonial/late post-colonial areas as well), and certainly tended to manage less than what we at any point in time have seen in the case of Western Europe.

Based on Barry Buzan's wheel of the English School (Buzan, 2004: 133), and looking at the society of states segment within that wheel, one can say that the Central/Eastern European society of states usually fit the criteria for at least the *co-existence* sub-segment, although thus clearly falling towards the pluralist, rather than the solidarist, end of the spectrum there.

However, one can easily think of several issues and cases that may suggest using the adjective 'asocial' rather, to describe states' relations in this region. E.g. one can think of how during the course of 1938-1939 Hungary (in 1938 along with Poland) in a way indirectly assisted Germany in disappearing Czechoslovakia from the map, by which time Germany had already incorporated Austria (whereas earlier on, in the wake of WWI it was Czech independence leader Eduard Beneš who, had he been able to have things his way, wouldn't have left much place for Hungary on the map). The Soviet Union, for its part, annexed and thus disappeared Baltic states in effect twice, the first time in 1940, and the second time in 1944/1945 (although preserving some of Baltic states' separateness in transforming them into constituent republics of the Soviet Union). Still before that, Italy had annexed Albania, in 1939, holding onto it until the end of WWII. And jumping further back, to before WWI again, the most important factor affecting events north of the Carpathians at the time was Polish nationalism and its struggle for independence in the wake of Poland's, or rather the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth' (the *Rzeczpospolita*'s) having been partitioned by Prussia, Russia, and the Hapsburg Empire. To give one further example, in the wake of WWI Serbia was allowed to incorporate Montenegro, disappearing from the map a country that was *de facto* an independent state already since centuries before, having preserved its effective autonomy even in the middle of Ottoman-held territory.

Saying that one feels as though the adjective 'asocial' could be used here, does, however, require a more thorough second look at, and potentially a re-conceptualisation of, the notion of 'an 'asocial society of states'.

One of the fundamental criticisms Barry Buzan makes of Realism, is reflecting on how difficult it actually is to find states in purely 'physical' interaction with each other, with no social contact between them. In fact, one can only find states in nearly only physical

both those countries conventionally cast as Central European as well as those more 'Eastern' are now trying to frame themselves not as Central European but simply European." (Kuus, 2007: 157)

interaction between them in a case where the only social contact they, or their people rather, are involved in, are wars of extermination, or, for example, relay trade (Buzan, 2004: 99-101). (This is also a move beyond Hedley Bull's distinction of *international system* and *international society* [Bull, 1995], whereby the essence of an international *system* is that the states that are party to it are forced by objective constraints, rather than by the maintenance of ties of a social character, to take each other into account in their strategic decision-making. A good example of what the analytical implications of this pair of Bull's concepts may be is Riemer's study of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and 'European International Society'—a crucial remark by Riemer in the introduction of his quoted paper is: 'the Ottoman Empire was part of a European International System, but for a rather long period of time not part of the European International Society' [Riemer, 2002: 2].)

I would argue, however, that one may build on a more benevolent interpretation of Realism, one which stresses that according to Realist thinking states are seeking survival at all costs, and are thus uninterested in that if other states' quest for survival is endangered, or quite simply made impossible, by their actions. Qualifying such state behaviour as 'asocial' still allows for the dissolution or integration of a separate Realist school of thought within the New English School (NES from hereon) conceptual framework. And arguably it allows for a more consequential use of the latter. Since NES regards the society of states as a second-order society, given how it is in fact a society of first-order societies (societies constituted and constructed by people), one may look at the institutional structure of the society of states as an architecture of second-order institutions. States are institutions themselves, with several context-dependent functions, created by people, to more or less fit their purposes. Out of the interaction between these institutions, meant to serve in the ideal-type-case as unitary collective actors furthering the interests of their population, a whole series of new problems or challenges stem, that also require institutional solutions. Thus institutions of the society of states may all be regarded as 'derivative' in this sense, forming a subset within the larger set of (inter-human) institutions. Note, however, that this doesn't deprive us of the chance to use the 'primary'/'derivative' distinction suggested by Buzan in describing and differentiating second-order, or interstate institutions (which, as said, I regard as such a subset of inter-human institutions within which we may distinguish further subsets) [see Buzan, 2004: 161-204 on interstate institutions].

When states can only manage their problems by making other states cease to exist, we may call that an asocial relationship on the level of second-order society. That is in fact what I have regarded as an element to be refined to a degree in the case of Buzan's definition of an

asocial interstate relationship: that in his description thereof an aspect of inter-human relations was pointed to as a characteristic and defining feature, which in fact stems rather from an asocial relationship on the level of first-order society. There's of course no question that when wars of extermination are the only social contact between states, then there is an asocial relationship between the states concerned. The point I'm making is merely that we may use the term 'asocial' for a larger set of constellations.

The challenge to be solved in the case of states looking for another's dissolution or incorporation is what to make of the fact that up until the very last moment before a state succeeds in doing just that to another, they may have fully fledged diplomatic relations established between them, and could thus qualify for inclusion in the set of co-existent dyads in Buzan's taxonomy. One may say that if the leaders of a state harbour ambitions for the complete disappearing of another state, or don't exclude such an end-game as possibly included in their set of objectives, then it will be merely a 'quasi-coexistent' relation between the two states concerned.

One may ponder relaxing criteria for the use of the term 'asocial' one possible step further even. If we are talking about regional societies of states, and thus accept that second-order societies are such that they can exist embedded into a wider, larger, other second-order society of states, and that we may thus talk of *societies within a society*, 'asocial' may be used to describe the lack of willingness by a state or a group of states to include within a regional society of states another state or a group of states. That behaviour is asocial, however, rather on a different scale, and so we may differentiate here by saying such relations are merely 'quasi-asocial' (given that it doesn't at all exclude the possibility of a coexistence-level, or even deeper, social relationship connecting to the given state or states).

How does this all affect Buzan's wheel of the English School then and his taxonomy of societies of states of varying thickness/thinness? The main challenge, as noted above, might be coming from a dynamic view of the relationship between two states, one of which implicitly or explicitly plays towards making the other disappear after a while, and qualifying such a relationship as only quasi-coexistent. Does that make it necessary to provide for an even richer taxonomy than the one provided by Buzan? No, I would I argue. Building on Wendt (1999), looking at the evolution of a society of states, Buzan pays attention to the question of *how/why* that evolution takes place, and reckons as a result with three distinct motivational factors that can affect the outcome (Buzan, 2004: 129-134). Participants to a state-level social organisation can partake and commit as much as they do on the basis of a belief that it is right to do so, or on the basis of calculations that it pays in a wide sense to do

so, or as a result of being coerced to do so. Therefore states may *calculate* so that for a while it is worth maintaining a co-existent level of relationship with another state they actually want to incorporate. Or they may also be *coerced* to do so by great powers that fear stability would suffer with the threat of escalation into a wider war, should the given state be allowed to even try to expand. And of course it's also a possibility that a given state may act according to a belief that any hastening of a union couldn't be justifiable unless there is unambiguous receptivity to the idea within the target state's population. (Careful analysis will tend to show a mixing of these motivational factors most likely, and no clearly possible distinction between them, nevertheless it is practical to differentiate between them at least in theory, and then look for which of these might have been/might be the predominant one in a given case.)

It is very important to note the motivating factor behind a state's subscription to a certain institutional order or its choice of preferring a lack thereof. The 'European society of states' which has always mostly been a Western European society of states, constituting a vanguard or core group of countries globalising interstate society through decolonisation, has at times shown an asocial/quasi-asocial behaviour towards its Eastern European counterparts. By its dominant position it was able to sanctify Serbia's annexation of Montenegro back in 1918, similarly to how it did in the case of Czechoslovakia's subjugation at Munich in 1938 to Germany's demands. And it has regarded with much passivity when an allied country, Poland, was re-positioned on the map and deprived of the chance of democratic post-WWII development by the Soviet Union.

In fact it is here that we have to draw attention to the importance of global structure which obviously amounts to more than merely the institutional order of a second-order, state-level society, and includes the distribution of economic and other forms and sources of power as well as cognitive factors.⁵ The West's (at times dominant) influence in shaping the development of other societies of states cannot be overlooked. In the case of Europe-in-transit, which I have written of in the previous chapter, it was to a large degree the West's influence that produced more multilateralism between the countries concerned than what the region has ever seen before. Although there is arguably a critical mass of politicians and thinkers, related in one way or another to the Visegrád project, who claim he wasn't right,

⁵ I will include these following remarks of mine in this footnote, but the issue I'm touching upon here would perhaps deserve more attention. An important part of 'structure', the significance of which I'm regularly reflecting on in this paper, is cognitive. A partly socially constructed reality is structured to a significant extent by what people think, and how they think. To give one example, Western decision-makers' knowledge about Central/Eastern Europe may indeed have been a relevant factor playing into what happened to Poland during and after WWII. See Norman Davies' insightful notes on the kind of mental map some of those decision-makers

former Czech President Vaclav Klaus went so far as to say that the Visegrád cooperation in his view was just a creation of the West. Even the much more optimistic interpretations don't ignore, however, how Visegrád functioned in effect as a relatively well-selling brand (Gniazdowski, 2005: 82). Add to this how I have heard from a former foreign minister of Hungary personally, that he always regarded Visegrád cooperation as important for Hungary specifically in order just to prevent a potential rebirth of the Little Entente of the interwar period, and then you get a picture on the basis of which you might be talking about an only 'quasi-solidarist' relationship between the countries concerned. Again, it is by examining the motivational factor that one may shed light on why a particular institutional order sprang up in the given circumstances.

Talking about the Little Entente, looking at it and the period between the two world wars might in fact be very instructive of all that I have come to discuss in this section of the paper, and so it may deserve a more detailed look here.

The Little Entente came into being as a result of a series of bilateral treaties in 1920 and 1921, between Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The originally only quasi-multilateral regime guaranteed military help to the participants for the eventuality of a Hungarian aggression. It has functioned visibly well at least once in practice, on the occasion when Charles I of Austria attempted to take the Hungarian throne in the autumn of 1921 for a second time. At that time the three member states of the Little Entente alliance were able to collectively exert some pressure on Hungary to deny this improbable restoration attempt which they nominally feared to be just a first step to restoring the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (although their pressure was just one of several factors influencing Hungarian Regent Miklós Horthy's decisions actually, and may even have been welcome by Horthy in making them easier) [see Ormos, 1990]. However, countering a Hungarian threat of any kind has only been a lowest common denominator type of policy for the three countries involved. They had more reason to fear the ambitions of other powers. Czechoslovakia had Germany, Romania had the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia had Italy to worry about more than the others did. It is no wonder that in these circumstances French diplomacy, interested in securing 'Europe-in-between', or the space between Germany and the Soviet Union, geopolitically, had an important role in bringing the Little Entente together in the first place (Fülöp and Sipos, 1998: 141-148). [Having said that, this is not to downplay the role of any indigenous figure, like most notably Eduard Beneš, in the process.]

might have been relying on, as well as, for another example, the problems politicians in the West had with the pronunciation of Polish names (and with remembering them, subsequently) [Davies, 2004: 21-22, 37].

The major Western European powers haven't always helped this cause, however. The 1925 Treaties of Locarno in fact produced a great setback in assisting Europe-in-between, by showing Central/Eastern European states as treated as non-equal partners (in that they weren't present at key parts of the discussions, just as Czechoslovakian diplomats were left out of negotiations at Munich in 1938 later on), and in fact the Locarno treaties themselves also reinforced that inequality by not providing for exactly matching guarantees regarding borders to the west and to the east of Germany. Italy, one of the guaranteeing powers of the Treaties of Locarno, has afterwards been offered the task of ameliorating the resulting situation to the east of Germany (and it took up the offer since it definitely wouldn't have wished to see France undertake that venture in its own place), to get a kind of 'Eastern Locarno' organised. Italy did, largely for tactical reasons, show enthusiasm for this idea, and in the process of arguing for the need for a multilateral regime to guarantee borders and stability in Central/Eastern Europe, including the Balkans, it even encouraged Hungary to develop closer ties to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia (which wasn't difficult to wish for, given how Hungary had at the time seen its territorial demands vis-à-vis Romania and Czechoslovakia as far more important). However, given Italian ambitions in the Balkans (notably first of all in Albania), Italian-Yugoslav ties were bound to become more tense soon. And with that, the idea of an Italian-led and Italian-guaranteed Eastern Locarno was effectively gone (Ádám, 1989, 233-238).

It was a sorry state of affairs. The two states of the Central/Eastern European region that would have had the most reason to cooperate faced with Germany's resurgence later on, Poland and Czechoslovakia, couldn't pull it off even as the need for such cooperation has only become more and more urgent over time—they were much more ready to suggest compensating Germany to each other's detriment instead. The roots of their bad relations went back to the two countries' conflict over Cieszyn/Těšín/Teschen-Silesia⁶. And they were also affected by the quite special phenomenon of Polish-Hungarian friendship. The latter was notably a friendship of two peoples whose countries were not directly neighbouring to each other, and also a friendship of two peoples that were very much influenced in the interwar period by Catholic nationalism. Piłsudski's victory over nationalist circles led by the likes of Roman Dmowski didn't mean a decisive sidelining of these forces in Poland (as the assassination of President Narutowicz, of whom it was claimed by the hardcore nationalist Polish right that he won elections with the help of the 'non-Polish'/'Jewish' vote, showed

⁶ The name of the talked of territory in three languages – from left to right: in Polish, in Czech, and in German.

already in 1922), and paradoxically it was in the wake of Piłsudski's coup-like takeover of power that the right gradually started gaining more and more influence in Polish matters, becoming more able to thus assert its agenda (on Piłsudski's and Dmowski's rivalry and their impact on Polish history see Davies, 2001: 113-129). In Hungary, on the other hand, the influence of Catholic/Christian nationalism was constantly quite significant from 1920 on, with the consolidation of the Horthy regime.

Poles and Hungarians were desiring a common border, and Poland was ready to give at least low-key support to endeavours endangering the integrity of (a clearly Czech-dominated) Czechoslovakia, including the potential separation of Subcarpathia/Ruthenia, and autonomy for Slovakia.

Poland, for that matter, didn't have good relations with its other non-German/non-Russian neighbour (beside Romania), with Lithuania, either, given the animosity between the two countries over the issue of Wilno/Vilnius (which Poles had occupied in 1920). In the words of Norman Davies, 'Poland stood haughtily aloof and isolated' [Davies, 2001: 105-106]. As others write elsewhere: 'Lithuanian leaders identified Poland as their country's enemy; they discounted Soviet Russia as a threat and even looked to it for help. But at that time Lithuania didn't have a common border with Soviet Russia. (...) Józef Piłsudski's seizure of Vilnius in 1920 cut Lithuania off from Soviet Russia...' (Senn, 1998: 8; see also Źalys, 1998: 60-65, whom Senn is reflecting on in his quoted remarks).

Meanwhile, having talked about Subcarpathia in a previous paragraph, and not focusing on Poland for a change, it could be mentioned for a side-note that that territory itself was also a source of conflict between Czechoslovakian and Romanian forces, early in the wake of WWI, when those parties were barely able to demarcate the territories they controlled in Subcarpathia without an escalation into conflict, and were able to do so only in a rather tense situation. Regional cooperation therefore might be seen as having been doomed indeed at the time, in Central/Eastern Europe.

And yet, towards the 'penultimate hour', in 1937-1938, there were some encouraging signs actually, even if only for a short while. In this brighter moment of foreign policy-making in the region, the states of the Little Entente began to see the need for coming to a *modus vivendi* with Hungary, to mitigate the geopolitical risks they were facing from the part of Germany, and Hungary began to see that lasting and legitimate improvement in the situation of Hungarian minorities in neighbouring states could only be brought about by negotiations, rather than by just demanding a complete revision of the Trianon peace treaty. Hungary was thus invited to participate as a non-member state at the Little Entente's Sinaia

Conference in Romania, in August, 1937, and in the following year, in the resort town of Bled (in today's Slovenia) even the contours of a comprehensive regional *modus vivendi* were drawn up, which would have consisted of a pact of non-aggression between Hungary and its neighbours, the recognition of Hungary's equal right to arm, and a political declaration from the part of Little Entente states that there would be improvements in their Hungarian minorities' situation. Unfortunately such an agreement didn't turn out to be realistic, given domestic resistance especially in Czechoslovakia to the idea of granting more rights to any minority there, and given also how in Hungary the majority of the public wouldn't have accepted, at the time, anything short of a full revision of the Trianon peace treaty for the long run really (see Fülöp and Sipos, 1998, 141-148). Meanwhile, a growing German threat led Poland and Lithuania, too, to seek more cooperation in the 1930s, however this was to be no less futile an attempt than that of the Little Entente and Hungary to do the same.

What one may see therefore in this mini case study of sorts of the interwar period in Central/Eastern Europe, is that elements of structure other than the interstate institutional elements, as pointed out above, tend to work as very strong constraining factors for states that may be termed structurally weak, as arguably the states of Central/Eastern Europe were indeed weak in a structural sense.

1) They were rather small states (except for Poland), sandwiched in-between in the shadow of Germany and the Soviet Union; 2) They were economically weak and their small 'national economies' couldn't draw as a resource on international economic relations, either, given how those were gradually nearly completely deconstructed in the interwar period, especially following the economic crisis starting in 1929; 3) Competing nationalisms (nationalisms competing over territory for all sorts of reasons, those including scarce economic resources, related ethnic groups living in an area, or the military-geopolitical-strategic significance of a given land etc.) turned these states and their elites against each other, affecting the integrity of their own societies as well.

These three factors in and of themselves were enough to make the states of the region playable against each other, so it is no wonder that to explain any cooperation (and even its absence) in the region in this period, one cannot look, in an analysis, past all that stemmed from outside actors' interests in the given case. The above described structural weaknesses of the states of the region, and the lack of an inter-subjective consent within the population of the region favouring more compromise-seeking behaviour, made it impossible for intra-regional political will to overcome the obstacles in intra-regional relations even at the time when the region's limited autonomy was already in danger of being totally robbed of it. Therefore in

this case, within the larger set of structural factors, it was everything else outside the subset of interstate institutions, that determined (as the apparently independent variable) that what we may find in retrospect within the subset of interstate institutional relations (the dependent variable). In summary, the states of the region may therefore be said to have lacked agency to a critical degree.

Importing alternative descriptive terms from other conceptual toolkits to put this differently, one may say for instance that the interwar period's Central/Eastern European classical security complex resembled more a kind of 'miniature anarchy' (as described in Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde, 1998: 13); whereas the cooperation of states in Europe-in-transit after the Cold War was to a degree a kind of 'organised hypocrisy' (as described in Krasner, 1999).

Interstate or international? – One of the key questions

For a Central/Eastern European IR student, like the author of this paper, it is especially welcome to read Barry Buzan's following remark in *FI2WS?*: 'the term "international", though often used to mean interstate has always carried a certain ambiguity which makes it awkward to use as a label for the strictly state-based domain' (Buzan, 2004: 201-202).

Without taking an excursion in this paper to review the literature on nations and nationalism, and also without providing here a schematic overview of how the concept of nation changed in the course of its largely theoretically constructed geographical pilgrimage from Western Europe through German and Italian territories to the multi-ethnic empires in Central/Eastern Europe, and then on to the post-colonial world, as it is sometimes described, I will use here the means of simplification (of a kind not at all new) to a great extent, highlighting two ideal-types in the interpretation of the concept of nation. (Strongly emphasising, however, that this is a great deal of simplification indeed and not something to reinforce in any way orientalist prejudices about a Western exception, or prejudices of any other kind for that matter.) I will do this similarly to Barkin and Cronin (1994)⁷.

⁷ Barkin and Cronin attempt to describe post-Napoleonic European history as a series of shifts between statist and national legitimization of sovereignty, connected to consecutive periods of crisis. While this section of my paper can be interpreted as demonstrating the usefulness of such an approach, I would like to indicate that at several points I'm debating Barkin and Cronin's conclusions. Most notably, while a shift to a national legitimization of sovereignty has clearly defined the post-WWI era, one has to emphasise, more than Barkin and Cronin do, that the states that were created as a result were far from ethnically homogeneous entities. In the wake of WWII then, Barkin and Cronin claim that "Many borders in Eastern Europe (...) were altered in ways that were politically convenient, but ethnically nonrepresentative" (1994: 124). The latter remark fails to take note of the population transfers and other forced population movements that took place in those years, making territorial

Nation is a concept that is inherently political. However, regarding its source, we may say that it may be derived from either a political or a cultural context.

The former version of the concept, nation-as-a-political-derivative, emphasises an overlap between nation and the society/population of a polity/country, with full equality between members as citizens of these more or less isolated segments of our planet's population (which are thus also matching 'societal groups', as that term is used by e.g. Roe, 2005). A citizen-identity being the primary identity within a societal group of this kind has the very much political function of serving state interest. It is integrative, and so it creates conflict group coherence which is all the more important when faced with outside threats, in times of crisis. Theoretically it also provides for the basis of a meritocracy, given how resource-distributive and status-allocative decisions will supposedly reflect merit if a citizen-identity is the pre-dominant one for all members of an ideal societal group of this kind.

The second concept of nation, nation-as-a-cultural-derivative, basically takes note of the failure of the former concept's taking hold within a given polity within which it is born, for the reason that cultural distinctness of two or more groups there is claimed to prevent the formation of a uniform citizen-identity. It takes note of that failure as though that would be possible in an objective sense, while of course, through contributing to this very belief, an ideology of this kind in fact reinforces its own premise (contributing to the construction of an alternative inter-subjective reality). As a result, there will be a lack of overlap between the nation and the society/population of the state(s) concerned. There will be a tendency towards the coming into being of an ethnocracy, where resource-distributive and status-allocative decisions may still reflect merit, but the pool of merit will be in no overlap with all people of merit within the given state's population, thus leading to discrimination against, and the disadvantaging of, other groups by a given 'decision-owner' group. There will also be conflict group incoherence which will lead to intense questioning of reliability in times of crisis, questioning of a sort that again just reinforces its own premises.

The aim of the concept of nation-as-a-cultural-derivative is actually to get to an end result that will be more like nation-as-a-political-derivative. As to empirical reality, one actually cannot find a really clear-cut case of constellations conforming to either of these ideal types, even if in Western Europe, arguably through the process of othering vis-à-vis the East

changes in effect ethnically representative (most spectacularly in the case of Poland). With these reservations in mind one may in fact form an historical narrative rather different from what Barkin and Cronin outline: one that emphasises a continuous move towards ethnic homogeneity, the analytical significance of which I'm about to reflect on in the current section of this paper.

in general, the belief, that there the idea of the nation is exclusively a political derivative, took hold more—again a belief that reinforces its own premise to a degree.

Over the course of history the population of Central/Eastern Europe (note that it's quite problematic to identify the acting subject of this sentence with clarity) struggled to reach the same degree of cohesive, meritocratic, citizen-based political nationhood that was seen as having been accomplished in Western Europe—a key stake of state formation in the pool of territory I wrote of in the first section of this paper. The process of that struggle has led to the emergence of both a discourse identified as Euro-conform by its adherents (reinforcing the concept of there being an ideal West as equivalent to, and synonymous with, an ideal Europe), aiming at the creation of Western-type political nations where culture is irrelevant or is at least only of secondary importance in light of there being a strong citizen-identity. But there also appeared a 'nationalist' discourse, one aiming at the creation of culturally cohesive, or, more accurately, culturally/ethnically homogenous states and societies, based on the idea that 'nation' necessarily precedes in its existence the nation-state (thinking that is sometimes labelled in colloquial terms as 'Balkan-like' by its critics in the Hungarian context, critics who thus construct contrast between Europe-as-Western Europe and the Balkans, geographically anchoring that what is and what supposedly isn't European-like in their view).

The dynamic interplay of these forces can be theoretically construed on the regional level as a fight between forces aiming at radically different societies of states as the ideal outcome. Either an *interstate society* where there may not be cultural/ethnic homogeneity within member states but where that will be irrelevant given that people of the member states will primarily identify themselves as citizens of their respective states. Or an *international society* (for contrast it may also be called a *society of nations*) where cultural differences can become irrelevant only then when states have already become culturally/ethnically homogenous.

Strikingly, one can actually identify institutionalised forms of cooperation historically, between states of the region, that functioned with the aim of arriving at conforming more to an *international society* as the desired outcome. One may see such an instance for example in the sometimes treaty-based, sometimes informally agreed population transfers that took place to contribute to the creation of more ethnic homogeneity in states of the region. Such transfers have taken place e.g. between post-WWII Poland and the Soviet Union (transferring Poles, Lithuanians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians to a country or Soviet Union constituent republic defined as 'theirs' on the basis of ethnic affiliation). Population transfer also has happened between Czechoslovakia's Slovakian part and Hungary following WWII, and also between

Greece and Turkey and between Greece and Bulgaria following WWI. One may possibly also mention here, not as a case of mutually agreed and mutually executed population transfer, but merely as something that is closely related to state cooperation in creating more ethnic homogeneity, the institution of giving e.g. Hungarians in Transylvania, in the wake of WWI, when that territory was incorporated into Romania, the possibility of ‘opting’ for the citizenship of the state that they desired more to live in. And finally, of course, one may also bring up the at times willing, at times not so clearly willing cooperation by majority ethnic groups within states in Central/Eastern Europe with Nazi Germany’s endeavours in deporting and killing those people of the region whom Nazis defined as Jewish by origin.

One very important thing to note with regards to population transfers and other measures (including the most brutal ones) that were taken with the aim of achieving more ethnic homogeneity, is that these usually weren’t taken exclusively at the decision of the states directly concerned. At times these measures were based completely on foreign-made decisions in fact, willingly or not-so-willingly accepted, supported, taken advantage of, or passively tolerated, by local populations. Even Western European great powers interested in stability have many times given backing to, or even inspired, the idea of population transfers for achieving calmer conditions in the states concerned. One very notable example of that, not mentioned so far, is the case of the post-WWII Potsdam Declaration⁸ which attempted to settle the already ongoing deportation of Germans from Czechoslovakia and Poland in an orderly manner, which turned out to work then as unintended invitation for several other countries to also deport their respective citizens ‘of German nationality’, including countries that (unlike Poland, Czechoslovakia, and beside them Hungary) weren’t mentioned in the Potsdam Agreement, such as Yugoslavia and Romania (thereby adding to the burden of an already large German refugee population in Western-controlled sectors of occupation in Germany). A more recent example of when great power stakeholder influence indirectly subscribed to the end result of ethnic cleansing was the case of the Dayton Agreement about Bosnia-Herzegovina, most notably by how it sanctified to a degree the ethnic cleansing that allowed for an ethnically homogenous Republika Srpska to emerge within former Yugoslav constituent republic Bosnia’s territory (even while stressing that refugees should be able to return to their original homes of course⁹).

⁸ The text of the Agreement is available at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/truman/psources/ps_potsdam.html (last accessed: August, 27, 2007).

⁹ See: The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. December 14, 1995; Annex 7 on „Refugees and Displaced Persons” – an exact URL where the latter may be found: http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=375 (last accessed: August 27, 2007).

Before moving on to an entirely new section, there are several special issues that this section of the paper should still deal with, with all of these issues affecting the dynamic interplay between the above described, and widely differing ideas of an interstate and an international society in Central/Eastern Europe.

First of all some more remarks on the question of the genocide committed against Jews in WWII. The Jewish population of Central/Eastern Europe was in a special position indeed. It was completely fragmented in fact by state boundaries, even while a Zionist/Jewish nationalist movement was emerging, with major, largely assimilated segments of this Jewish population in the countries that they were living in (except for those areas where Jews' separation was enforced by forced ghettoisation). Given, however, how Jews were present in all the countries of the region, and how in several sectors of the economy (retail trade, the professions etc.) they were in a dominant position in several areas, circles within majority ethnic groups in the states concerned started to see this, and let it be seen, as a threat, and they worked on undermining the standing of people of Jewish origin as reliable, accepted, just-like-any-other sort of citizens in the countries concerned already in the 19th century. This process was aggravated later on by Nazi sponsoring of like-minded political groups, and eventually the complete Nazi takeover by force of the region by the autumn of 1944 (by which time Hungary was also just another occupied country).

For more context, it is also notable, related to this question, how many people of Jewish origin, people who were completely assimilated to the given area's, or country's, majority population, tended naturally to turn positively to ideologies such as socialism/communism, which offered the vision of a future where cultural differences wouldn't matter any more. Their 'internationalism' stemmed partly from a desire to dispose of the burden of a context in which such ideas were present because of which the threat of one's status becoming debated always loomed around (for a comprehensive work on the subject of Jews in Central/Eastern Europe, see Prepuk, 1997).¹⁰ Using the conceptual framework I'm putting forward here, it might be said that many of those people were naturally, by birth, inclined to vote for an *interstate* rather than an *international* society (with the possibility of a world society in mind even). It might be relevant to add here that in the

¹⁰ This is a topic breeding much controversy indeed. For instance, in a debate of two noted Hungarian historians, Gyáni criticised Romsics for the mere mentioning in one of the latter's works of the proportion of people of Jewish origin on several levels of the Hungarian Soviet Republic's establishment, for thus potentially reinforcing in his view a pet thesis of nationalist thinkers according to which the creation of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919 was something like an 'error', a foreign element, weaved forcibly and violently into the organic fabric of Hungarian national history (see Gyáni, 2003: 47-55).

wake of the Cold War then, and for some of the organising opposition actors already before it was to come to an end in fact, liberal internationalism became the new source of hope as an idea that might transform the region into a cooperating *interstate*, as opposed to an *international*, society of states (note the obvious here, that the number of intellectuals of Jewish origin of course drastically diminished by this time, in the wake of WWII). It is in light of all this that one can see the origins of the lasting tendency of radical nationalist discourse within Central/Eastern Europe, represented usually by parties to the right of the political spectrum, to falsely identify up to this day both liberal and socialist internationalism as ideas of foreign origin the presence of which is somehow non-natural (as though nationalism wouldn't be an idea of foreign origin), and as ideas that are represented only by foreign elements, 'an Other within', by people who want to manipulate a national 'Us', serving 'Their' purposes.

Further, similar issues to be discussed then are the cases of two other societal groups, beside that of Jews, that don't simply spread beyond the boundaries of a given state, but who were/are present in almost all of the states of Central/Eastern Europe. These are ethnic Germans on the one hand, and Slavic groups as such in general on the other.

Of all that German states' and statelets' history might demonstrate for the English School, the most clear lesson is that on the sub-global level the most likely venue for a 'world society' (or rather Buzan's inter-human society, bound together by a common identity), and subsequently for a 'world state' to develop, is within a territory inhabited by a group of people willing to consider themselves, together, as a nation. The process of German unification has led to a mixed result, however. On the one hand significant other ethnic groups beside Germans were there living in the German state at the time of this unification, when the mission of the ethnic project could have seemed to have been accomplished (e.g. Jews against whom already after the 1873 economic crisis anti-Semitism was growing rapidly [see Evans, 2004: 22-27], and Poles, from parts of the historical territory of partitioned Poland that were incorporated by Prussia). On the other hand, a lot of Germans were left outside the boundaries of the apparently not so unified 'Germany'.

As noted before, German ideas of a 'Central European region', interpreted as spreading from the estuary of the Rhine (possibly including the Netherlands and Belgium even, therefore) to the estuary of the Danube traditionally reckoned with a natural leading role for Germany and Germans within it. Over time, however, these ideas appeared in more aggressive forms, as noted before in this paper. Already Paul de Lagarde, from 19th century Berlin, had some of the foundations of later national socialists' thought laid, by imagining a

large German space, with all German lands, including German parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, closely integrated within it, and with Germans in the leading role everywhere, relegating other peoples inhabiting the area to the status of servant peoples, that, while Lagarde also wished to see the Jewish population of the area ‘encouraged’ to leave for Palestine (Romsics, 1997). But even while Lagarde has already formulated his ideas, mainstream German thinking during even the first years of WWI was more flexible, and many, including even Friedrich Naumann, who published a book titled *Mitteleuropa* in 1915, were ready to think only in the more modest terms of economic integration with Germans at the lead, with German language as the *lingua franca* for the region, and with Germany conducting foreign policy for this whole area in coordination with the other states (but of course still largely on its own). Progressing further into WWI, however, these ideas grew more and more annexationist, and moved away from the position that Germans should have merely a *primus inter pares* leading role in the region [Romsics, 1997]. Proponents of pan-Germanism in the Austrian part of the Monarchy have by this time also become quite strong of course (although they, too, have been around ever since the Hapsburg Empire’s defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1866, at Königgrätz, which led to Hapsburgs’ loss of a chance for a leading role among German states).

WWI has produced a setback for such pan-German thinking—contradictorily right after Germany has just conquered, albeit only for a brief while, most of the region, as pointed out before. But then, as really everyone knows, came Hitler who realised more than the most radical versions of the above ideas.

German populations left behind thereafter, in the wake of Nazi Germany’s retreat, had their fate consequently sealed. They had no chance of resisting the endeavour of such political actors that looked to expel them on the basis of a kind of collective guilt, and, especially, they didn’t have a chance against the Soviet Union which was quite understanding itself of this sort of agenda from the part of anyone, particularly given how a major element of Stalin’s design for the Soviet-controlled part of Central/Eastern Europe seems in hindsight to have been consciously enhancing ethnic homogeneity in all of the countries of the area, probably to achieve more political stability in that way. (Stalin was, after all, even People’s Commissar of Nationalities’ Affairs between 1917-1923, as well as a sinister mastermind, as the leader of the Soviet Union, of the 1930’s Ukrainian famine, and of the collective punishment of ethnic groups in the Crimea and the Caucasus for their collaborative stance towards Germany. All that may have been formative experience for him, regarding the factor of ethnic relations.)

An interesting case to look at, in connection with this, is that of Hungary. The Hungarian leadership at the time looked to avoid the expulsion of Germans, calculating that their ouster could set a useful precedent for nationalist Slovakian political forces in Czechoslovakia pushing for the expulsion of Hungarians from there at the same time (Fülöp and Sipos, 1998, 314-329). But the Soviet Union had a clear vision of what it preferred to see, and although it didn't give full backing to Czechoslovakia, neither did it stand in the way of Czechoslovakia's attempt to create a hurting stalemate by putting the Hungarian minority there in a rightless situation, forcing the Hungarian government to strike a deal eventually.¹¹ And within Hungary the Peasant Party was significantly also pushing for deporting Germans; hence this seems to have been inevitable to a degree.

Finally then, for this section of the paper, some words on Pan-Slavism. Writing of it I will not fill much room in this paper. Most countries in Central/Eastern Europe have either a majority or at least a small minority of Slavic inhabitants, true, but, in a nutshell, there have historically been major obstacles hindering the achievement of pan-Slavic unity, such as 1) religion (the division between Western and Eastern Christianity); 2) the fear of a way too lopsided dominance of a pan-Slavic region, or even state/empire, by Russia; 3) perceptions and realities of Western Slavs' being more developed than Eastern Slavs; 4) greatly varying geopolitical contexts and subsequently incompatibly differing interests in the vast area inhabited by Slavic people that we are talking about; and finally 5) the idea of a distinct nationhood and a distinct national history enjoying wide inter-subjective consent among populations of the Slavic-majority territories concerned. Religion in fact played an important dividing role also given how Russia was always interested in nurturing the consciousness of a pan-Orthodox collective, too, which of course cannot have included much of Poles and Czechs for example, whereas it did, on the other hand, include from the start e.g. the non-Slavic Orthodox Christian population of those lands that were to become Romania (Moldavia and Wallachia).

From world proletariat to a world society without a world state?

Looking merely at the title of this penultimate section of my paper may make it clear that I'm taking use of the terminological/conceptual repertoire of classical English School thinking in

¹¹ It wouldn't have been in the Soviet interest to put pressure on Czechoslovakia on this issue, given how in the Czech areas there was, uniquely for the region, significant electoral support for communists, and how in the Slovakian part of the country the situation was markedly different, which thus made appeasing nationalist sentiment among Slovaks (and allowing it to be appeased) a logical strategy of co-optation.

quite an obvious way here. The transition suggested by the question in the title is more or less exactly that what Marxists were hoping to see brought about by revolution, as they imagined the latter; the transition to a classless world society with a strong common inter-human identity (that of being human beings of equal worth, actually), a community of human beings that knows no distinction in its ranks on the basis of national identities, either.

In examining the impact of that latent ambition on developments in Central/Eastern Europe one could look at not just the era following WWII, but also at the short period while Hungary experimented with being a Soviet Republic (until its communist regime was toppled, in 1919), and while Lenin was in power, and Stalin hasn't yet introduced his 'socialism in (only) one country' policy thus officially taking note of the inevitable transition of the Soviet Union from the liberated territories of a world-salvaging ideology's vanguard army into just another state with a foreign policy (with a somewhat ideological, but definitely much more pragmatic foreign policy at that). For a few critical historical notes on how that ambition was very far from ever being realised it is perhaps enough to discuss the wake of WWII and the Cold War era in a nutshell, the period when the Soviet Union actually had the chance to transform the entire Central/Eastern European region in a way it preferred (see Márer, 1998, as the basis of much of this section of my paper).

It has to be pointed out at the start that in the first couple of years after WWII the countries of Central/Eastern Europe did attempt to develop some intra-regional cooperation on their own, while they were still allowed to do so. One of the greatest lessons of the period between WWI and WWII were drawn by the Polish and the Czechoslovakian leadership, and they had ambitious plans for future cooperation outlined already during the years of WWII. Polish politicians in exile, like PM Władisław Sikorski (until his death in 1943), or his advisor Józef Retinger, played an important part in discussions about European integration even. In talks with their Belgian and other counterparts they may be said to have had a direct role in the birth of the Benelux economic union (Lane, 2004: 11). Yugoslavia, weary from the start of Soviet attempts to dominate the forming socialist bloc of countries, also played an integrative role in its neighbourhood. It looked to dominate Albania, and coerced it into a customs union, while it also initiated discussions about a potential Balkan federation of states with Bulgaria and Romania. Bulgarian leader Dimitrov had already come to mention the possibility of a customs union in January, 1948, when on January 28 *Pravda* issued an editorial that made it clear this would be against the Moscow line. The Soviet Union decided that this was the time when it had to let everyone know that only it was in a position to initiate bilateral ties in the region, and that others weren't to be allowed the autonomy to do so.

(Dimitrov died the following year in a sanatorium near Moscow, whereas Yugoslav leader Tito, in the position to do so, broke up with Stalin and thus avoided a similar fate.)

Following up on effectively cutting all fledgling regional ties, Moscow announced the creation of its version of regional integration: the COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance). Contrary to popular belief, however, it didn't start functioning until only years after the coming into being of the Warsaw Pact, since Moscow was the master of all bilateral ties anyway, and, more than that, it was comfortably in the position to set the countries of Central/Eastern Europe on an economic development path that it saw fit for its own purposes. Thus heavy, Soviet-style industrialisation followed. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union also looked to exploit the countries of the region in a more direct way, as sources of raw materials (as well as sources of practically anything else that could be taken from them). For example, Poland was forced to supply the Soviet Union with coal at an extremely low, subsidised price, while Czechoslovakia had to do the same with uranium. East Germany was subjected to the harshest policy of war reparations, while even Hungary was treated as though it wouldn't have finished WWII as an occupied state, but as a losing power.

COMECON started functioning in effect only from the 1960s as the (inter)state-administered (albeit clearly Moscow-centred) cooperation of state-administered economies. Special COMECON exchange rates were in use by participant countries, and companies of participant countries that were entitled to foreign commerce had to lead a double account, because the 'interstate' price of goods in the COMECON system was at times radically different from the domestic price of the same good (which may have been somewhat closer to a realistic price in most cases). Paradoxically, but not surprisingly, this was a *disintegrative form of economic integration*. Firstly, the fact that there was no way to guarantee balanced foreign trade in this system provided a significant disincentive to member countries to do trade with each other. In turn that meant an incentive to trade externally, outside the COMECON system, even when in a market-shaped environment it could have been rational to do otherwise. A case in point often cited is that it was rational in this perverted COMECON system for a Romanian producer of salt, located just a few kilometres from the Hungarian border, to sell that salt to the U.S. rather than sell it to a Hungarian chemical plant that would have needed it just a few kilometres from the same border, on the Hungarian side. Secondly, this system didn't encourage quality production, either, and export products were supplied to each other by COMECON countries with an extremely high proportion of wastrel (Pálffy, 1999). In general, all the problems discussed here may be said to be a consequence of the

difficulties of planning cooperation between economies that themselves were planned flawed in many ways.

What eventually sustained the COMECON system was that over time the Soviet Union turned from the exploiter of Central/Eastern European economies into a financier of this irrational economic regime, thus becoming exploited itself in a way. This gradually became the case when oil prices began to rise in the 1970s. Through a special price mechanism (later on dubbed the ‘Bucharest price mechanism’, given that its modalities were refined at a Bucharest meeting) the Soviet Union supplied Central/Eastern European countries with oil and natural gas at an effectively subsidised price. This made COMECON even more irrational of course, in giving an incentive to COMECON countries to sustain very energy-inefficient economies.

While some make the point that this subsidy by the Soviet Union served the purposes of retaining its key allies in the Cold War, and preserving the geopolitical buffer zone the Soviet Union gained in the wake of WWII when it made Central/Eastern European states its satellite states, Márer very logically rejects that argument by pointing to the fact that this subsidy started following the 1970s. By that time any geopolitical buffer zone had far less importance given the strategic significance of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The robust, but still rather impotent, armies of the Warsaw Pact client countries, not being particularly useful in a prospective clash with NATO forces, served much more the purpose of backing up the Brezhnev doctrine, as a potential force with which nominally multilateral interventions could have been carried out in case that would have been needed (in the wake of, and similar to, the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968).

Both COMECON and the Warsaw Pact do seem in hindsight to have been merely institutions functioning to the end of maintaining the context that reproduced the need for them, existing thus for themselves, on a bit of a *l’art pour l’art* basis. This arrangement was in effect the paradox of a complex society of states with institutions that socialised its member states into quite asocial, irresponsible economic behaviour. The Soviet Union arguably did have some symbolic advantages out of this arrangement. It could both maintain its dominance over, as well as point to, Central/Eastern Europe as a part of the world which proved that the liberal/capitalist ‘Western’ world is not the only possible world, and that thus it hasn’t won (at least yet). However, it couldn’t finance this arrangement eternally, as it became clear for Gorbachev, and the tenets of the thinking that suggested it should be financed also came to be questioned parallel to that.

What may be relevant to English School thinking regarding that what the Soviet Union managed to achieve therefore is that a society of states was created in this case whereby member states had quite similar, *converging*, Soviet-style domestic structures (although with gradually more and more divergence appearing between them in the post-Sovietisation phase), which were quite far, however, from developing anything like a world society among themselves at the same time, with even the opportunity to travel heavily restricted from one member state to the other. The Soviet Union, which nominally set about the venture of serving an ideology that had as its main aim the creation of a world society without a world state, ended up creating a very much state-centric ‘world’ that paradoxically best underlines in retrospect the argument that Barry Buzan makes at one point in *FI2WS?*: “*Convergence* means the development of a substantial enough range of shared values within a set of states to make them adopt similar political, legal and economic forms [...] This definition makes clear the divorce of solidarism from cosmopolitanism. In a society of states the Kantian form of solidarism around liberal values identified by the English School and Wendt is one option, but not the only one.” (Buzan, 2004: 160). With this in mind, and referring back to a previous section of this paper, it can be said that the ‘Eastern bloc’ of countries formed merely a quasi-solidarist society of states, and it is, of course, quite instructive to look at how/why that society of states came into being, just like I attempted to do in this section.

Conclusions

At the end of my brief attempt to overview in a nutshell several centuries of Central/Eastern European history, used here as input for the purposes of fine-tuning the New English School’s conceptual repertoire, as well as subject material on which the latter’s usefulness for structuring analysis may be demonstrated, the following conclusions may be seen as having crystallised.

The creation of regional identities which themselves are bases of potential inter-human societies takes place in several aspects similarly to how national identities are formed. A constructivist approach in analysing this process is indispensable. As a result of the othering that inevitably accompanies the venture by anyone to delimit a region, some states will be included, others excluded, some territories of certain states carved in, some carved out. Constructively thinking of (imagining) the boundaries of a region therefore has profound consequences on the formation and the dynamically changing quality of any regional society of states. Arguably, since human beings seem to find more comfort with multiple layers of

narrower identities, or a network of narrower of identities, rather than with just the (infinitely, it seems) wide identity of being a human being in the midst of the entire human race, thinking with the aim of conceiving of regions does take place, and that itself is a factor decisively driving towards the formation of regional societies of states. On a basic level, even when the historical record is not encouraging in this respect, or perhaps to an even stronger degree in the latter case, people do see cooperation within a narrower region, that they live in, as important, or even imperative. Nevertheless, as demonstrated in the case of Central/Eastern Europe, delimiting and naming such a region can indeed be a source of contention and tension itself, and subsequently an obstacle to cooperation, too. But still it may have been that instinctive search for regional cooperation that gave the critical impulse for a vanguard group of countries in Central/Eastern Europe to hold together enough to be able to join the European Union, and consequently pull after itself the rest of Europe-in-transit, too.

Taking account of the historical thinness of a Central/Eastern European society of states, and employing Buzan's taxonomy of regional interstate societies of different thickness, as a result of some minor re-conceptualisation of the notion of what may, from a theoretical point of view, constitute an asocial relationship between states, I did point then to several instances of relations seemingly of that kind among states of Central/Eastern Europe. Probing further, I raised the question whether in certain cases, with hindsight, it may be necessary to term relations among states of the region in one era or another as merely quasi-coexistent, or quasi-solidarist, (backing this up with 'empirical' realities as much as those can be reconstructed, with hindsight). I have then come to reject the need for enriching Buzan's taxonomy, however, pointing to how Buzan stresses the importance of analysing motivational factors behind interstate institutional arrangements, and how those play their role in the case of all the different states party to such arrangements. Therefore, instead of a need for a more diverse taxonomy, it suggests rather the need for looking at a separate, additional dimension in analysing a particular society of states. And it is looking at such motivational factors that may open insight into the significance of 'structure', interpreted here as much more than merely the interstate institutional structure itself. As I have attempted to show in several cases, for example with regards to the period between the two world wars in Central/Eastern Europe, other elements of structure (within the larger set of structural factors of which interstate institutions are merely a subset therefore) may in fact work as the independent variable in the case of structurally weak states, determining as the dependent variable the interstate institutional structures that those states may turn out to be capable of designing, with

the countries concerned thereby ending up showing a critical deficit of agency in the face of structural constraints.

Identified in this paper as one of the fundamental structural weaknesses of a regional society of states in Central/Eastern Europe is the at times violent interplay, almost constantly manipulated from outside the region, too, between what outcome ‘politically correct’/‘Euro-conform’ and nationalist discourses see as ideal for the long-run stability in the region: the interplay between forces preferring an *interstate* society, and forces preferring an *international* society. The main difference between these schools of thought is that the latter sees ethnic homogeneity as a prerequisite for stability, whereas the former does not. I have, in the relevant section of this paper, presented historical examples of when there occurred cooperation between states of the region in creating more ethnic homogeneity within the states participating. I have also pointed, however, to how this in many instances took place with the backing of, or even at the inspiration of, powers outside the region, again something whereby a fundamental structural weakness or vulnerability of the states of Central/Eastern Europe may show.

Finally, in the ultimate section of this paper, I have looked at the times in the wake of WWII when much of the region was dominated by the Soviet Union. Largely similar domestic structures sprung up within the states of Central/Eastern Europe, and looking at this period could theoretically be interesting for classical English School thinking in how Marxists/socialists historically endeavoured to create, through the struggle of a world proletariat (one that overcomes being fragmented by nationalist antagonisms), a stateless world society. Instead, as I pointed out, a case study of this kind seems more instructive of what Buzan points to in *FI2WS?*, when he discusses the possibility of such societies of states where one may find converging domestic structures within states, but may not at the same time find necessarily anything like a liberal world society: the latter in New English School-speak would be both a strong inter-human society and a richly organised trans-national society promoting a liberal or at least a pluralistic agenda.

To finish on a note reflecting on Central/Eastern Europe then (my elusive object of research), I feel that even if I had to be quite daring in this paper at times, and may have got some things wrong in the process, or presented in an insufficiently sophisticated manner, I undertook this exactly in order to be able to put the history of this region into a new, potentially revealing light. The New English School’s conceptual repertoire indeed seems to have been tremendously useful for this purpose to me, and I do somewhat ambitiously hope that this paper may be at the same time both an added momentum for discussion on

Central/Eastern European history and interstate relations *and* something that may potentially even restructure some of the discussion that it was written to be new input to.

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