Spatialising International Relations

Polish Mental Mapping and the Image of Germany (1848–1871)

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Research Master History Thesis

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Supervisor: Prof. dr. Jacco Pekelder

Second Reader: Prof. dr. Ido de Haan

Word Count: 34 871

Date: 11.06.2022

Abstract

Geography is susceptible to human imagination. This becomes particularly visible when one historicises political bodies of spaces which were previously deemed as "natural" and based on "national characteristics." Among the most powerful tools of nineteenth-century political vocabulary were the concepts of "the West" and "the East." These terms gained a profound political and normative appeal as they served to draw civilisational lines between European states and the rest of the world as well as within Europe. The dichotomy between these two spatial imaginings stood at the core of Polish perceptions concerning the nineteenth-century international order. So far, the existing historiography has approached the West-East divide as either an aspect of the internal Polish discussion about modernisation or as a tool by means of which Western Europe essentialised Poland. Alternatively, it is my intention to argue that this was a mental map which helped the Polish elites navigate through uneasy waters of the nineteenth century diplomacy, revolutions and frame relationships with neighbours, most notably Germany. By comparing Germany to the notorious "Others" (Persia, China or Russia), members of the Polish intelligentsia strived to exclude Germany from the "Western" bond of European nations. At other times, Germany was conceptualised as a "model nation-state", industrious and culturally advanced nation. This thesis causally relates the Polish use of "the East" and "the West" against Germany with the conditions of the mid-nineteenth century international affairs. By combining the theories of public opinion and mental mapping, the proposed approach traces the ways in which non-state actors formulated their systemic views on international relations and strived to exercise agency through the deployment of carefully crafted discursive tools. The application of historical semantics to written contributions of the Polish public (political pamphlets and newspaper articles) enables to capture the constructed nature of "the West" and "the East", their fluctuating and deeply contextual meaning as well as their political functionality.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Sławomir Mrożek, a distinguished twentieth-century Polish dramatist, writer, and cartoonist, when asked about the location of his homeland, replied that "it lies east of the West, and west of the East." At first glance, the statement wittily describes the peculiarity of the Polish political and cultural position in Europe, with which Poles have wrestled for the last two hundred years. But there is also a much more consequential insight enshrined in Mrożek's *bon mot*. It illustrates the fact that geography is susceptible to human imagination and interpretation. Mapping is not simply a geographical reflection of reality. Instead, it carries a full set of meanings that people attribute to the location of states, nations, borders. This realisation creates an incentive to alter the existing power relations by redrawing the previously non-existent lines and boundaries in accordance with ideological wishes. Every process of mapping involves a territorial and moral image of "the Self" as well as of "the Other". In this imagined world, neighbouring states or nations commonly play the role of "the Other", whose political actions and stances are subjugated to a constant evaluation and judgement. This interdependence is particularly visible among Polish intellectuals, revolutionaries and journalists who struggled to come to terms with the political position and civilisational adherence of Germany in the mid-19th century Europe. Some of them, like Polish philosopher Bronisław Trentowski, labelled the western neighbour as "European China."[1] On the other side of this conceptual spectrum was historian Stanisław Koźmian who viewed Germany as a deeply "civilised, European and enlightened nation."[2] Both of those quotes disclose a profound tension in the Polish political thought and signify the importance of such categories as "the West" and "the East" in the nineteenth-century international relations discourse. On a more theoretical level, though, these statements neatly correspond with the analytical thought forwarded by Edward Said, that "the struggle over geography is not only about soldiers and cannons, but also about ideas, forms, images and imaginings."[3]

The process of filling specific bodies of space with political and cultural meanings is commonly termed in historical research as mental mapping or spatial imagining. By representing and highlighting certain symbolic features of regional, national, or transnational

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[1] Bronisław Trentowski, *Przedburza Polityczna* [Political Pre-Storm] (Freiburg: Trzcionkarnia Umiejętni u Adolfa Emmerlinga, 1848), 92.
[2] Stanisław Koźmian, "Północny Związek Niemiecki, dzieło hr. Bismarka, przez St. Koźmiana" [North-German Confederation, the work of hr. Bismark, described by St. Koźmian], *Przegląd Polski*, vol. 3, no. 10, April 1869 (Kraków: w drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego pod zarządem Konst. Mańkowskiego, 1869), 437
[3] Edward Said, *Culture and imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 7.

territories, these maps can gain political functionality and order interests of states, organisations or movements in a specific way. As Barry Buzan and George Lawson argue the emergence of modernity and "rational" state-formation became "caged within nation-states and extended outwards into "alien spaces."[4] Making sharp distinctions between varying nations, cultures and civilisations were an indispensable trait of the 19th century political language. Crucially, they helped historical actors justify the deeply hierarchical and stratified view of international politics with exclusive norms and values. However, the significance of mental maps is hardly tied only to the historical context. Elements of the 19th- century inequality within the international sphere have been sustained during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[5] Even today, instrumentalization of space often underpins neo-imperial expansion (the narrative about "Novorossiya" in the wake of Russian aggression against Ukraine), political revisionism (utilising the concepts of "Greater" Serbia or Hungary, "neo-Ottoman Turkey") or serves as a convenient framework for addressing security challenges ("Eurafrique" and French policing missions in sub-Saharan Africa).[6] This is to say that there has been a vast multiplicity of mental maps with different aims and content in mind.

Among the most proliferated and powerful tools in the arsenal of spatial vocabulary are such notions as "the West" and "the East". Being conceptually and discursively subscribed to one of the above-mentioned concepts often determined the political, economic, or cultural status of states and nations in international relations. Poland and Germany have been embedded in the geographical space of Central-Eastern Europe and hence, they have maintained an ambiguous relationship with "the West" and "the East". Even the most contemporary history supports this assumption. In the early 1990s, the fates of both counties were marked by their quest towards the integration with Western Europe – conceptualised as the family of democratic nations with free-market economy. Poland initiated its democratisation and economic transformation while Germany embarked on the process of reunifying the Federal Republic with the German Democratic Republic. On discursive and ideological levels, attempts were made to bridge the former division of Europe by championing the term "Central Europe".[7] However, the widely

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[4] Barry Buzan and George Lawson, *The Global Transformation History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3.

[5] Ibidem, 12.

[6] Benedikt Erforth, "Mental Maps and Foreign Policy Decision-making," *European Review of International Studies* 3 (2016): 2, 38-57; Michail Suslov, "The Production of 'Novorossiya': A Territorial Brand in Public Debates," *Europe-Asia Studies* 69 (2017): 2, 202-221; Umut Uzer, "Conservative Narrative: Contemporary Neo-Ottomanist Approaches in Turkish Politics," *Middle East Critique* 29 (2020): 3, 275-290.

[7] Milan Kundera, "The Tragedy of Central Europe,"*The New York Review* April 26, 1984, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1984/04/26/the-tragedy-of-central-europe/, accessed on Mar. 4th, 2022; Iver

cherished "End of History" did not put an end to the spatial and political differentiation. Concepts such as "the West" and "the East" persevered and as Ferenc Laczó correctly identifies: "The peculiar entanglements and asymmetrical relationship between the 'two halves' of the continent have certainly not disappeared with the second great westernizing revolutions of East European peoples in 1989."[8] As the time has shown, only the imagined borders changed. In Poland, the dominating enthusiasm for becoming a part of Western Europe decreased. For instance, within the right-wing political spectrum Poland started to be present as "the true West" which cultivates the heritage of "Western Christendom."[9] This framing served to highlight the contrast between Poland and the secular, multicultural and permissive societies of Western Europe. In this context, Germany is commonly evoked as a counterexample, sometimes satirically labelled in the popular culture "zgniły zachód" (*the rotten West*). Simultaneously, in Germany, the expressions such as "Eastern Europe" once again gained negative connotations (*EU troublemakers*, *authoritarians*) amidst the policy choices of governments in Poland and Hungary. This thesis does not intend to untangle all the controversies related to the current use of the terms.[10] Instead, I would like to argue that the use of spatial concepts such "the West" and "the East" between Poles and Germans has a long historical tradition. Its enduring historical legacy does not simply date back to the period of the Cold War but, in fact, was determined by the developments from the second half of the nineteenth century. I would like to present the period between 1848 and 1871 as crucial in that respect. By implication, this thesis will analyse how the Polish mental mapping envisioned the position of Germany in Europe and whether Germany belonged to "the West" or to "the East". In purely geographical terms, Germany was obviously Poles' western neighbour. However, the premises guided by political ideologies provide a much more ambiguous answer to this question. Accordingly, it is my intention to sketch not a cartographic map, but a conceptual one - a product of political imaginary, fuelled by assumptions about moral and developmental differences between national cultures. This map helped the Polish elites navigate through uneasy waters of the nineteenth century diplomacy, revolutions and wars and justified their position in respect to the pending questions in international affairs.

B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[8] Ferenc Laczó, "How East-West Dynamics Define Europe," *RevDem: Review of Democracy*, July 3rd, 2021, https://revdem.ceu.edu/2021/07/03/how-east-west-dynamics-define-europe/, accessed on Mar. 4th, 2022.

[9] Tomasz Zarycki, "Poland and the East" in *Understanding Central Europe*, Marcin Moskalewicz, Wojciech Przybylski (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2017), 80.

[10] For the overview of the contemporary relationship between Poland and the West-East dichotomy see: Tomasz Zarycki, "Poland and the East," in *Understanding Central Europe*, 80-86.

The Rise of "the West" and "the East" in the Nineteenth Century Political Discourse

During the mid-nineteenth century the concepts such as "the West" and "the East" acquired profound normative meanings which justified the distinctions between nations both across the world and within Europe. In this way, they reaffirmed the image of international society as a deeply hierarchical structure which possessed its "centre", "peripheries" as well as "insiders" and "outsiders."[11] Countries affiliated with "the West" became recognised as beacons of progress, democratisation, and modernisation while entities labelled as "Eastern" represented "Asiatic barbarism", stagnation, absolutist forms of governance, with inhabitants unaware of their individuality. As Ricardo Bavaj and Martina Steber indicate, "the East" was fettered to patriarchal structures and ruled by theocratic regimes and its societies were governed by violence.[12] These seemingly general expressions also appeared in the context of cross-national interactions within Europe.[13] Both Poles and Germans employed West-East dichotomy in political writings, newspapers and literary works to bolster or diminish the position of each other on the scale of "civilised nations" and, consequently, forwarded a peculiar view of the European political order.

In the Polish context, this mental map played a significant role in asserting independence of thought and opinion. Due to the partitions, and the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late eighteenth century, the sphere of ideas, discursive tools and public discourse compensated the Polish lack of institutional power.[14] Hence, it was a matter of highest urgency for Polish politicians, members of the intelligentsia and revolutionaries to maintain the "vitality" of the nation by positioning the Polish nation on the axis of the West-East divide. Even though Poland lost the statehood, it desperately sought to cultivate its adherence to the "Western civilisation". This peculiar Polish political position led, in the view of the Polish historian Andrzej Wierzbicki, to quite original ideas concerning space which were not commonly encountered in other cases of European thought.[15] The "independence of opinion"

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[11] This phenomenon can be described be described as the "stratification" in international relations which is extensively described in: Barry Buzan and Mathias Albert, "Differentiation: A sociological approach to international relations theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 16 (2010): 3, 315-337.

[12] Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber (eds.), *Germany And 'The West': The History of a Modern Concept* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017), 9.

[13] Erhard Stolting, "The East of Europe: A Historical Construction," in *Biographies and the Division of Europe: Experience, Action, and Change on the 'Eastern Side'*, Roswitha Breckner, Devorah Kalekin-Fishman, Ingrid Miethe (eds.) (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2000), 35.

[14] Tomasz Zarycki, "Uses of Russia: The Role of Russia in the Modern Polish National identity," *East European Politics and Societies*, 184 (2004): 4, 625.

[15] Andrzej Wierzbicki, *Wschód-Zachód w koncepcjach dziejów Polski: Z dziejów polskiej myśli historycznej w dobie porozbiorowej* [West-East in the visions of Polish history: From the history of Polish historical thought in the post-partition era] (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1984), 15-16.

was achieved by deploying ideas in respect to both the eastern and western neighbours. For instance, the notion of "Eastness" was extensively applied to the Russian Empire through the creation of binary oppositions (Catholicism-Orthodoxy, civilisation-backwardness, republicanism-despotism). However, German states and the German nation as a whole were much more problematic. They could be portrayed as both a Western power which was willing to support Poland in regaining statehood or as a vivid representative of "the East" because of its internal, political fragmentation and favourable policies towards Russia. Ultimately, the significance of mental mapping is enclosed in the nexus between the broader, European intellectual developments and the distinctiveness of the Polish-German relations between 1848 and 1871.

First, it needs to be acknowledged that the increased tendency to fill such terms as "the West" and "the East" was a result of evolving intellectual and philosophical interests. During the last decades of the eighteenth century, the combination of global European expansion with the Enlightened notions of scientific categorisation encouraged leading intellectuals of the age to classify the position of different peoples in the hierarchy of civilisations on the basis of essentialist traits. A growing disparity in socioeconomic terms between Europe and the rest of the world and new ideological tendencies, like imperialism invited a solidification of this process during the nineteenth century.[16] By accepting the underlying self-assertation about "the Western" unique path towards modernity, the societies of Western Europe could distinguish themselves from the rest of the world. New spatial labelling was also applied as a way of framing the interactions within Europe, as Norman Davies correctly asserts: "Just as Western studies of the Middle East were to be distorted by viewing the Islamic or Arab Orient as a foreign, exotic, and inferior 'other', the research of the eastern part of our continent by Western scholars was often tinged with a deep conviction of clear and lasting 'otherness' of Eastern Europe."[17] Simultaneously, the early nineteenth century was a time of expanding national consciousness with nation-states envisioned as the desired vision of a territorial organisation. The cultural underpinnings of Romanticism made space and its symbolic value an inseparable element of national identities. The challenge of these mental maps derived from the fact that every nation developed different spatial views which were conflicted with each other.

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[16] Norman Davies, *Europa między wschodem a zachodem* [Europe East and West] (Cracow: Znak Horyzont 2019 [2007]), 50.
[17] Ibidem, 39.

Second, the enhanced popularity of a certain political vocabulary coincided with the peculiar state of the German-Polish relations. Two German powers (Prussia and Austria) were, simultaneously, the forces which partitioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. Nevertheless, the early decades of the nineteenth century brought about a completely new political constellation. From a systemic view of international relations, the Vienna Congress of 1815, despite the declared success, left some nations and actors deeply unsatisfied with the new European order. To-that-end, the cases of Poland's resurrection and Germany's unification seemed to be mutually intertwined. Given the affinity of aspirations of both nations, it appeared that the German and Polish "Questions" caused equal unease for those who attempted to uphold the Vienna system.[18] However, during the Revolutions of 1848-49 the gap between conceptualisation of politics and the reality of international relations became one of the fundamental factors which constrained the cooperation between the two nations. Subsequently, the period between 1848 and 1871 stands out as the time during which Polish independence struggle coexisted and competed with the German unification attempts at the top of the European political agenda. It became evident that the lack of the state on the Polish side as well as lagging behind in socioeconomic terms created a profound rift between the two nations which can be described as an asymmetrical relationship.[19] This tendency, in the view of Wilfried Spohn, determined the formulation of cultural and ideological lines between Poles and Germans. [20]Mental maps provided the justification of the German hegemony over the Polish population, especially in the Prussian province of Poland. At the forefront of the intellectual simplifications were German authors who projected their biased assumptions into Eastern Europe, and especially Poland. Frequently evoked examples are the book by Gustav Freytag, *Soll und Haben* (1855), or the speech that was made by Wilhelm Jordan on the floor of the Frankfurt Parliament in 1848. However, Poles were not passive recipients of these labels. In fact, they strived to reformulate and rethink these conceptual divisions in accordance with their political goals.

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[18] Germans and Poles were among the most prominent groups within Giuseppe Mazzini's movement of 'Young Europe' as Hagen Schulze indicates in Hagen Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Malden/Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004 [1994]), 192.

[19] Willfried Spohn, "European East-West Integration, Nation-Building and National Identities: The Reconstruction of German-Polish Relations," Frankurter *Institut fur Transformationsstudien*, Discussion Paper 5/02, 6.

[20] Ibidem.

Research Question

The interdependence between mental mapping and asserting influence in international relations certainly encourages questions about the content and function of the Polish spatial imaginary. Accordingly, this research seeks to establish the prominence and function of these spatial representations within the political discourse surrounding the Polish-German relations between 1848 and 1871. For the purposes of this thesis, I would like to ask: how did spatial representations such as "the West" and "the East" shape the Polish view of Germany between 1848 and 1871? The focus on the Polish case allows us to convincingly highlight the fact that Polish authors participated in the broader conversation which involved mental mapping of other nations. In a sense, this realisation enables to challenge the allegedly "peripherical" position of the Polish lands in the intellectual developments of the era. Poles were not only "victims" of spatial labels but also their co-creators. Not only does this approach identify the Polish meanings attributed to "the West" and "the East", but it also indicates a close connection between the proliferation of these ideas and the situation in international politics. By implication, Polish thinkers strived to bolster the position of Poland by conceptually aligning or criticising Germany. This is the functional aspect of the research question. Even though the thesis is committed towards investigating the Polish political discourse, it does not intent to capture the entirety of Polish opinions about the spatial position of Germany. By choosing a set of political writings and newspapers, it aims at sketching different conceptual avenues and emphasising the diversity of meanings ascribed to Germany.

Historiographical Debate

In recent decades, historians have begun to increasingly recognise that the way in which people conceptualise space is hardly neutral. The field of mental mapping owes much to Edward Said and his work *Orientalism* (1978) in which he argued that geographical terms provided a bedrock for simplistic European perspectives on the Middle East and Asia.[21] Similarly, *Imagined Communities* (1983), written by Benedict Anderson, demonstrated that the European attempt to cartographically map the world served as a tool to project power and claim the right to control territories and people.[22] These publications, together with the experience of "linguistic" and "spatial" turns reshaping humanities and social sciences opened a possibility for uncovering the cultural and political significance of spatial imaginaries. Mental mapping has broadened its

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[21] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003 [1978]).
[22] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London/New York: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 174.

scope by systematically investigating the meanings vested in such concepts as "Eastern Europe", "the Orient" or "the Third World". In respect to the nineteenth century, scholars have acknowledged that this century became crucial in enhancing the clichés surrounding certain regions. Among the most significant representations of cognitive mapping are the terms "the West" and "the East".

Against this conceptual background, two historiographical approaches can be distinguished in the context of nineteenth-century Poland. The first one can be identified as a history of modernisation. Within this framework, historians emphasised the fact that Poles themselves maintained an ambiguous and conflicted relationship with "the West" and "the East". Subsequently, they argued that the emergence of these terms as elements of mental mapping sparked a relentless discussion among Polish politicians, philosophers, and members of the intelligentsia. At the core of the dispute stood the concern about the Polish path towards modernity and whether Poland actually belonged to Western Europe. This vision is clearly visible in the sweeping analysis conducted by Jerzy Jedlicki who portrays this dilemma as intellectual confrontation between the nineteenth-century reformers and traditionalists:

> This is the dilemma of the era. All countries, nations, and tribes, without exception, experience it to this day [the same situation], when the expansion of the Western type of civilisation reaches them, its ideological and systemic arrangements, science and technology, capitalist production and bourgeois lifestyle. This expansion everywhere divides the domestic intelligentsia into "Slavophiles" and "Zapadniks", that is, defenders of native tradition and enthusiasts of the imported modernity.[23]

In line with this assumption, Maciej Janowski traces the intellectual transfers and the process of appropriating "Westness" through the coinage of "peripherical liberalism."[24] Andrzej Wierzbicki deals more explicitly with the impact of terms such as "the West" and "the East" on the shape of the Polish intellectual life by pointing out that "the differently understood patterns of the East and the West fulfilled the function of a positive or negative standard of development. In relation to them, the concepts of Polish uniqueness or 'typicality', 'delay' or 'advance', 'anomaly', 'deviation' were formulated."[25] Ultimately, these works place the East-

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[23] Jerzy Jedlicki, *Jakiej cywilizacji Polacy potrzebują: studia z dziejów idei i wyobraźni XIX wieku* [What kind of civilisation do Poles need: History of ideas and imagination in the 19th century] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo WAB, 2002), 58-59.
[24] Maciej Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918* (Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, 2004), VII.
[25] Wierzbicki, *Wschód-Zachód w koncepcjach dziejów Polski*, 16.

West dichotomy in the context of the domestic, Polish discussion without considering its broader transnational implications.

The second historiographical tendency considers Poland, or even broader Central-Eastern Europe, as an object or victim of Western European mental mapping. This strain of study became closely affiliated with "the cultural turn". It strives to relate the emergence of politicized ideas about space with the process of "Othering". At the forefront of these investigations stands the seminal publication by Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe* (1994).[26] The author argues that "Eastern Europe", as a spatial and political concept, emerged as a set of negative connotations, facilitated by philosophers and travellers of the Enlightenment. As Wolff extensively demonstrates, Poland became one of the common objects of criticism. In many instances, German authors conceptually connected the lesser advancement of the country in socioeconomic terms with "inferiority of character." Similarly, Norman Davies in *Europe: East and West* (2007) forwards an argument that in the eyes of contemporaries, the civilisational status of countries like Poland was ambiguous – it was neither Western nor purely Oriental.[27] Frithjof Benjamin Schenk develops this angle further by exploring the political functionality of mental maps: "The cognitive mapping of eastern Europe by western Enlightenment thinkers must – according to this argument – even be interpreted as the cognitive preparation for the territorial expansion of western powers into eastern Europe, which resulted, for example, in the Partitions of Poland."[28] In his view, contrary to most other concepts of European mesoregions, "Eastern Europe" has always been exclusively a term denoting an "Other" geographical, political and cultural space.[29] Bernhard Struck, although critical of Wolff's thesis, also agrees that "the East" and "the West" became meaningful categories around 1850, due to the evolving political situation and growing economic disparities between different parts of Europe.[30]

The relevance of this thesis stems from the fact that both strains of existing historiography consider Poland only as an object of mental mapping. So far, historians have investigated either the way in which the ideas of "the West" and "the East" impacted the internal Polish debate –

[26] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[27] Davies, *Między wschodem a zachodem*, 36.

[28] Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, "Mental Maps: The Cognitive Mapping og the Continent as an Object of Research of European History," *European History Online*, August 8th, 2013, http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/theories-and-methods/mental-maps/frithjof-benjamin-schenk-mental-maps-the-cognitive-mapping-of-the-continent-as-an-object-of-research-of-european-history, accessed on Mar. 4th, 2022.

[29] Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, "Eastern Europe," in *European Regions and Boundaries. A Conceptual History*, Mishkova, Diana and Balázs Trencsényi (eds.) (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017), 189.

[30] Bernhard Struck, "Viewing France and Poland in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *East Central Europe* 32 (2005): 1-2, 96-97.

especially national identity and modernisation plans - or they have scrutinised the Western spatial discourse (in particular, the German one). What is missing in this historiographical picture is the spatial perspectives that Poles attributed to other countries, most notably Germany. By the same token, this research will consider the Polish intellectuals as co-creators rather than passive recipients of spatial labels as they responded with their own mental mapping and spatial interpretations. It was very much highlighted by Larry Wolff that further research into this theme ought to treat the Central-Eastern European responses to the Western attempts of ideological essentialising and account for the "the complex cultural strategies of resistance, appropriation, deference, complicity, and counterattack pursued in the different lands of Eastern Europe."[31] In line with this assumption, the research illuminates the fact that mental mapping was not a one-sided political conversation. It could become a double-edged sword which could also help proliferate a peculiar view of countries like Germany. This is an "inside-out" perspective which, according to Diana Mishkova, brings agency to actors that were previously perceived as marginalised: "it becomes a terrain of multiple competing conceptualizations that might replicate and internalize but also react against, oppose, resist or manipulate this system of representation."[32] Additionally, this research will argue that the spatial concepts, such as "the West" and "the East", permitted the formulation of national interests and justification of political alignments in the international arena. By employing a seemingly straightforward spatial dichotomy between opposing systems of values, historical actors could portray their aspirations not in strictly political terms, but the moral ones as well.

Analytical Framework: Between International Relations and Mental Mapping

This research builds upon two theoretical tendencies. The intention to investigate the Polish spatial perceptions of western neighbours introduces a transnational dimension. Therefore, it seems adequate to benefit from the rich history of international relations. Yet, one is forced to recognise that the political interactions and conservations that took place between Poles and Germans did not occur on the level of states or official diplomacy. Poland was subjugated to foreign rule with no officially acclaimed government. Evidently, it is much more difficult to apply traditional approaches entailing the focus on great statesmen, institutions, or diplomatic circles. In order to overcome this problem much closer attention needs to be devoted to the informal political sphere, facilitated by revolutionary movements, media, individual

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[31] Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 373.
[32] Diana Mishkova, *Beyond Balkanism: The Scholarly Politics of Region Making* (London: Routledge, 2020), 3-4.

thinkers – actors that can be included in the broader category of public opinion. Most recent theoretical contributions enable to fulfil these analytical goals. For instance, Daniel Hucker argues that the greater emphasis on the role of public opinion in facilitating international action offers new analytical avenues.[33] Behind this theoretical underpinning stands an assumption that decision-makers are not disentangled from the view of "ordinary people" nor from their own social imaginary.[34] Nevertheless, it still remains to be answered how to define public opinion. At first glance, it may appear as a massive and daunting perspective because it is "deeply problematic for the historian of public opinion, precluding the possibility of ever determining accurately a genuine 'public opinion' at any given time."[35] Rather than trying to capture the entirety of views expressed by public opinion, it seems much more feasible to focus on these voices which actually set the tone in a discussion. This approach introduces a transition from scrutinising the "genuine public opinion" towards the one that "genuinely mattered."[36] Building on the framing provided by Hucker, it is my intention to delimit the concept of "public opinion" by "identifying how perceptions of public opinion (whether accurate or otherwise) influenced foreign policy choices, which is by no means the same as attempting to recreate public opinion 'as it was'."[37] Without a doubt, traditional elites and diplomats played a crucial role in formulating "national interests" in the international sphere. However, there also other groups-involving industrialists, scientists, or journalists, which contributed to the process of constructing values and political aims through knowledge production and its circulation.[38] In the words of Eckart Conze these are the "functional elites" (*Funktionseliten*) whose significance in international relations has been previously underestimated.[39]

By implication, I would like to identify Polish (exiled) politicians, revolutionaries, and members of the intelligentsia as the representatives of that part of public opinion that "genuinely mattered." Broadly speaking, members of the intelligentsia perceived themselves as "a moral elite of a society deprived of a right of free public expression of its views, and consequently, being classified among this group could be understood as a kind of ennoblement, in a very

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[33] Daniel Hucker, *Public Opinion and Twentieth-Century Diplomacy: A Global Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020).
[34] Hucker, *Public Opinion and Twentieth-Century Diplomacy*, 2.
[35] Ibidem, 4.
[36] Ibidem.
[37] Daniel Hucker, "International History and the Study of Public Opinion: Towards Methodological Clarity," *The International History Review* 34 (2012): 4, 781.
[38] Eckart Conze, "Abschied von Staat und Politik? Überlegungen zur Geschichte der internationalen Politik," in *Geschichte der internationalen Beziehungen: Erneuerung und Erweiterung einer historischen Disziplin*, Eckart Conze, Ulrich Lappenküper and Guido Müller (eds.) (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), 40.
[39] Ibidem, 33.

Romantic sense."[40] This classification involved traditional elites (the aristocracy and nobility) but also newcomers, "the apostles" of the national consciousness, such as revolutionaries, poets, journalists and writers. The emphasis on these "extended" elites is informed by the historical reality of the period rather than the unwillingness to include more "popular" voices. International relations within the Polish popular discourse only gained greater prominence during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when publications dedicated towards workers and peasants emerged.

Apart from identifying public opinion as a pivotal facilitator of international relations, it seems equally crucial to establish *how* it expressed itself. Hucker's perspective reveals a connection between the opinions articulated by the public and perceptions developed by decision-makers. Nevertheless, Poles lacked the institutional arrangements to channel and translate their perceptions into political practice. Instead, they commonly referred to the sphere of ideas and discursive tools. For example, Polish revolutionaries believed that the political situation in Europe could be altered by shaping "hearts and minds" of European governments and people. This tendency was vividly reflected by one of the editors of *Wiadomości Polskie*, a Polish journal issued in Paris, who stated that: "Nations live, but also come to life by asserting their good name."[41] And a "good name" of "the Self" and the criticism of other actors could be maintained through a careful control of the surrounding political discourse. The significance of ideas in the investigation of the nineteenth-century national cross-perceptions is a factor recognised by the Polish historian Wojciech Wrzesiński who argues that:

> With the growing interest in the history of "entire" nations, and not only their political elites, but public opinion also became an important element conditioning the activities of political elites in the international arena and in internal relations. In the period of democratisation of political life, the understanding for the need to investigate judgments and assessments of one nation about another was deepening. It has often turned out that without the reconstruction of the image of one nation in the consciousness of the other, it is difficult to rationally explain the relations between them, and that the reconstruction of political events without sufficient consideration of [these] attitudes and interdependencies [is problematic].[42]

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[40] Jerzy Jedlicki, ''Problems with the intelligentsia," *Acta Poloniae* Historica 100 (2009), 17.
[41] "Z Poznania kores.," *Wiadomości Polskie*, vol. 4, nr 43, October 23rd, 1857, 188.

[42] Wojciech Wrzesiński, *Sąsiad czy wróg? Ze studiów nad kształtowaniem obrazu Niemca w Polsce w latach 1795-1939* [Neighbour or enemy? From studies on shaping the image of a German in Poland in the years 1795-1939] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytety Wrocławskiego, 1992), 7-8.

A similar perspective is conveyed by Klaus Zernack who describes the complicated nexus between structural conditions of international relations and the variety of meanings that people developed to describe other nationalities. In the view of the German scholar, it is tempting to conduct "the analysis and historiographic objectification of the subjective attitudes and accents which characterise the historical contacts with their neighbours. The study must be about their origins and meaning. [It] becomes a methodical procedure that requires a different approach than when dealing with traditional diplomatic and trade relations."[43] Polish subjective attitudes, which constituted of a very wide array of political, cultural, and spatial concepts, were displayed on the pages of newspapers and popular writings that imagined a new European order that would benefit the Polish people and other nations. In order to uncover this conceptual sphere of international relations, I would like to employ the notion of mental maps.

Mental maps are a result of attributing ideological qualities to space. On a general level, they can be considered as schemata in the persisting human attempt to generalize and give meaning to the surrounding world.[44] As Maria Todorova rightly indicates, "Crucial to this understanding of space (and borders for that matter) is not so much its material morphology, but the premises of its social production and the ideological underpinnings of its production, as well as the various forms of interpretation and representation that it embodies."[45] In order to capture the complexity of mental maps, I would like to employ the definition provided by Luis da Vinha:

> [A] geographic mental map is a cognitive construct, which encloses an individual or group's beliefs about the geographic character of a particular place or places and their relationship toother places or spatial phenomena.[46]

In addition, this type of imaginings reveals itself and becomes an immanent part of the discourse under specific circumstances, as Simin Davoudi points out:

> [Mental maps] are produced through political struggles over the conceptions, perceptions and lived experiences of place. They are circulated and propagated

[43] Klaus Zernack, *Polska i Rosja: Dwie drogi w dziejach Europy* [Poland and Russia: Two paths in the history of Europe] (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 2000), 30.
[44] Maria Todorowa, "Spacing Europe: What is a Historical Region?" *East Central Europe* 32 (2005): 1-2, 64.
[45] Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi, "Conceptualizing Spaces within Europe," in *Conceptual History in the European Space*, Willibald Steinmetz, Michael Freeden, and Javier Fernández-Sebastián (eds.) (New York/Oxford: Bergahn Books, 2017), 213.
[46] Luis da Vinha, *Geographic Mental Maps and Foreign Policy Change: Re-Mapping the Carter Doctrine* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017), 77.

through images, stories, texts, data, algorithms, and performances. They are infused by relations of power in which contestation and resistance are ever present.[47]

Although mental maps are constructed, they require to be treated as discursive tools with potential political agency: "in this context [mental maps] are understood not as something unreal or fictitious, but rather as the potential of imagination to restructure a system or order and to create something new."[48] Respectively, the main task of this analytical approach is to excavate and relativise spatial ideas, as it is neatly encapsulated by Frithjof Benjamin Schenk:

> [T]he focus is on how personal concepts of space are influenced by (world)views which are transferred culturally, and how shared collective representations of an – experienced or imagined – spatial environment in turn affect processes of cultural group formation and identity formation.[49]

Mental mapping, treated as a historical phenomenon, gained a particularly strong foothold within the Polish political discourse. And there is a good reason for that. According to Buzan and Lawson three factors contributed to the acquisition of a great-power status in a nineteenth-century Europe: industrialisation, rational state-building, and ideologies of progress.[50] While the overarching political and socioeconomic circumstances prevented Poles from utilising the first two spheres, they could build up their position upon an ideological framing. Without the ability to structurally redraw the existing borderlines, Polish politicians, revolutionaries, and thinkers extensively embarked on the imaginative adjusting of the political order. The peculiarity of the political experience led, in the view of Andrzej Wierzbicki, to the Polish theorising inclinations which manifested explicitly in the constant comparing the history of Poland against two models of historical development – the Eastern and Western models.[51] For this reason, the terms such as "the West" and "the East" stood at the centre of Polish deliberations concerning politics, modernity but also the international arena. Tomasz Zarycki goes one step further by considering the mapping of moral and "civilisational" qualities as a kind of a conscious and deliberate, political tendency:

> One can sometimes even encounter direct references to the construction of a cultural capital-based identity to compensate for Polish inferiority in the political and economic dimensions . . . [T]he insistence on the cultural, 'civilizational,' and moral qualities of Poles . . . may be seen as an element of a wider strategy that

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[47] Simin Davoudi (ed.), "Spatial imaginaries: tyrannies or transformations?" *Town Planning Review* 89 (2018): 2, 103.
[48] Ibidem.
[49] Schenk, "Mental Maps".
[50] Buzan and Lawson, *The Global Transformation History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations*, 5.
[51] Wierzbicki, *Wschód-Zachód w koncepcjach dziejów Polski*, 16.

could be theoretically described as the compensation for economic and political weakness through the reliance on cultural capital.[52]

Ultimately, the focus on public opinion and spatial imaginaries serves to draw a more explicit relationship between the sphere of (spatial) ideas and international relations. Against the background of the theoretical framework, two aspects stand out.

In my view, it is valuable to perceive the terms such as "the West" or "the East" as tools of knowledge production upon which historical actors structure their worldview and exercise political power. Given their evolving nature on semantic and ideological levels, concepts in history of international relations frame the contingencies, ruptures, and discontinuities of the way our knowledge about the world is being formed.[53] In the view of Jennifer Milliken, discourses, including the spatial ones, justify the existence of particular "regimes of truth" and define subjects authorized to speak and act (i.e. foreign policy officials, defence intellectuals, development experts).[54] As Virginie Mamadouh and Gertjan Dijkink convincingly argue, spatial concepts equip societies and decision-makers with a broader, more holistic perspective of international relations to which policy elements are later on adjusted: "[G]eopolitical representations might be less sophisticated and detailed when it comes to preferences regarding the usage of certain policy instruments or tactical decisions, but they are broader in scope so as to include worldviews, perceptions and assessments of ongoing social developments in different parts of the world."[55]

Moreover, one is quick to realise that spaces have contain also "edges" and "boundaries." This is a phenomenon which Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsény label as the "conceptualisation of delimitations" (discourses about where a given region 'ends', or the metaphors of in-betweenness are evoked).[56] Hence, mental maps could serve as a mechanism of including or excluding certain actors from certain spaces and consequently, restrict their access to the system of international society. According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Iver

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[52] Tomasz Zarycki, "Uses of Russia," 625; See also: Tomasz Zarycki, "O jednostronnej wizji 'Wschodu' w polskiej tożsamości narodowej," [About the one-sided vision of ''the East" within the Polish national identity] in *Modernizacja Polski: Kody kulturowe i mity*, Jan Szomburg (ed.) (Gdańsk: Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, 2008), 73-80.

[53] Oliver Kessler, "Conceptual History in International Relations: From ideology to social theory?" in *Routledge Handbook of Historical International Relations*, Benjamin de Carvalho, Julia Costa Lopez and Halvard Leira (eds.) (London/New York: Routledge, 2020), 552.

[54] Jennifer Milliken, "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods," *European Journal of International Relations* 5 (1999): 2, 229

[55] Virginie Mamadouh and Gertjan Dijkink, "Geopolitics, International Relations and Political Geography: The Politics of Geopolitical Discourse," *Geopolitics* 11 (2006): 3, 354.

[56] Mishkova and Trencsény, "Conceptualizing Spaces within Europe," 214.

B. Neumann, the system adheres to the culturally formulated norms of behaviour, which to an extent imitates the societal arrangements enforced on the intrastate level: "International society normally conforms to the shared set of rules. In this sense international society, reproduced by the ongoing interaction between elites, can be said to form a cultural community."[57] Exclusion from the community results in a sharp boundary-drawing and cultural essentialising. As Larry Wolff indicates that there was a vivid connection between the state of international affairs and the intellectual justification of such spatial concepts as "Eastern Europe":

> If international affairs contributed to the image of Eastern Europe as a domain of geopolitical chaos, of sliding borders and slipping parts, that image in turn created the cultural climate in which those affairs were conceived and reported. Diplomacy, cartography, and philosophy operated in a triangular relation of mutual endorsement, reinforcement and justification.[58]

Ultimately, what needs to be emphasised more convincingly on a theoretical level is the fact that affiliating a nation with cardinal directions (such as "the West" or "the East") goes beyond cultural "Othering." Simultaneously, the use of these terms displays a functionality of shaping the international affairs by propping up or downplaying the "national traits" of peoples.

Methodological Implications

Behind the combination of the theory of international relations and mental mapping insights lies methodological synergy. The focus on public opinion determines the types of actors that ought to be included in a historical narrative. In this case, the emphasis will be placed on the Polish intelligentsia. Moreover, the embraced framework also carries implication for the selection of primary sources. Traditional diplomatic history prioritised formal sources which were corroborated within the institutional settings of nation-states (like diplomatic archives). However, in the context of this research, I would like to focus on the proliferation of views and patterns of argumentation which can be uncovered by investigating political pamphlets and the press.

One also needs to anticipate how the analysis of primary sources will be operationalised. Here, the mental mapping approach delineates the thematical boundaries of this research - the discursive use of enumerated concepts ("the West", "the East"). Furthermore, the analysis of

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[57] Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Iver B. Neumann, "International Relations as a Cultural System: An Agenda for Research," *Cooperation and Conflict* 28 (1993): 3, 243.
[58] Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe,* 362.

historical mental maps discusses representations of spatial-social contexts.[59] That is why, in order to effectively analyse the spatial imaginaries attributed to Germany by the Polish public, I would like to employ the method of historical semantics. Following the assumptions introduced by Reinhart Koselleck, I argue that spatial ideas, like any other concepts, require to be tested against a particular historical context, emotional attachment and linguistic structure: "studies [should] continually reach out and take up the sociohistorical context; trace the impulse in the pragmatic or political language of author or speaker; or, on the basis of conceptual semantics, draw conclusions concerning the historico-anthropological dimension present in every act of conceptualisation and linguistic performance."[60]

The application of historical semantics will consist of three steps. First, historical semantics helps to trance the transformation of geographical concepts such as "the West" and "the East" into the socio-political ones.[61] According to Koselleck, territorialisation of the concepts is followed by their spiritualisation.[62] Therefore, it seems crucial to identify the meanings that stood behind the representations of "the West" and "the East" both at the beginning and the end of the discussed historical period. This process of meaning-decoding serves to explore the ways in which collectives and individuals orient themselves in their environment, or to understand how they perceive the world.[63] Sometimes authors did not use the explicit wording of "the West" and "the East". Often, these general terms appeared under the form of "neighbouring concepts"[64], such as "barbarism" or "civilisation", "the Orient", "the Occident" or others. These formulations have to be included in the analysis as well.

Second, in accordance with historical semantics, it needs to be recognised that meanings attached to "the West" and the "the East" were anything but stable. In fact, as Davoudi indicates, spatial imaginaries are subjugated to the process reinvention: "spatial imaginaries are not immune to change; there are always cracks in the concrete, rooms for interrogating taken-for-granted assumptions, and space for the emergence of alternatives imaginaries."[65] Here, it would be crucial to relate the evolution of conceptualisations with changing intellectual trends and conditions of international relations.

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[59] Schenk, "Mental Maps."
[60] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004 [1979]), 4.
[61] Bavaj and Steber, *Germany And 'The West'*, 8.
[62] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 160.
[63] Norbert Götz and Janne Holmén, "Introduction to the theme issue: 'Mental maps: geographical and historical perspectives,'" *Journal of Cultural Geography* 35 (2018): 2, 157.
[64] Bavaj and Steber, Germany *and the West*, 7.
[65] Davoudi, "Spatial imaginaries: tyrannies or transformations?," 10.

Third, I would like to investigate the function of evoking spatial imaginaries in Polish-German relations. Apart from being simply appealing rhetorical tools, there is a political agency enclosed in mental maps. As Koselleck puts it, "A political or social agency is first constituted through concepts by means of which it circumscribes itself and hence excludes others, and therefore, by means of which it defines itself . . . The concept is not merely a sign for, but also a factor in, political or social groupings."[66] In other words, the agency of concepts is an indispensable element of a political process. Thus, it seems crucial to investigate what the representatives of Polish public opinion sought to achieve on the level of the European state-system by describing Germany in a particular way, even though they lacked the institutional embedding of a nation-state.

Sources

In order to fulfil these theoretical and methodological aims, I would like to focus on two types of primary sources. This thesis will investigate political pamphlets and newspaper articles, issued by Polish thinkers, philosophers, politicians, novelists, and revolutionaries such as Joachim Lelewel, Klementyna Hoffmanowa, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Bronisław Trentowski, Karol Libelt, Henryk Kamieński, Wincenty Mazurkiewicz, Władysław Czartoryski and Stanisław Koźmian. These authors sketched the possibilities of imagining Germany as an epitome of "Eastern" aggression or as an exemplary "Western" nation-state. Crucially, they provided the Polish public with a reservoir of ideas which could be deployed for the purposes of a political agenda. In this sense, the Polish intelligentsia used the appeal towards shared cultural practices to draw the lines of inclusion and exclusion which, in the view of Małgorzata Kurjanska, facilitated the culturally based mobilisation of the masses.[67] One is forced to acknowledge that the Polish intelligentsia was not a unanimous nor coherent societal group. However, in this research, the choice to incorporate these specific individuals was primarily determined by their intellectual recognition among the Polish elites and their willingness to reflect upon the state of Polish-German relations. Because of these ideological, political, and geographical divisions it should not come as a surprise that they often conveyed conflicted views. Geography is a significant element in the selection procedure. The above-mentioned selection strives to include representatives of all three partitions.

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[66] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 155-156.
[67] Malgorzata Kurjanska, "The Political Value of Cultural Capital: Nationalism, Ethnic Exclusion and Elites in 19th Century Congress Poland," *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 7 (2019): 1-2, 2.

The analysis of individual contributions will be supplemented by scrutinising Polish newspapers. The insights deriving from the nineteenth-century press allow us to trace the proliferation of spatial imaginaries and their significance. The inclusion of enumerated outlets chiefly related to their societal relevance and the inclination to discuss both domestic and international affairs. Newspapers such as *Krzyż a Miecz* (1850), *Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego* (1815-1865) and *Dziennik Poznański* (1859-1999) extensively presented the views of the Prussian part of Poland and its capital, Poznań. While speaking about Galicia and the Austrian partition, it is necessary to include *Przegląd Polski* (1866-1914). It was a monthly literature and political journal which represented the views of conservative Galician elites. Finally, the importance of the Polish press which was issued in exile should not be underestimated. The intensity of the Polish intellectual life in Paris alongside the lack of censorship provided a very fertile ground for numerous political publications. To that end, I would like to chiefly scrutinise *Demokrata Polski* and *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich* which conveyed the left-wing, republican, and revolutionary perspective. A lesser attention will be devoted to *Wiadomości Polskie* – the chief newspaper of Hotel Lambert, the conservative-liberal camp.

One can rightfully point towards the fact that there is an absence of journals issued in the Russian partition. Polish historian Piotr Łysakowski, indicates that it is particularly difficult to evaluate German developments or excavate Polish opinions on Germany in the Congress Kingdom due to more restrictive censorship policies. He points towards the fact that: "It seems that the Russian authorities were afraid of comparing the political situation in the 'Vistula Land' with the conditions prevailing in the Prussian partition."[68] This assumption stands in close agreement with my own observations related to the empirical evaluation of available sources. Overall, the selection of sources reflects my intention to show that mental mapping was not a completely abstract, philosophical conversation conducted by the elites. In fact, the geographical dichotomy between "the West" and "the East" became popularised within various layers of the Polish society through the circulation of journals and pamphlets.

Structure of Research

The research concerning the Polish mental mapping of Germany consists of four main parts. Chapter One sketches the rise of the Polish understanding of "the West" and "the East"

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[68] Piotr Łysakowski, "Śmierć Bismarcka w opiniach prasy warszawskiej (lipiec-sierpień 1898 r.)," [The death of Bismarck in the opinion of the Warsaw press (July-August 1898)], *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 20 (1983): 3-4, 14.

against the background of political developments (partitions of Poland, the Napoleonic wars, the November Uprising) and intellectual tendencies (the late Enlightenment, Romanticism). In Chapter Two, I introduce the perspective of the Polish voices which considered Germany as an "Eastern" nation and implied negative connotations about the German mentality. Here, the comparisons with Persia, China and Russia served as a primary point of reference for the Polish authors to make claims about German "Janus-faced" attitude, "barbarism" and political inability. These assertions chiefly emerged in the aftermath of the Spring of Nations (1848-1849). Chapter Three addresses the vision of Germany as a vivid representative of "the West" with its advanced industry, the progressing unification process under the auspices of Prussia, efficient administrative and political bodies. This reinvention of the mental map occurred during the 1860s. The conclusions bring together the insights which emerged during the research and presents mental maps as a valuable contribution to the constructivist interpretation of international relations.

Chapter 1: The origins of West-East dichotomy in the Polish Political Discourse (1795-1848)

The Late Enlightenment and Emerging Spatial Consciousness: 1795-1830

It nearly goes without saying that the history of the "West-East" mental map is inseparably intertwined with the political and intellectual conditions of nineteenth-century Europe. Even though the early modern period provided certain incentives to politicise cardinal directions (the Catholic "West" versus the Orthodox or Islamic "East") it needs to be recognised that Polish interpretations of the dichotomy are essentially a product of the era which followed the French Revolution in 1789. Nevertheless, they did not emerge as a result of a rapid outburst of an ideological fervour. Instead, it was a gradual transformation of meanings, facilitated by the need to adjust the political language to the evolving reality. If we take a look at the decades preceding the nineteenth century, it is evident that "the East" was in no way predestined to become associated with backwardness, stagnation, and absolutism. At the same time, the meanings attributed to "the West" did not go further than religious affiliation – commonly envisioned as the community of Catholic states. In fact, throughout the early modern period, up to the last decades of the eighteenth century, Polish culture cherished and manifested its inclination to appropriate elements of "the East". Being at the intersection of multiple political, economic, and intellectual interests, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth cultivated the role of a powerhouse of an intercultural exchange. The lively interactions with the worlds of Christian Orthodoxy and Islam stimulated the emergence of a peculiar type of society, which, in the view of Andrzej Wierzbicki, was an example of a "syncretic culture": "In addition to its native elements, [Polish culture] embraced a lot of both eastern and western provenances . . . The Orient influenced the decorative arts, clothing and weapons, the West influenced literature, construction, and to some extent science."[69] This sense of syncretism and "in-betweenness" began to fade away during the last decade of the eighteenth century. In the place of relatively blurred and insignificant cardinal directions, new spatial language emerged. Several factors contributed to the internalisation of the dichotomy between "the East" and "the West" within the Polish political discourse.

Most importantly, the eighteenth century brought the disastrous collapse of the Polish state, primarily driven by the long-lasting, aggressive expansion of the neighbouring states -

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[69] Wierzbicki, *Wschód-Zachód w koncepcjach dziejów Polski*, 34.

Russia, Prussia, and Austria (which enforced the partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 1795) and the progressing weakness of the Polish political system. The gravity of this event was often accompanied by a sense of exceptional harm suffered by the Republic of Poland, the feeling that the partition was an unprecedented act, an event that exposed the failure of the ideals of the civilised world.[70] As Marek A. Cichocki indicates, the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late eighteenth century coincided with the changes of the European spatial imaginary, which evolved from the North-South axis towards West-East. According to the author, in this new division of Europe Poland had no meaningful place.[71] Instantly, the unfavourable turn of political events sparked a discussion about the reasons for a decomposition of the state. In Prussian-occupied Warsaw, vivid willingness to embrace new ideas could be sensed.[72] One common argument, expressed by the camp of the Enlightened reformists, entailed that Poland deviated from the desired, Western European developmental path. The institutional shortcomings and failures in international relations of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were placed in the context of the revolution in France, but also contrasted with the modernisation attempts undertaken by the absolutist monarchies in Prussia, Austria or even Russia. Under these circumstances, the Polish elites began to increasingly acknowledge that "the West had created a better kind of civilization, the values of which would serve as the universal norm, radiating outwards and drawing into their orbit ever new, more distant countries."[73]

In addition to the political deterioration, there was a growing sense that Poland lapsed behind when it comes to the socioeconomic development. Polish advocates of the Enlightenment as well as external observers were particularly worried about the low levels of urbanisation, poor education and public health, insufficient infrastructure. Johann Gottlieb Fichte upon his arrival in Warsaw criticised the city for its poor living conditions: "The entrance is like a Polish country town, huts instead of houses, manure on the street."[74] He was also stunned by the looming societal inequalities in the streets of the Polish capital, where tiny huts were built next to wealthy palaces of the Polish magnates.[75] Simultaneously, Polish physiocrats

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[70] Ibidem, 15.
[71] Marek A. Cichocki, "Poland – Between Germany and Russia," in *Genealogy of Contemporaneity: A History of Ideas in Poland, 1815-1939*, Bartłomej Błesznowski, Marcin Król, Adam Puchejda (eds.) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2015), 20.
[72] Jerzy Jedlicki, *A suburb of Europe: Nineteenth-century Polish approaches to Western civilization* (Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, 1999), 13.
[73] Ibidem, 13.
[74] Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 339.
[75] Ibidem.

emphasised the need for an urgent economic reform. Antoni Popławski, a political thinker, wrote a lot about the social situation of peasants, criticising the backwardness of the countryside and the poverty of farmers.[76] Other members of the Polish gentry were exposed to the ideas of laissez faire to correct the failings of the feudal system.[77] Through the ability to compare the economic conditions in across countries, a sense of a civilisational distance was created between Poland and the rest of Europe.

Finally, the overarching thought processes of the eighteenth century brought a new attitude towards space, territories, and boundaries. This development stood at the intersection of enhanced human capabilities to describe and comprehend space (more accurate cartography, the introduction of the metric system) and the European attempt to claim political and cultural hegemony over the rest of the world. The acquisition of the European spatial consciousness is neatly encapsulated by Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi:

> The great turning time in the spatialization of historical experience, however, coincided with the advent of the era of high modernity, and found its original form in the post-Enlightenment logic of organizing knowledge along civilizational dividing lines. Temporal terms such as 'development', 'progress', 'conservatism', 'stagnation' and 'delay' acquired spatial embeddedness, and spatial terms such as 'the East', 'the West', 'the North', 'the South.'[78]

Ultimately, the intertwinement of political developments and intellectual trends permitted the introduction of a coherent vision of "the West" in the Polish political thought – a geographical space under the overarching influence of progress, rationalism, and secularism. Specifically, it primarily entailed France and Great Britain being role models in the sphere of political systems, socioeconomic policy, and culture. Against this background, thinkers like Stanisław Staszic or Hugo Kołłątaj strived to infuse and present the values of the Enlightenment as the main remedy for the persisting political inability, economic stagnation, and the pathologies coming from the culture of Sarmatism. In the words of Jerzy Jedlicki, "[T]his philosophical enthusiasm, this scientific faith in the brilliant future of mankind were just what the Poles needed in order to combat the general torpor which encroached them after the partitions."[79] The circulation of new ideas, imported from Western Europe, encouraged the

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[76] Maciej Indan-Pykno, "Fizjokratyzm oczyma polskich przedstawicieli myśli polityczno-prawnej," [Physiocracy through the eyes of Polish representatives of political and legal thought] *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin-Polonia* 58 (2011): 2, 125.
[77] Maciej Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918* (Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 49.
[78] Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi, "Conceptualizing Spaces within Europe," 215.
[79] Jedlicki, *A suburb of Europe*, 12.

Polish elites to rethink existing political and socioeconomic arrangements and propose innovations, which materialised most clearly in the introduction of the 3rd May Constitution in 1791. Their plan was to turn Poland into a "modern European state."[80] Although this goal remained unfulfilled due to the loss of statehood, Polish intellectuals started to wrestle with the normative of appeal of "the West". At this moment, it seems pivotal to notice that the image of western countries was merged into a particular ideal which Poles ought to follow: "[It was] the Europe that existed only in the world of ideas, in philosophical and learned treatises, in constitutional drafts of rights and of eternal peace."[81] Subsequently, this view turned out to be one of the main points of reference in the domestic discourse of Polish liberals and modernisers who attempted to instil "the West" into the Polish lands.

In order for "the West" to become a meaningful metaphor describing the reality, it required a counter-concept, a binary opposition. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the intellectual position of the Enlightenment advocates became increasingly contested by the generation of Romanticists. New tendencies and aesthetics in literature, poetry accentuated the value of the spiritual reasoning. Nonetheless, even as Romanticists opposed mimicking culture and politics developed by "the West" and extensively highlighted Polish exceptionalism, they rarely identified Poland with the traditions of "the East". Thus, it seems much more problematic to trace the genealogy of "the East" in the Polish spatial imaginary. Poles did not consider themselves to represent "Eastness". Instead, "the East" was invented through a careful observation of steps that some countries took on the international level. The Russian Empire with its long tradition of being the European "Other" and impugning the Polish independence appeared as a meaningful candidate. Prior to the nineteenth century, Russia was imagined as the "the North". Arguably, this situation changed due to the fluctuation of international affairs in post-1789 Europe. In the words of Iver B. Neumann, already in the late eighteenth century Russia was considered as "uncivilised" primarily because it had failed to follow the liberal trend of a separation of state and society that had been developed in Western Europe.[82] The early decades of the nineteenth century provided additional incentives to uphold this view.

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[80] Maciej Janowski, *Birth of the Intelligentsia: 1750-1831: A History of the Polish Intelligentsia – Part One* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 122.
[81] Jedlicki, *A suburb of Europe*, 17.
[82] Iver B. Neumann, "Governing a Great Power: Russia's Oddness Reconsidered," in *Governing the Global Polity: Practice, Mentality, Rationality*, Iver B. Neumann and Ole Jacob Sending (eds.) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 71.

In the years succeeding the partitions, Poland ceased to be an active political actor and transformed into an object of a great power-play. Being subjugated to an external rule forced Poles to search for and imagine alliances that could have supported the cause of national independence. The Napoleonic Wars profoundly shaped the Polish aspirations to be treated as an integral part of Western Europe and shaped the introduction of a new conceptual map. An opportunity to materialise this intention came from the constantly changing borders and evolving power-relations due to the French expansion eastwards. As Paul Stock correctly observes: "borders were open to constant reinterpretation and redesignation: they are the products of human contrivances and endeavours, not fixed by natural laws."[83] Another impulse to position Poland in "the West" appeared on the ideological level. France, and particularly the figure of Napoleon, exemplified the trends that a considerable part of the Polish elites tried to implement locally: "It seemed that Napoleon fulfilled the dreams of the enlightened generation about the political system that was devised according to universal principles of Reason, in agreement with the law of nature and ensuring the happiness of the citizens."[84] The emperor of the French was a metaphorical embodiment of an advanced and bureaucratized state and vivid example of the values of the Enlightenment. On the other side of the political aisle stood Alexander I, the emperor of Russia, who presented himself as a defender of the traditional socio-political order, religion, and the sanctity of monarchy. This dichotomy was pressingly forwarded by the French propaganda which constructed its narrative around such slogans as — "Scratch a Russian and find a Tatar" and "Europe has to be either Republican or Cossack."[85]

In essence, this period laid foundations for the new, spatial division: "The years 1795-1815 are, after all, the period when the fate of Poland was decisively influenced by two powers, one of which in the minds of Poles became almost a synonym for the West (France), while the other (Russia) represented the East."[86] Mark Brown signifies that these ideological optics served as a mobilisation tool of the Polish population ahead of the French military campaigns: "In the months before the campaigns in eastern Europe in 1807 and 1812, the imperial government itself had encouraged the publication of propaganda which presented Poland as the barrier to Russian expansion and a land where the ideals of liberty and equality, though corrupted, were still cherished."[87]

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[83] Paul Stock, "Histories of Geography," in *Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism,* Paul Hamilton (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 636.
[84] Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918*, 20.
[85] Neumann, "Governing a Great Power," 91.
[86] Wierzbicki, *Wschód-Zachód w koncepcjach dziejów Polski*, 63.
[87] Mark Brown, "The Comité Franco-Polonais and the French Reaction to the Polish Uprising of

By establishing a new European state-system during the Vienna Congress in 1815, the idea of Europe being divided into two civilisational spheres, became less sharpened. Poland remained subjugated to the three powers (but received elements of autonomy with the creation of the Congress Kingdom and the Free City of Cracow) while Russia effectively entered the discussion about the collective security of Europe as one of the major powers. Instead of employing the West-East conceptual dichotomy, the Holly Alliance, which brought together powers such as Russia, Austria, and Prussia, aptly referred to the notion of Central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*).[88] By cherishing the image of a liberator of the European nations from the French oppression, Russia became a socialised member of the European security system. Even more, it acquired a status of an equal partner in governing the newly established order. And this turned out to be detrimental for the Polish independence aspirations and the narrative about the "West-East" divide.

Introducing a Spatial Divide: 1830-1831

The further formulation of a negative stereotype attributed to "the East" was embedded in the deterioration of Polish-Russian relationships in the Congress Kingdom. The liberal constitution of the newly enacted Congress Kingdom under the auspices of the Russian Empire, as well as other concessions, gave a hope for maintaining a more equal relationship. Yet, the initial optimism was quickly revised by the Russian attempts to curtail the Polish political and institutional autonomy. After the outbreak of the November Uprising in 1830 the conceptual antithesis between "the West" and "the East" gained its extensive normative appeal in the Polish imaginary. On November 29th, 1830, a group of officers of the Polish army initiated an insurrection which within days transformed into an uprising against the Russian government. These events sparked a fully-fledged military conflict between the Congress Kingdom and the Russian Empire. Not surprisingly, the war provided Poles with an opportunity to distinguish themselves politically and morally from the aggressors in the eyes of international public opinion. In order to convincingly describe the ongoing conflict, it seemed meaningful and politically useful to draw binary opposition between Poland as a "bedrock of liberty" and Russia fulfilling the role of "Asiatic barbarism."

November 1830," *The English Historical Review* 93 (1978): 369, 778.

[88] Florian Gassner, "Becoming a Western Nation: German National Identity and the Image of Russia," in *The East-West Discourse: Symbolic Geography and Its Consequences,* Alexander Maxwell (ed.) (Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), 57.

This wartime narrative emerged out of several conceptual roots. As Neumann emphasises, a regime type, under which a certain state operates was a significant criterion for weighting the importance of a polity on the scales of civilisations.[89] By the same token, the entirety of the Polish-Russian conflict started to be assessed from the position of the moral superiority of Polish socio-political arrangements.[90] For instance, it became common to contrast the tradition of Polish republicanism, parliamentarism or the concept of "złota wolność" (*golden liberty)*, dating back to the times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with the Russian disregard for individual liberty. Other elements, related chiefly to the sphere of mentalities and national characters also prevailed. Among the trends in the Polish propaganda, identified by Aleksandra Julia Leinwand, there was one which "showed our eastern neighbour as Poland's mortal enemy, and the Russians as cruel and almost savage people, representing lower level of civilisation than Poles."[91] Prominent Polish intellectuals such as historian Joachim Lelewel, philosopher Bronisław Trentowski, poet Adam Mickiewicz, and journalist and amateur scholar Franciszek Duchiński, excluded Russians from the Slavic world by ascribing to them Asian Mongol or Tatar origins and traits.[92] Interestingly, Trentowski portrayed the long-lasting, conflictful nature of the Polish-Russian relations as a struggle between Europeanism and Asianism.[93] This message proliferated both domestically and abroad. As Mark Brown reveals, it would be difficult to overestimate the impact of *émigré* organisations, such as the *Comité Franco-Polonais*, which contributed significantly to keeping the Polish narrative alive in the cities like Paris:

> [Poland was presented as a] traditional defender of western civilization from the barbarian east. They linked the rights of the Polish people to liberty and independence to the general movement for emancipation in Europe and they evoked the memory of the shared glory and military comradeship between the two nations on the battlefields of Europe.[94]

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[89] Neumann, "Governing a Great Power," 78.

[90] Andrzej Nowak, *Między carem a rewolucją. Studium politycznej wyobraźni i postaw Wielkiej Emigracji wobec Rosji 1831 – 1849* [Between the tsar and the revolution: A study of the political imagination and attitudes of the Great Emigration towards Russia 1831-1849] (Warsaw: Warszwska Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1994), 146.

[91] Aleksandra Julia Leinwand, ''Rosja w propagandzie polskich powstań narodowych 1768-1864. Wybrane zagadnienia," [Russia in the propaganda of Polish national uprisings 1768-1864: Selected Aspects] *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej,* 48 (2013), 16.

[92] Serhiy Bilensky, *Romantic Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Russian, Polish and Ukrainian Political Imaginations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 64.

[93] Andrew Kier Wise, "Russia as Poland's Civilizational Other" in *The East-West Discourse*, 75.

[94] Brown, "The Comité Franco-Polonais and the French Reaction to the Polish Uprising of November 1830," 778.

Despite the efforts of Poles, both at home and abroad, the uprising was lost in the last months of the year 1831. In its aftermath, a significant part of the Polish elite, in order to avoid tsarist repressions, fled the country and settled in other European countries, mainly in France. The experience of political emigration left Poles with limited opportunities to effectively influence France's foreign policy. That is why, they turned towards the French public by building informal networks of support. While attempting to instigate passion for the Polish cause, it became crucial for the Polish emigres to employ the kind of political vocabulary that would resonate with the broader, European audience: "One of the paths - which seemed to lead to the achievement of such a goal - was propaganda designed to give the Polish issue a supra-particular, universal dimension."[95] In essence, Polish exiles demanded recognition for the political agenda and shielding "the West" from the expansiveness of the Russian absolutist regime. In this way, the conflict between Poland and Russia was not presented as dispute between two feuding neighbours but in broader philosophical terms – as a struggle between "civilised" Europe and "barbarian" East.[96]

Romanticism: Poles, Germans and Space: 1831-1848

Without a doubt, the period of the November Uprising marked the new era in which spatial imaginaries started to determine the Polish perception of international politics. Russia became a clear embodiment of "the East" that ought to be excluded from the family of European nations. At the same time, due to the overarching revolutionary activism of the years 1830-1833 that resulted in a series of disturbances across Europe, the conceptual category of the "the West" started to involve new entities. Previously, Polish thinkers and revolutionaries did not ascribe significant attention to the position of Germany on "the scale of civilisations". One of the reasons for this relative absence was related to the fact that the paradigm of the conflict between "the West" and "the East" primarily encompassed France and Russia as the main protagonists. Additionally, it seemed particularly challenging to relate Germany to specific space because of its political fragmentation.

The situation changed in the aftermath of the November Uprising. During their travel to the political exile in France, members of the Polish government, army and intelligentsia experienced an outburst of enthusiasm and support among the German population. Also, in the

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[95] Wierzbicki, *Wschód-Zachód w koncepcjach dziejów Polski,* 115.
[96] Ibidem, 115-116.

eyes of the western neighbour, Poland ceased to be "insufficiently enlightened" and started to be perceived as a rightful member of "Western civilisation" which was unjustly oppressed by the Russian Empire. This new development was certainly welcomed on the Polish side. From the Polish perspective, the self-assertion which stressed Poland's belonging to "the West" was not enough. Other European nations ought to recognise the Polish civilisational status. That is why, the German voice proved to be of highest political importance. Various historical inquiries reveal that German writers, scholars, and politicians used the concept of "the West" to make sense of historical experiences such as the Polish uprising of 1830.[97] German intellectuals extensively contrasted the Polish values with the notions of "the East" – represented by tsarist Russia - stood for the past and fostered backwardness if not outright "barbarism."[98] The view of the Polish-Russian war as a conflict between the binary moral oppositions was neatly conveyed by Karl van Rotteck, one of the German liberal politicians, "In Poland [one may find] the vicarious war of European antagonisms, the hinge around which everything revolves, the concentrated European crisis."[99] In addition, he described every supporter of the Polish cause as the "reasonable, humane part of the European population with a high regard for human and international law."[100] In the view of the Polish historian Maria Wawrykowa, the support of the German liberal nationalists for Polish independence was driven by both ideological and geopolitical calculations:

> [German democrats] spoke out in favour of rebuilding Poland within the borders it had before the partitions. Their motivations were expressed in the following arguments: 1. Historical justice demands the restoration of Poland; 2. The neglect of the Polish question was seen by the reactionary forces as a sign of the weakness of the revolutionary forces . . . 4. A strong and democratic Poland would be a bulwark of revolutionary Europe and thus of united Germany against the reactionary tsarist empire.[101]

Interestingly, the last point on Wawrykowa's list includes a strong spatial dimension. Indeed, being effectively a political barrier against the expansion of "the East" was a

[97] Ricardo Bavaj, "'The West': A Conceptual Exploration," *EGO: European History Online*, November 21st, 2011, http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/crossroads/political-spaces/riccardo-bavaj-the-west-a-conceptual-exploration, accessed on Apr. 19th, 2022.

[98] Struck, "In search of the West," 50.

[99] Gabriela Brudzyńska-Němec, "'Polenbegeisterung in Deutschland nach 1830," *EGO: Europäische Geschichte Online*, 12th March, 2010, http://ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/europaeische-medien/europaeische-medienereignisse/1830er-revolution/gabriela-brudzynska-nemec-polenbegeisterung-in-deutschland-nach-1830#InsertNoteID_36, accessed on Apr. 21st, 2022.

[100] Ibidem.

[101] Maria Wawrykowa, *Deutsche Geschichte aus Polnisher sicht 1815-1848* (Braunschweig: Albert Limbach Verlag, 1974), 57.

noteworthy attempt to bridge the interests of Polish and German aspirations. It corresponded strongly with the ideas of a "historical mission" and national exceptionalism which were formulated by national poets, writers, and historians. In both cases, Poles and Germans were presented as nations acting in the best interest of all of Europe.

Despite the deeply internalised scepticism towards the German states – Prussia and Austria – and often considering them as accomplices of Russia, Poles developed a rather positive view of the German national aspirations. Similarly, to the situation of the Polish lands, the persistence of the post-1815 political system, characterized by the disregard for national identities, inflamed the dreams of a unified, German nation-state. Given the affinity of aspirations of both nations, it appeared that the German and Polish "Questions" caused equal unease for those who attempted to uphold the Vienna system.[102] It needs to be acknowledged that throughout the 1830s and 1840s the potential unification of Germany was commonly perceived by Polish independence fighters and intellectuals as a factor which could effectively lead to a new, favourable international constellation. As Cichocki convincingly states, this period is commonly described as the *Deutsche-Polenfreunschaft* which expressed itself in the multiplicity of solidarity gestures, literary works, and political actions: "The famous *Polenlieder* of Franz Grillparzer, Ludwig Uhland and Gottfried Keller, to mention only the best known, were among the expressions of this sort of *Polenrausch,* as some called the sudden German interest in Poland."[103]

On the Polish side, revolutionaries, and historians, such as Joachim Lelewel (1786-1861), envisioned a political alliance which could gain its importance in the wake of a European-wide national revolution: "The Germans became brothers of the Slavs, and they loudly declare it. Even though there some [voices] which complain about [German] procrastination, their slowness . . . they must restrain their impatience . . . Germans show evidently that they are moving forward, that they are carefully preparing themselves for effective, decisive action."[104] Affiliating more closely the national identities of Poles and Germans could be realised through a cultural exchange. This tendency is clearly reflected in the works of Klementyna Hofmanowa (1798-1845) a novelist and playwright. She depicted Germany in an arguably positive light and as an especially "learned" and "knowledgeable" nation:

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[102] Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism,* 192.
[103] Cichocki, "Poland – Between Germany and Russia," 25.
[104] Joachim Lelewel, *Mowy i pisma polityczne: dzieło pośmiertne przypiskami pomnożone i wydane przez E. Rykaczewskiego* [Political speeches and writings: a posthumous work with footnotes multiplied and published by E. Rykaczewski] (Poznań: nakładem księgarni Jana Konstantego Żupańskiego, 1864), 535.

[Germans] are setting an example not only for us, but also for France and many other European nations, when it comes to the number and significance of scientific establishments. Nowhere [else] is there so much science, so much erudition, so many people who can read and write, so many people who know the [Holy] scriptures and are familiar with elementary books.[105]

These bonds of friendship were particularly visible in the joined political and symbolic actions. In 1832, the Hambach festival took place which gathered the German liberal public around expressing solidarity with Polish revolutionaries. At the historical castle of Hambach, the Polish flag blew alongside the black-red-gold banner. When Giuseppe Mazzini established Young Europe, a transnational network of national fighters in 1834, the representatives of both nations became its prominent members. Ultimately, there was a vivid sense among the members of the Polish intelligentsia that Poland, together with Germany, ought to dismantle the existing, reactionary European system which was epitomized by "the Eastness" of the Russian Empire and establish a new one – "the Western" family of democratic nation-states.

To sum up, Polish and German revolutionaries forged a mutually benefiting political understanding. They were seeking to establish their presence on the map of Europe – both in literal and metaphorical terms. However, there is more to uncover behind this process. Importantly, this temporary rapprochement was possible due to the fact that both sides referred to the similar ideas and concepts. At this point, it deems justified to ask why the spatial categories turned out to be such an appealing vocabulary. One is obliged not only to look at the political developments but also to explore the broader intellectual and cultural tendencies in geography, philosophy, literature, and poetry which made the differentiation between "the West" and "the East" conceptually viable. In other words, the belief of the national fighters in unity among the oppressed, European nations and nationalism as means to progress the whole humankind, became intertwined with the overarching aura of Romanticism.

The lack of a unified political territory steered the intellectual discourse of both nations towards a peculiar, imaginative view of space. Both Poland and Germany were not-existent nation-states in a political sense. Nonetheless, nothing could prevent politicians, revolutionaries, or thinkers from imagining these entities and their relationships with other states. And geography served as a bedrock of the emerging national identities. Spiritualisation of space turned out to be one of the frequent philosophical facets of German idealism. In the

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[105] Klementyna Hoffmanowa, *Opis przejazdu przez Niemcy w listach Wacława do siostry swojej Jadwigi* [Description of the journey through Germany in Wacław's letters to his sister Jadwiga] (Leipzig: Nakładem i trzcionkami Breitkopfa i Hartela, 1844), 24.

early decades of the nineteenth century, the optimistic paradigm of the Enlightenment was surpassed by historicism and spatial categories developed by German philosophers, above all Georg Wilhelm Hegel.[106] In their view, space no longer simply constituted a physical space, but it conveyed cultural qualities, a kind of attachment upon which stories, myths and historical consciousness could be structured. Nationalism and space became closely aligned with the perspectives on borders, the symbolic relevance of certain territories (rivers, mountains, plains). Crucially, the idea of a nation-state entailed a specific type of a territorial ownership because, as Chenxi Tang puts it, it "endowed the territory with a symbolic quality that it took to be the source of the cultural and spiritual identity of the nation. The territory ceased to be merely a physical space but assumed in addition the status of a primeval ground that brought forth and nurtured national culture and history."[107] Consequently, the conceptual West-East dichotomy has additional importance, insofar as it was and is integrated in different constructions of national identity as institutionalised in national public discourses.[108]

These new, spatial concepts spread eastwards and were, to an extent, adapted by Polish intellectuals. As Adam Kożuchowski reveals "the repertoire of means by which Polish and German historians [and other authors] proved the uniqueness of the historical legacy of their nations was strikingly similar."[109] While German nationalists were trying to find the unifying qualities among the distinct Germans lands, their Polish counterparts sought to reinvigorate "the national spirit" under the reality of political subjugation. Within the Polish discourse, the raising interest in space was often presented and labelled as *Geografia serca* ("Geography of the heart") to emphasise the emotional attachment of Poles towards territories and landscapes. In line with these assumptions, the Romanticist intelligentsia strived to figure out the exact location of Poland, in territorial, ethnical and historical terms. There was a far-reaching agreement among the different Polish political groupings that Poland had to be restored within the borders of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Behind this conviction stood a particular historical memory of a country stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. This vision went beyond pure

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[106] Denis Sdvižkov, "Russian and German Ideas of the West in the Long Nineteenth Century," in *Germany And 'The West'*, 99.

[107] Chenxi Tang, *The Geographic Imagination of Modernity: Geography, Literature, and Philosophy in German Romanticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 17.

[108] Stolting, "The East of Europe: A Historical Construction," 25.

[109] Adam Kożuchowski, "Najpiękniejsza strona naszych dziejów? Rozwój terytorialny i paradygmat narodowej wyjątkowości w niemieckiej i polskiej historiografii i XIX wieku," [The most beautiful side of our history? Territorial development and the paradigm of national uniqueness in German and Polish historiography of the 19th century] in *Drogi odrębne, drogi wspólne: problem specyfiki rozwoju historycznego Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w XIX-XX wieku*, Maciej Janowski (ed.) (Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk. Instytut Historii im. Tadeusza Manteuffla, 2014), 96.

categories of ethnicity as it incorporated not only Poles but also Ruthenians, Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, and Jews living in the eastern borderlands of the Polish state. What these culturally divergent groups of people had in common was an experience of a daily existence within the formerly mighty *Rzeczpospolita.*

Memories constituted a powerful tool of creating attachment to spaces because, as Danuta Dąbrowska points out, they allow the images of places, landscapes, symbols, and emotions to be grounded and frozen in the eternal "now".[110] Undoubtedly, this kind of spatial imaginaries helped to strengthen the sense of distinctiveness among the Polish population from its political overlords. Here, artistic genres such as Romanticist poetry and novels played a pivotal role. A Polish national space was immortalised by such poets as Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki. Serhiy Bilenski convincingly states that this carefully evoked memory also stimulated and justified political goals: "To the extent that the historical or natural borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth defined the geographical boundaries of the 'Polish nation,' it is possible to speak about geographical legitimism in Polish political imagination. In this sense, the idea of the Polish nationality was constructed out of the mental geography of Poland."[111] By implication, mental mapping turned out to be one of the most significant means of cultivating and cherishing the Polish identity.

At the same time, the borders of the Polish nationality were imagined as congruent with the ones of the "Western civilisation". Historically speaking, during the early modern period, Poland had to face challenges coming from powers such as Muscovy or the Ottoman Empire. The experience of being threatened by states representing different cultures paved the way for the idea of Poland as a "political bulwark" – shielding the rest of Christian Europe from external intrusions. This perception was reinvented during the nineteenth century, in the midst of the Russia's expansion process in Central-Eastern Europe and its intentions to remain a permanent political player in the post-1815 "Concert of Europe". Unexpectedly, the reinvigoration of this concept also altered the Polish perspectives on Germany. If Poland was the bulwark of Europe, then Germany, following this logic, would immediately become a part of "the West". Despite all cultural, religious, and historical differences between both nations, they could, as the interactions between revolutionaries reveal, create an alliance around the notions of "Westness." In addition, Polish intellectuals assumed that Prussia and Austria or a unified

[110] Danuta Dąbrowska, "Polska W Geografii Mentalnej Zygmunta Krasińskiego," [Poland in Zygmunt Krasiński's Mental Geography] *Repozytorium Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku*, 25th March, 2021, https://repozytorium.uwb.edu.pl/jspui/handle/11320/10572, accessed on Apr. 21st, 2022.
[111] Bilensky, *Romantic Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, 27.

German state would be in a geopolitical need of an intermediate power in the east to counterbalance the increasing Russian aspirations. In this vein, by the mid-nineteenth century, space started to occupy a prominent place in social and political thought. Furthermore, mental mapping became closely intertwined with national identity and envisioning the position of a nation within the international order.

From the overview presented above, it is essential to note that mental mapping was an intellectual process which, in the Polish case, took a three-dimensional form. One angle of this discussion was primarily concerned with the question: which territories constituted Poland? Here, the Polish political and cultural elites focused on the creation of an emotional and cognitive attachment to the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, especially in the east, which suffered from the direct incorporation to the Russian Empire. The second aspect informed the broader discussion about the position of Poland within Europe. The content of this geography was formulated around the notions of Occidentalism as it highlighted the adherence of Poland to the Latin culture and the historical advancement that it delivered. Finally, Poles started to include or exclude other nations from their "map" by deploying the notions of "the West" and "the East". Given the analytical scope of this thesis, the third intellectual lens will be given much closer scrutiny.

Overall, the period between 1795 and 1848 witnessed the introduction of new spatial categories in the Polish political discourse. Poles designed their own mental map through which they assessed the political reality. Initially, the West-East dichotomy emerged as a discussion about internal reforms and modernisation but then, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, it transformed into a crucial framing of international developments. At first, the currents of the Enlightenment, alongside the political partitions, facilitated the raise of realisation that territories differ in their status and prosperity due to the moral, philosophical, and socioeconomic solutions they embrace. Thus, "the West" entered the political discourse as a developmental model which seemed very appealing for some members of the Polish elite. In contrast, "the East" emerged out of the conflicts during the Napoleonic Wars which were marked by the instability of borders, changing political regimes and the universalising claims of France. Under such conditions, it seemed meaningful to draw a stark civilisational contrast between Napoleonic France and tsarist Russia.

Later on, the advocates of the Polish independence used the West-East dichotomy to portray the November Uprising between 1830 and 1831. It was an ideological and propagandistic tactic which hoped to instigate support for the Polish struggle among other

European nations. The *Deutsche-Polenfreunschaft* was a vocal German response to this call. The European intellectual life during the 1830s became heavily influenced by German idealists. This phenomenon permitted the formulation of common concepts, language, and ideas between Polish and German revolutionaries. To a considerable degree, it was a continuation of the civilisational discourse that proliferated during the Enlightenment, but with a greater emphasis on the nation-state as the desired form of a territorial organisation. Around the year 1848, it could have seemed that the Polish ideas about European space solidified around specific themes. "The West" became associated with countries and nations in Europe that could potentially assist the Polish struggle for independence – France, Great Britain and German revolutionaries aspiring for the national unification. Simultaneously, the Russian Empire served as an illustrative example of "the East" which cherished morality that was irreconcilable with European values. Its absolutist form of governance and expansive nature were certainly the qualities that united both Polish and German liberals and fostered a broad understanding about the necessity to contain the influences of "the East". However, given the contingent nature of spatial concepts, they were about to change in a very profound way. The unfolding revolutionary unrest, most commonly termed, as the Spring of Nations, impacted the Polish view of Germany.

Chapter 2: Where was Germany? In "the East"

Political Conditions and the Mapping of Germany as "the East"

Was Germany a representative of the "Western civilisation"? Did it lie in Europe? Under the conditions of the dramatically changing international relations, the answers to these questions seemed no longer straightforward in the eyes of the Polish intelligentsia. Prior to the Revolutions from 1848-1849, if spatial considerations were undertaken, Germany was by default subscribed to "the West" due to *Deutsche-Polenfreunschaft*. The Spring of Nations (1848-1849) and its aftermath altered extensively this state of affairs. At the time when the revolution broke out, the sense of mutual destiny and cooperation between Poles and Germans was vividly expressed. For instance, the German democrats published a proclamation, on the pages of one of Polish exile newspapers, which highlighted the nearly spiritual character of the bond between the two nations: "By issuing this [revolutionary] cry, Germany entered into an alliance with Poland, and we will add nothing more to the deep thought of this noble cry, unless we rise against Moscow, together with France and Poland!"[112] In response, the Polish revolutionary circles willingly embraced the proposition of the alliance: "Brothers, on behalf of the Polish Democratic Society of which we are a governing body, we accept the alliance of democratic Germany that you are offering us. Our combined efforts will break all obstacles."[113] However, this mood did not last for long.

Eventually, the war with Russia did not take place and the Prussian authorities decided to bring the Polish independence movement in the region under their control. The fate of the province was still deliberated on the national level, in the Frankfurt Parliament. As Marek Cichocki indicates, the reason for which the Polish democrats vested such high hopes in the proceedings of the German National Assembly is closely related to the 'international' significance that they ascribed to it: "The Frankfurt national assembly thus represented not only the particular interests of Germany, but also pan-European goals. These, above all, were the establishment of an order free from despotism of monarchs, based on the restored rights of nations, with consideration for the necessary liberation of the Slavic nations."[114]

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[112] Jerzy Herwegh, "Demokraci Niemieccy w Paryżu do Demokratów Polskich" [The German Democrats in Paris to the Polish Democrats], *Demokrata Polski*, vol. 11, nr 2, March 30th, 1848, 69.

[113] Franciszek Sznajde, Stanisław Worcell, Wojciech Darasz, Wincenty Mazurkiewicz and Wiktor Heltman, "Do Demokratów Niemieckich w Paryżu" [To the German Democrats in Paris], *Demokrata Polski*, vol. 11, nr 2, March 30th, 1848, 69.

[114] Cichocki, "Poland – Between Germany and Russia," 25.

One is quick to realise that the overarching tone changed dramatically after July 27th, 1848, when the Frankfurt Parliament voted with the overwhelming majority (342 to 31) to include parts of the Poznań region into the German Confederation. The new demarcation line, supposedly created on the basis of adherence to a specific nationality and language, effectively meant the collapse of the autonomy of the province. To the utter surprise of the Polish delegation and public opinion, even the representatives of the parliamentary liberal wing forwarded a case against the restoration of Poland by employing a new language of ethno-nationalistic dominance: "As [Wilhelm] Jordan stated in his oration, for him the demarcation line did not at all represent a new 'partition' of Poland but rather simply showed 'how far German language and civilization had victoriously advanced.'"[115] German historian, H. J. Hahn reveals that, "the Polish Debate" differed significantly in tone and rhetoric from other proceedings concerning the shape of the German borders: "Whereas the Schleswig-Holstein debate had largely been confined to patriotic statements or romantic dreams, the debate about Posen engendered nationalist and even racist sentiments."[116] There was a deeply internalised feeling among the German deputies that Poland was economically and culturally lagging behind. In the view of Mirosława Zielińska and Marek Zybura this assumption legitimised the political status quo after the partitions of the First Polish Republic (Prussia would not have built its power without absorbing the Polish lands) and became the foundation of the German national self-stereotype in the "long" nineteenth century.[117]

Following this undesired turn of events, the ideal of being a family of Western nations became impossible to uphold. In spite of this "betrayal," Polish revolutionaries found themselves in a need of deploying a new, more antagonistic narrative towards German states and the German nation. On top of that, they had to face the accusations of the Frankfurt Parliament which aptly included the considerations about the Polish "civilisational inferiority." One way of meaningfully diminishing the position of another country was to consider its behaviour as non-European. Thus, Polish intellectuals moved conceptually Germany from "the West" to "the East". The view of the "the East" or the Orient had been already settled and proliferated in the European, mid-nineteenth century, discourse. Jürgen Osterhammel argues

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[115] Brian E. Vick, *Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 156.

[116] Hans Joachim Hahn, *The 1848 Revolutions in German-Speaking Europe* (Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2001), 148.

[117] Mirosława Zielińska and Marek Zybura (eds*.), Monolog, dialog, transfer Relacje kultury polskiej i niemieckiej w XIX i XX wieku* [Monologue, dialogue, transfer Relationships of Polish and German culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries] (Wrocław: Centrum Studiów Niemieckich i Europejskich im. Willy'ego Brandta, 2013), 9.

that the newly developed political vocabulary enabled to imagine the space between the Bosphorus and the Sea of Japan as a unitary space with socio-political arrangements that were alien to the European developmental path.**[118]** Nonetheless, another cognitive step was needed to introduce an altered version of a mental map. The generalised traits of Asia had to be connected with the German national character.

Germany as the Orient

The Polish philosopher Bronisław Trentowski (1808-1869), was at the forefront of inserting a more critical view of Germans. This is even more surprising as the author maintained close intellectual ties with Germany. After the fall of the November Uprising in 1831, he fled to Germany and completed philosophical studies at Freiburg and Heidelberg universities. Being exposed to the notions of German idealism, he embraced a very teleological view of philosophy and history. In addition, he did not abstain from commenting political developments and highlighting the dangers of Russian imperialism. Prior to the Spring of Nations events Trentowski portrayed the conflict between Poland and Russia in Manichean terms, as the struggle between "European Enlightenment" and "Asiatic darkness." In his work, alongside other European authors, Asia carried an emblematic value in debates about savagery and civilisation, progress and decadence, governance and justice, the wealth and poverty of nations, the rights and happiness of women, truth and falsehood in religion.[119] As an ardent occidentalist, Trentowski contrasted the Russian Empire with the idea of the Slavic Reich, based on the values of Western culture, i.e., the political unification of the Slavs, free from the Russian influences.[120] Simultaneously, he argued that the Russo-Asian idea of Pan-Slavism must be effectively countered.

The experience of the 1848-49 revolutions changed profoundly his perspective on Germany and Germans. The infamous "Polish debate" in the Frankfurt Parliament was one of the impulses to write *Przedburza Polityczna* ["Political Pre-Storm"] (1848) in which he ascribed the qualities of "the East" to Germany. His mental map argued that beneath the layer of idealism, sensitivity, and civility, which remained the main qualities of truly European societies, one can discover a much more corrupt image of western neighbours. In that respect,

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[118] Jürgen Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East: The Enlightenment's Encounter with Asia* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 38.
[119] Ibidem, 17.
[120] Ewa Starzyńska-Kościuszko, "Bronisław Ferdynand Trentowski vs panslawizm rosyjski," [Bronisław Ferdynand Trentowski vs Russian Pan-Slavism] *Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski* 12 (2021): 1, 324.

the author also willingly referred to his personal experience of engaging with the German intellectual life:

> I came to Germany with great reverence for the Germanic spirit. The homeland of Schiller, Jean Paul, Lessing and Herder had an extraordinary charm for me as a dreaming, young man. The power of philosophers and skilful celebrities told me that I would find enough Alexandria and Athens here. I threw myself to work studying their wisdom, without counting the time. How disappointed I have been! People are doing everything here only for profit. They even write honourably if it pays off well. But they think and act differently. Their language and heart are divided.[121]

The vivid and emotional disappointment of the author was far more consequential than it may seem at first glance. In the nineteenth-century imagination, antiquity and the classics served as a pivotal point of reference for multiple scholars, artists, politicians. By implications, consciousness of the past traditions formed an inseparable element of Occidentalism – a belief in the unique developmental path of "the West". Nonetheless, the dominating intellectual trends in Germany are presented as a deviation from the traditions of European philosophy. In Trentowski's view, it was very illusory and unjustified to consider Germany as the cultural successor of Athens and Alexandria. The fulfilment of this role proved to be impossible because of the German inclinations towards petty-bourgeois materialism. On the basis of his personal experiences, Trentowski deprives Germany of representing the legacy of the "Western civilisation." In this deeply essentialising view, Germany is presented as a state of a moral collapse which ultimately goes against European multigenerational, intellectual legacies. This assertion immediately invites a question about the origins of such a moral decay among Poland's neighbour. While addressing this issue, Trentowski turns his attention towards genealogical roots of Germans as people. From the perspective of the Polish philosopher, they cannot be subscribed to "the West" as they do not even have Western ancestry: "The Germans themselves admit their descent from the old Persians, they see 'the Xerxeses' and 'the Cambyses' as their grandfathers of their divided kingdom. They keep calling: *Licht! Licht!* - and yet they are children and servants of the darkness. It would therefore be necessary to explore this **European Iran** more closely."[122]

At least several elements catch attention in the above-mentioned quote. First, it includes the explicit references to two rulers of the Persian Achaemenid Empire from the sixth century B.C.

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[121] Bronisław Trentowski, *Przedburza Polityczna* [Political Pre-Storm] (Freiburg: Trzcionkarnia Umiejętni u Adolfa Emmerlinga, 1848), 88.
[122] Ibidem.

Both Cambyses II and Xerxes symbolise the peak of the Persian might in terms of territorial expansion, military position, and administrative organisation. Yet, these examples contained a clearly negative element which could be perceived as alien to European history. Trenowski's emphasis on the Persian heritage of Germany neatly encapsulates the interplay between "the West" and "the East." On this more abstract level, Persia or Iran served as an exemplary state in the imaginary of French, German or Polish intellectuals in which all types of arguments, hopes, fears and anxieties were vested.[123] Trentowski's statement metaphorically described the collision of the two worlds – the civilised and the barbaric one. To that end, he followed the footsteps of ancient Greek authors, like Herodotus, who in his *Histories*, constructed the historical narrative around stark and dichotomic divide between "advanced" and "democratic" Greeks on the one hand and Persian "backwardness" and "absolutism" on the other. In the words of German historian Osterhammel, the nineteenth-century authors owed much to the categories that had been already formulated back in antiquity, which involved "positing a binary contrast between civilization and its opposite, describing civilizations in comparative terms, deriving biological and cultural differences from climatic and other environmental factors, theorising the origin and evolution of cultures."[124]

Even though Germans suffered from the burden of the "barbaric" heritage, it was difficult to disavow their accomplishments all together. After all, Trentowski eagerly mentioned Schiller and Herder in his work. Hence, the philosopher forwarded a motion that Germans *only pretended* to be "Western." In order to expose the superficiality of the German Enlightenment, the author contrasts "the Persian origin" with the calling *Licht! Licht!* which is commonly ascribed to Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Finally, Germany is described as the "Iran of Europe". This expression clearly aims at evoking negative connotations among the contemporaries as Iran from the nineteenth century was no longer powerful Persia from antiquity.

More importantly, the past heritage informed the contemporary German behaviour. In the view of Trentowski, the Persian nature of Germans determined their political stance during the Spring of Nations:

> Indeed, in the similar way in which their ancestor, Cambyses, treated Egypt, they [today] govern in Poznań and partly also Kraków. The situation was similar in Schleswig and Italy . . . The English daily newspapers asked themselves the question: where is the ugly vandalism of the German army coming from?

Unrelenting stubbornness, unbreakable stoniness of soul . . . it is the eternal mark of the German [identity] . . . A Muscovite is much more good-natured and understanding! These are all Hesperian apples of German civilisation. And why should we [Poles] respect such a red, predatory, self-indulgent civilisation? Down with it! This is unworthy barbarism.[125]

Behind the comparison between the ancient Egypt and nineteenth-century Poland, looms the intention to uncover the "uncivilised" instincts guiding the German, specifically Prussian and Austrian, politics. The victimhood of countries, like Italy or Denmark, is brought forward to indicate a pattern of the unjustified German violence and oppression. Even more surprisingly, Germans are considered to be crueller than Russians as their strategies of curtailing the Polish independence exceeded even the practices of policing, enforced by the Russian Empire. And this is a very remarkable statement, given the fact that Poles circulated a persistently negative view of Russia as the European "Other."

At this point it seems justified to assess why Persia (or Iran) corresponded so closely with Trentowski's intention to downgrade the reputation of Germans. The reason for such an extensive use of the Central-Asian examples relates to the fact that German philosophers, scholars, and historians, themselves, were fascinated by this region. Adding to that, they sometimes expressed their positive or nostalgic outlook on the ancient grandeur of Persia. Johann Gottfried Herder in his work under the title *Persepolis, Eine Muthmaasung* (1787) praised Persia as a testimony to a great civilisation with advanced language and religion. Johan Wolfgang Goete's *West-östlicher Divan* (1819), with its romantic sensibility paved the way for the new wave of German investigations into Iran's culture and Friedrich von Schlegel launched the notion of an Indo-European convergence between the spirit of Asia and that of Europe, especially Germany, by way of language and race.[126] As Rudi Matthee reveals, there were also other factors which encouraged Germans to relate their political and cultural experience to the history of Iran: "The German image of Iran never crystallised around the idea of the country as a political entity also reflects the fragmentary character of the German-speaking world and the attendant lack of German national coherence and consciousness at the time."[127] However, in the eyes of other Europeans, Persia from the early nineteenth century started to become associated with decreasing might and destruction resulting from the inability to adapt to modern conditions: "In the eyes of . . . observers the country of high civilization had descended to a

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[125] Trentowski, *Przedburza Polityczna*, 97.
[126] Matthee, "The Imaginary Realm: Europe's Enlightenment Image of Early Modern Iran," 453, 457, 460.
[127] Ibidem, 454.

shadowy melancholy existence."[128] This became an opportunity for authors like Trentowski who utilised the German fascination with Persia to argue that countries share commonalities when it comes to corrupt morality and weak political system. As in the Polish spatial imaginary, Asia did not provoke positive connotations.

The description of Germany as a part of "the Orient" was not limited to one specific geographical or cultural destination. While highlighting the expansive nature of Germans, the author compared their territorial advances to the Mongol invasion from the 13th century, which in the Polish social memory is immortalized as a cataclysmic event. However, apart from Persia, it was the image of China which played an equally significant if not leading role in formulating a variation about "the East". In this way, he stepped into the shoes of other European intellectuals who considered China as a meaningful counterexample with its stagnated economy and political inability. As Jürgen Osterhammel points out, "arrogant behaviour" and "overconfidence" was one of the traits that were extensively described in the European writings considering China.[129] Similarly, Trentowski initiated his inquires into the "German character" with the idea of self-admiration or egoism that both nations, in his view, exemplified:

> Until now, kings and petty princes have ruled Germany, making deals with foreign nations, and even with each other, for their own interests, [and] not the common ones. Today the German people want to rule themselves and have a completely free voice. And how do they speak out? . . . They hate the French and Italian, Danish, Swedish and English, Polish and Muscovites, Madziars [Hungarians] and Czechs! Who then do they love? Weird question! Whom else is a selfish one capable of loving, other than just himself?[130]

This selfishness came into a forefront during the Spring of Nations. The decision of the Frankfurt Parliament to incorporate the Polish lands into the potentially unified German state provided Trentowski with a justification to accuse Germans of breaching the solidarity among the oppressed nations. In accordance with this view, nations, or their representatives, ought to work together towards the common goal of overthrowing the European reactionary regimes. The love for oneself serves an excuse to make a claim about Germany being a non-Western nation:

> Today the German people have offended, pushed away and enslaved European nations and brought hatred and contempt for themselves. If they had remained in the power they cherish at the moment, they would have been surrounded by

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[128] Ibidem, 461.
[129] Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East*, 314.
[130] Trentowski, *Przedburza Polityczna*, 92.

enemies, without allies, like egoists. And it would be revealed then, which is still hidden under the [alleged] supremacy of Christianity and the garment of wisdom, that Germany is, to put it bluntly, **European China**![131]

Aside from describing national jingoism as a Chinese trait, the author illustrates the alleged superficiality of Germany's civilisational progress. Trentowski reduces its status by stating that Germany ineptly tries to impersonate and mimic the relationships that "mature" European nations maintain between each other. Instead, members of the German nation attempted to fulfil the goal of national unity by breaching the solidarity with other, oppressed nations. This is a clear allusion to the Prussian interventions in the Poznań region but also in Schleswig-Holstein, which gained noticeable popular support within Germany. The entire emotional and rhetorical weight of the statement is encapsulated in the expression "European China." Here, the accusations of "selfish" nationalism, but also political inability, are transformed into an ultimate, spatial generalisation.

The divergence between Germany and the rest of Europe is further constructed on the comparison of the education systems. According to Trentowski the whole German intellectual life was built around outdated and potentially backward premises:

> What is their education? They embrace Chinese Scholastic and Sophistic. Already in the Middle Ages the most venerable and venerable Scholastics were born and existed in Germany. Are not Wolf, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, all kinds of German scholars, both ancient and new, not faithful scholastics? All German skills are scholastic and are not very different from high-profile Chinese schools. It is always about the form and never about the [content]. In the last three centuries, the Germans stuffed from theology and philosophical speculation.[132]

This view disapproves the fact that the German language, traditions, and symbols are not in any way supported by morality. In this sense, the values guiding Germans in their social and political life have only a performative significance and they are empty gestures which are ultimately meaningless. Even worse, the faulty education directly translates into political deeds:

> Today they [Germans] gain a political life. Therefore, their scholasticism also turns into parliamentary deliberations, that is, into politics. Listen to the hearings in the Frankfurt or Berlin Parliament for a while! Soon you will get spiritual laminitis and get excruciating pressure. They argue over the very forms, over the words, they are unbearable. Pedantic people! . . . [95] And this Sophistic, together with its Sister Scholastic – why would this Germanic [wisdom] even appeal to us, Poles and Slavs [96]? May God protect us from it as from the moral plague! The tsar or the sultan

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[131] Ibidem.
[132] Ibidem, 94.

share the same wisdom. Germans, we do not want your education, because it is a dirty barbarism![133]

In line with the previous argumentation, it hardly comes as a surprise that the Frankfurt Parliament is evoked as a symbol of German weakness. Its proceedings are clearly perceived as the ascendancy of words over actions. The unending deliberation among the parliament's representatives illustrates inability of this body to enforce the national unification. Given the rather poor progress in fulfilling its original tasks, the Polish bitterness towards the German National Assembly became expressed in an open strain of invectives. The criticism directly attributed to the parliament reveals another crucial trait. In the view of Europeans, the Chinese form of governance represented a highly dysfunctional system in which obedience curtailed creativity, innovation, and popular representation. Trentowski adjusted this general assumption to describe the collapse of the German revolutionary spirit during the Spring of Nations.

The inclination to touch upon the "non-Western" nature of Germans was not limited to Trentowski's views. These considerations also appeared in the writings of Karol Libelt (1807-1875) – a renown Polish political activist and philosopher from the Poznań region. In his *Pisma pomniejsze Karola Libelta* ["The minor writings of Karol Libelt"] he turned his attention towards historical origins of different nationalities. A significant part of this work addresses the "languor of spirit" among the German nation. While placing the development of German culture and statehood in the historical context (from antiquity till the nineteenth century), the example of China is also mentioned. Interestingly, Libelt substantiates his opinion by evoking German authors, most notably Jean Paul Richter:

> It is Jean Paul Richter, who in his *Damerungen* gives another characteristic of his nation: 'Muhammad announced to his faithful the delights of paradise after death, and among other things, the delight that all parental consolations will be united there in one hour, because in one hour, the child conceives, is born and grows up. This is the character of the French. And the Chinese claim that [the longevity] of a tree is an [constitutes an eternal] element of all things; such a lumbering, such a motionless trunk, is in the character of the Germans.'[134]

This enigmatic assertion is further unravelled and explained by the Polish author:

> They [Germans] are similar in their actions to the winding course of the Seine, which runs from Paris to St. Germain, half a mile in a straight line, turns out to be a fifteen-mile circle. A French and a Pole have three sounds to say "yes". [And yet,]

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[133] Ibidem, 94-96.
[134] Karol Libelt, *Pisma pomniejsze Karola Libelta, Tom III* [The minor writings of Karol Libelt. Volume III] (Poznań: Księgarnia N. Kamieńskiego i spółki, 1850), 33.

they will pronounce it much faster than the Germans with their long, two-voice sound – "Ja!" - A French man strikes a thought with one word, and for a German hundred words is not enough. A German often changes his opinion about the French, a French never about the Germans. Germany is so little a nation that every other nation calls them differently. They feel good and at home everywhere, there is no such a thing for them as the exile. They like to imitate strangers, but in this imitation, they do not look like happy monkeys, but like gloomy orangutans.[135]

Behind the entanglement of multiple metaphors, Libelt constructs a picture of deeply contrasting characters of European nations. On the one hand, there is the forward-looking and the dynamic attitude of the French and Poles while on the other, stagnation and perseverance are displayed as the German traits. China, with its assumed standstill in political and intellectual life, serves as an illustration to this claim. In the minds of many European, nineteenth-century, authors (notably but not exclusively Georg Hegel, Karl Marx, or Adam Smith), China had not evolved for centuries and was a cultural vestige of a distant past.[136] By implication, the steadiness of the character and unwillingness to cope with modernity make Germans comparable to the Chinese. Moreover, the insufficiently developed national consciousness makes Germans not politically mature. Similarly, to the non-European nations, which were at that time treated with contempt, Poland's western neighbours are only capable of mimicking other countries in the field of philosophy, governance, and national identity. In essence, the German character is described as a state of complete inertia. Given this characterisation, it becomes possible to delineate which nations truly represent "Western civilisation" and which only suferically appropriate its elements.

In several instances, a similar mapping of Germany was undertaken by the Polish press. A foreign correspondent of *Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego* summarised the gradual decomposition of the German revolutionary efforts during the Spring of Nations in such words:

> I leave aside the French [political] fencing and I will add a few remarks about the current relations in Germany . . . Neither Vienna nor Berlin listens to the Frankfurt oracles, in the first place; [Josip] Jelačić, Alfred [Ferdinand, Prince of] Windischgraetz, they disregard the Frankfurt deputies, they only pretend to listen to the Frankfurt fathers who, like Chinese shadows, present their decrees. Providence seems to have confused the languages in this Frankfurt Babel, because pride, greed and disregard for all principles of humanity could arouse God's wrath, and the Frankfurt fathers will probably

[135] Ibidem.
[136] David Martínez-Robles, "The Western Representation of Modern China: Orientalism, Culturalism and Historiographical Criticism," *Digithum*, 10 (2008), http://dx.doi.org/10.7238/d.v0i10.511, accessed on Apr. 23rd, 2022.

not build a Babylonian tower and will not gain any dignity and strength for themselves.[137]

In this context, the comparison with the Chinese serves to indicate the political ineffectiveness of the German parliament which lacked the legitimacy of the major German states, especially Prussia and Austria. A pure force represented by political and military leaders of the Austrian army such as Josip Jelačić and Alfred Ferdinand, Prince of Windisch-Grätz prevailed over the oratory disputes and emotional manifestations performed by the revolutionaries. This is also a good example of the assumed German inertia under conditions of which the violent actions undertaken by reactionary governments were met with ambivalence, anxiety, and compliance.

Beyond the context of the Spring of Nations, the example of China was rarely used. Nevertheless, in 1860, the political tension increased over the position of the Germans living in the two principalities of Denmark. In May, the Prussian Landtag voted in favour of a motion which condemned the actions of the Danish government targeting the German-speaking minority of Schleswig and Holstein. The Polish deputies to the Prussian parliament supported the resolution but they also took the opportunity to present their view of the matter during a parliamentary session. Accordingly, *Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego* displayed a transcript of the speech delivered by Władysław Bentkowski, a Polish deputy to the Prussian Landtag since 1852.

> I will not go into a closer comparison of the location of Schleswig with that of the Duchy [of Poznań] . . . Because Schleswig has been under the Danish rule for centuries, and remains [there] as a result of the free choice of its estates; because in Schleswig the oppressed are not the Scandinavian indigenous people, but the Germans who, it seems, only later and gradually moved to this country . . . Well, gentlemen, it seems to me that your kinsmen behind the Eider River could be assisted almost as much by the general moral and political action of Germany as by diplomatic or military steps. In my opinion, Germany can only gain the necessary moral justification for its efforts in Schleswig when in Hungarian, Italian and Slavic countries they cease to behave in the same way as the Danes . . . I know that many will answer me with this well-known argument as the German civilisation stands so much higher than all others that it has the power to absorb and mediate neighbouring nationalities. Well, I must admit to you, gentlemen, that a position of this kind has always seemed very Chinese to me. The people of the Middle Kingdom also claim that they themselves are the sole representatives of the true civilisation par excellence, and that everything that is not Chinese is barbaric. For

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[137] "Z Paryża," [From Paris] *Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego*, nr 273, November 22nd, 1848, 111.

me, however, their political dogma does not seem to prove their versatility of civilisation, but rather arrogance, and therefore a harmful political presumption for themselves.[138]

The speech made by Bentkowski, who also represented the Polish minority in the Prussian parliament, is a very peculiar rhetorical construct. The main argument is encapsulated in the assumption that rather than imposing military or diplomatic pressure on Denmark, Germans should set an example of how national minorities ought to be treated by resolving their ethnic issues with Poles and other Slavic nations. By not embracing this kind of attitude, Germans reveal their "Chinese character" which entails the unconditional belief in Germany's civilisational exceptionalism. In this way, moderation and diplomatic solutions were described as European code of conduct while arrogance and militarism became traits deeply associated with "the East".

Despite the evidence presented above, it needs to be acknowledged that comparing Germany to the Orient was not a particularly common motif. Germany served only as an "incidental" China or Iran. This mental map proved to be useful in the context of the Spring of Nations during which chaos, indecisiveness, and weakness within Germany, as well as the collapse of revolutionary ideas, sparked the Polish anger. In particular, it was the political inability of the Frankfurt Parliament and its supporters that justified in the Polish eyes drawing the parallels between the western neighbours and the nations which were considered inferior to the European ones. Moreover, it was a vocal, conceptual response to the proliferating image of Poles as a backward and inferior nation.

Germany as Russia

On the Polish mental map there was the "far" East which was associated with Iran or China. However, Poles also imagined the "close" East which predominately involved Russia. While suffering under the burden of tsarist absolutism, they criticised other European nations, notwithstanding the Germans, for maintaining friendly relationships with the Romanov's empire. This state of diplomatic affairs immediately encouraged an assumption that that there was something "Russian", and hence "Eastern", about the German behaviour. In the attempt to mobilise Western societies for a collective action on behalf of Poland, it became relatively common for Polish revolutionaries to present Russia, Prussia and Austria as entities which merged into one form. As the previous chapter has indicated, the image of Russia as the European "Other" had been already firmly established within the Polish discourse. Its main

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[138] "Telegraficzne wiadomości Gazety Wielkiego Księstwa Poznańskiego," [Telegraphic news of Gazeta Wielkiego Księstwa Poznańskiego] *Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego*, nr 110, May 11th, 1860, 1-2.

facets strived to emphasise the "civilisational" and "moral" superiority of Western Europe over the tsarist regime. The more Russia was antagonised with Great Britain and France, the more it seemed meaningful to spatialise the European relations in terms of "the West" and "the East".[139] I would like to argue that Germany was also included in this mental mapping. By implication, while Russia was perceived as a symbolic epitome of "the East", so were the German states under certain conditions.

On a conceptual level, two factors permitted the formulation of a mental map in which Germany started to increasingly resemble Russia. First, there was persistent geopolitical synergy between the German states and Russia in maintaining their supremacy in Central-Eastern Europe. The above-mentioned powers contributed to the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. Later on, the same states initiated the Holy Alliance after 1815, a political format which effectively guarded the monarchical and conservative order of Europe. These alignments resulted in the persistent collaboration between the German powers and Russia in curtailing the Polish independence aspirations. Second, the Polish authors pointed towards the fact that Russia and the German states were governed in a similar way – monarchical absolutism precluded any opportunity for democratic accountability and the wellbeing of citizens.

Once again, these deeply internalised resentments started to be used amidst the Spring of Nations, as Central Europe, including the Polish lands, was shaken by a revolutionary zeal. In the first place, Germans were equalled with Russians when it comes to the way in which they treated the Polish independence aspirations during the revolutions of 1848-1849. The Prussian, Russian and Austrian authorities crushed the resistance of the Polish society with a combination of diplomatic manoeuvring and military action. By implication, it was the cruelty with which Prussian and Austrian authorities curtailed the Polish revolutionary attempts that justified their comparison with "Asiatic" practices of Russia. Specifically, it was the capture of the cities such as Cracow and Lviv (Galicia) or Książ (Grand Duchy of Poznań) through an artillery barrage that evoked in the Polish imaginary the practices of the war of 1830-31. This vision was highlighted on the pages of *Krzyż i Miecz*, a Polish newspaper from the Poznań region, which reflected upon the collapse of the Polish political activism:

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[139] Andrzej Nowak, "Rosja w publicystyce politycznej Wielkiej Emigracji przed powstaniem styczniowym," [Russia in the political journalism of the Great Emigration before the January Uprising] *Przegląd Historyczny* 82 (1991): 1, 84.

We faced the same consequences everywhere: since our opponents recovered from their first fear and grew stronger, the state of siege replaced the previously given concessions . . . Cracow and Lviv were bombed for no reason, Książ was murdered, the innocent victims were faced with blind credulity . . . [Germans], in the clear violation of their promises, armed themselves to fight Poles with the consent of the Prussian government . . . The swarmed soldiers began to plunder the region, and the German citizens, fattened with Polish bread, formed local groupings, and attacked Polish houses. [The] Germanic in spirit, in cunning and cruel torment over the defenceless, did not yield to Mongolian tsarism. [140]

In this case, "Mongolian tsarism" is clearly an expression of contempt for the Russian practices of governance. By embracing the same methods of policing and control in the formerly Polish territories, Germans effectively exclude themselves from "the West" as the humanitarian treatment of populations constitutes one of its main underpinnings. Crucially, the author makes no distinction between the members of the Prussian miliary and ordinary Prussian citizens. While pretending to be a part of the European history and traditions, Germans reveal their true face in the times of a political crisis. Because of their violence and brutality, the author concludes that all Germans started to adhere to standards of interaction and behaviour determined by "the East".

Moreover, an accusation of a "betrayal" of the pan-European struggle for national sovereignty was ascribed to the German ruling elites and revolutionaries. In the Polish view, the failures of the Frankfurt Parliament and the subsequent counter-revolutionary actions pleased the interests of the Russian Empire. This line of reasoning was further developed by other Polish outlets, most notably *Demokrata Polski* in France. This was a newspaper of the Polish Democratic Society which represented the left-leaning, republican and at the same time nationalist political spectrum. While witnessing the change of tune among the German public in respect to its attitude towards the "Polish Question", the newspaper started to include tangible geopolitical threats implying the need for the Poles to reconsider their alliances. This intellectual complexity is explicitly presented in the proclamation of the Central Committee of the Polish Democratic Society from August 16th, 1848, which was directly addressed to the German Nation:

Would you, German people, be our enemy, the associate our tyrants? . . . If you forget your vows, if you let your conscience sleep, you will sanctify injustice by your vile silence . . . then . . . an unfaithful tribe to the mission of providence

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[140] "Polityka – Pogląd na obecny tok rzecz," [Politics – The opinion on the current state of affairs] *Krzyż a Miecz*, nr 16, April 22nd, 1850, 126.

will suffer at the hand of the God of Nations, slayer of crimes of peoples and kings. The avenger has already arisen, and he is calling out to the millions of Slavs who were awakened by the call towards their independence. Poland would have been deaf to his voice if she had lived; she would have covered you from the blows meant for you. She would have turned her Slavic brothers away from the walls of Vienna and Berlin, and lead them, under the banner of universal freedom, against the tsarist despotism and serve as the link in the fraternal chain that should relate the East and the West of Europe in a common progress. You, helped the tsar to crush her, and today you, the Peoples of Germania, separated among themselves, subjugated to the intrigues of reactionary kings are susceptible to Nicolas's [Tsar of Russia] blows.[141]

On the surface, this deeply impassionate statement expresses a bitter disappointment with the ways in which the Polish case was handled by the representatives of the German nation. However, it also reveals a rather open intent to realign Polish interests with the ones of Slavic nations, against Germany's wishes. The weaponisation of ethnicity and evoking the close connection with other Slavic peoples should be considered as one of the key features of the newly emerging discourse. In order to become a "civilised nation" and a member of "the West," Germans first needed to get rid of their Russian influences within their country. While considering the reasons for the failure of the pan-European revolutions, another contributor to *Demokrata Polski* directly accused the German nation:

> You were defeated, because you did not understand clearly that national unity could arise only after the fall of your many despots; that only one and indivisible democracy could give you freedom and independence; that the German people could not exist to the detriment of other nations, nor they could constitute itself legally, without the European union of other peoples who would be independent and free. It is a bitter lesson, indeed, because the despots you have left in place have sold you to Moscow . . . These small armies of your princes are the divisions of Moscow's army that is ready to flood you. These Austrians, Bavarians, Prussians - they are Muscovites, they only wear different uniforms and serve under different banners. Is the command not issued in St. Petersburg? . . . To be a Muscovite or a Democrat, this is the only choice. Amidst this danger, what Germany must you do? Get rid of your tyrants, these Moscow servants, to limit the Russian influence.[142]

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[141] "Centralizacya Towarzystwa Demokratycznego Polskiego wydała odezwę do ludu niemieckiego w skutek postanowienia Zgromadzenia Niemieckiego w Frankfurcie," [Centralizacya of the Polish Democratic Society issued an appeal to the German people as a result of the decision of the German Assembly in Frankfurt] *Demokrata Polski*, vol. 11, nr 3, August 16th, 1848, 107-108.

[142] "Komitet Centralny Demokracji Europejskiej do Niemców," [The Central Committee of European Democracy adresses the Germans] *Demokrata Polski*, nr 3, January 26th, 1851, 10.

According to the contributor, the "Russification" of Germany was conducted by the German rulers who placed the dynastical interests above the national ones. In the attempt to maintain their political position, they viewed the Russian Empire as their staunchest ally and protector. By implication, the existence of the German Confederation not only ensured the perseverance of monarchical and quasi-feudal structures but also consolidated the Russian grip over this part of Europe. It is pivotal to note that the author employed the implicit division between "the West" and "the East" to describe the German internal relations. By stating that everybody needs to take a stance in the conflict between "Moscow" and "Democracy", the turmoil within the European countries is articulated as a struggle among clearly distinguishable civilisations.

Another ideational element which permitted the conceptualisation of Germany as Russia-alike was related to the form of internal governance. In the view of the Polish intelligentsia, "the East" was exported to Europe through the proliferation of non-constitutional and absolutists regimes. This stands in accordance with the broader practices of boundary-making between Russia and the rest of Europe in which the aspect of illiberal Russian system was particularly highlighted. In the words of Neumann "Russia was considered uncivilized primarily because it had failed to follow the liberal trend of a separation of state and society that developed in Western Europe in the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth centuries."[143]

Undoubtedly, the Crimean War (1853-1856) equipped the editors of *Demokrata Polski* with another justification to perceive the German states as accomplices of Russia. At that time, the coalition of Britain, France, Piedmont, and the Ottoman Empire decided to counter the Russian political aspirations in respect to the Balkans and Constantinople. Especially, the involvement of London and Paris provided an incentive to portray the military intervention in the Black Sea as a manifestation of unity among the liberal empires against a common non-European enemy. As Stefan Berger indicates, it became a frequent practice to forward this narrative by referring to spatial ideas: "In the Crimean War, the Western enemies of Russia all made the distinction between their own "westernness" and the "easternness" of Russia, which equalled "Asian despotism."[144] Undoubtably, members of the Polish intelligentsia took advantage of these developments to display their own views. Even though Austria and Prussia did not take part in the war, the facilitators of the Polish perspective presented the situation as

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[143] Neumann, "Governing a Great Power," 71.
[144] Stefan Berger, ''Western Europe" in *European Regions and Boundaries*, 25.

a struggle between two binary, political blocks with Russia, Austria, and Prussia on the one side and France and Great Britain on the other.

In the issue of *Demokrata Polski* from 11th November 1854, the anonymous author presented an assumption that the plans of the Russian expansion towards "the West" are closely aligned with German political interests:

> The policy of Prussia and Austria, in terms of future plans, is no different from that of Moscow. It is enough to look at the geographic map drawn at the Congress of Vienna to find that out. If there is a difference between them, it probably only relates to the fact how they plan to divide the territorial gains. [145]

In addition, it is asserted that the alliance constitutes a major danger for the existence of 'the West:'

> Russia advances from East to West . . . [At the same time] Prussia and Austria, in collusion with Russia, extended their rule across the continent . . . What would happen to the remaining piece of Europe that is called the West, amidst such a partition of Europe and Poland [?] [The answer to this question] has not yet been written by the Holly Alliance but its intention is already known to the public.[146]

The interests of Russian and the German states are presented as closely intertwined as they strive to acquire more international power at the expense of Western Europe, most notably France and Great Britain. The use of the word "partition" in respect to the future of Europe is hardly accidental. Implicitly, the author argues that Europe could follow the catastrophic steps of Poland if it did not counter the plans of the Holly Alliance. This rhetorical device serves to convincingly convey that the fates of Poland and Western Europe are inseparably related. Shared values as well as common enemies constituted the bedrock of Polish belief in the alliance with "the West", especially France. Apart from the purely geopolitical considerations *Demokrata Polski* investigated the reasons for which Germans, and particularly Prussia, were so susceptible to the Russian influence. A profound attention was ascribed to the Prussian ruling elites:

> The [Prussian] court aristocracy are Muscovites. Historically, Prussia has never been independent, probably [only] during the reign of Frederick II, when he had the courage to fight against half of Europe . . . what is Prussia today? It is part of the Polish country, part of the German country, which bizarrely stretches from Memel

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[145] "Polityka Prus i Austrii oraz duch ich mieszkańców i wojsko. Artykuł z kraju," [Politics of Prussia and Austria, spirit of their citizens and their armies. Article from the Polish lands] *Demokrata Polski*, nr 49, November 16th, 1854, 193.

[146] Ibidem.

all the way across the Rhine to Aachen. The predominant language there is German, but its government is a Muscovite fief and follows Moscow's inspiration. It is a supposedly German state, but its cohesion does not come from Germany, and therefore Prussia takes [the strength] from Moscow.[147]

Moving beyond the criticism of Prussian elites and their alleged double loyalties, Prussia is conceptualised as a state which relies on the legitimacy and protection of Russia. It consists of a patchwork of different states with neither a geographical nor political rationale. With expressions such as a "Muscovite fief" the author views Prussia as completely non-independent state which is subjugated to quasi-feudal relations. Moreover, the need for securing the dynastical position turned out to be an unshakable paradigm of the Prussian policy:

> The king of Prussia, William III, the father of the present king, wrote a will. After his death, it will be officially announced in Prussia as every law is announced. The testator asked their sons and all heirs that the Prussian crown would never break the alliance with Russia, because Prussia could only exist as long as it was strictly connected with Russia. The present-day king of Prussia, with his brother, heir to the throne, is closely associated with Russia. It is a fairy tale, what the newspapers write, that the heir to the throne (Prinz von Preussen) sides with the Western powers. [He] is just pretending. Whoever wants Prussia to exist, [this person] maintains close ties with Russia. Only the Prussians who envision unified Germany can cooperate with England and France [but] there are not many of them.[148]

By evoking the examples of William III's testimony and the actions of his successors the author presents how deeply internalised the relationships between Prussia and Russia are. Furthermore, he argues that the interests of the Hohenzollern house exclude any possibility of alliance with the Western powers. The notion of "Eastness" is encapsulated here in the prioritisation of monarchical rule over the notion of "Western" national self-determination. The author effectively accuses Prussia of embracing *tsarskoye samoderzhaviye* (tsarist absolutism) - a Russian-coined idea which considers the state as hereditary property of the ruling dynasty. This claim should be perceived as a significant political statement because the regime type was a key criterion for gauging how heavily a certain polity weighed in the scales of civilization.[149] Iver B. Neumann interestingly reveals that a prestige in the international arena could been decreased only because other actors did not consider political system of a state as enviable.[150]

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147 Ibidem.
148 Ibidem,193-194.
149 Neumann, "Governing a Great Power," 77.
150 Ibidem, 77.

Only if Prussia embarked on the process of national unification and democratisation, it could forge a new type of understating with "mature" powers - France and Britain. The anticipated relationship between Prussia and Russia goes as far as the linguistic etymology. Accordingly, *Demokrata Polski* compares the origins of words "Prussian" and "Russian" in the Polish language: "When in Berlin, in March 1848, there was a revolutionary outbreak, the People only then let themselves be calmed down, when the king threw away the Prussian bow and went out into the city with banners in German colours. [T]hen they shouted: "long live the king! long live united Germany, down with the Prussians! They do not want to be Prussians, because they know that the word "Prusak" [in Polish: a Prussian] itself comes from "Rusak" [in Polish: a Russian]."[151]

It needs to be acknowledged that this type of political language persisted throughout the 1850s. In 1857, Jan Nepomucen Janowski, the editor of *Demokrata Polski*, included the excerpts of a political work of Henryk Kamieński - Rosya*, Europa i Polska* [Russia, Europe and Poland]. Crucial to Kamieński's understanding of international relations was the concept of "barbaria" which was extensively applied to Russia – a representative of backwardness and oppression. As the Polish historian Andrzej Nowak points out, "Kamieński combined his concept of 'barbaria' with the view that Poland can only inspire this colossus with thought, freedom, and civilisation. Poland was to act as a relay between the West, which did not understand Russia, and its Slavic sister."[152] More importantly, Kamieński viewed the unfavourable position of Poland as a result of reoccurring Russian and German oppression. Interestingly, the threat coming from the western neighbours was perceived as even more dangerous as it carried not only political but also social and economic implications:

> Tsarist rule is more horrible than any other, but in one respect it is better than the Germanic one . . . The tsars want to reign only for reign, and the Germans want to reign for profit. So, in the first case, we have the evil of ignorance and pride, and in the second, of greed which gives no hope of improvement . . . In the first case, Poland is devoted to the play of lawlessness of the government, and in the second, to the spoil of the nation that wants to suck all possible benefits out of [our land], to expand its property and improve livelihoods. [It] even aims at depriving our place under the sun.[153]

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[151] "Polityka Prus i Austrii oraz duch ich mieszkańców i wojsko. Artykuł z kraju," 194.

[152] Nowak, "Rosja w publicystyce politycznej Wielkiej Emigracji przed powstaniem styczniowym," 80.

[153] Jan Nepomucen Jankowski, "Rosya i Europa – Polska, nadesłane przez X.Y.Z," [Russia, Europe and Poland, delivered by X.Y.Z.], *Demokrata Polski*, vol. 18, nr 18, November 5th, 1857, 72.

This perspective was very much in line with the other left-wing Polish newspapers in exile, such as *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich.* On April 26th, 1859, the Second Italian War of Independence broke out, which vividly signalled that the European political order would become subjugated to a major change. The ongoing conflict between France and Piedmont on the one side and Austria on the other, generated extensive tension within Germany. This is an event which is commonly labelled as the crisis in relationship between the German states and France in 1859. With a direct inclination to support the efforts of Italian revolutionaries and French forces, the Polish authors perceived these events as an opportunity to display the German states and Russia as the defenders of the absolutist order. In the article under the title "The Principle of Nationality in the Italian War," the contributor suggests that it is precisely the collaboration between Germany and Russia that prevents the national awakening across Europe:

> The same customs, superstitions and monarchical hatreds, all this attracts and binds Russia and Germany to each other. There may be momentary quarrels between them - the old Machiavellianism may direct Russia to apparently come closer with France and support the Italian nationality as a harmless way to make itself more popular in Europe. [However,] only those can believe in breaking bonds between Russia and Germany who do not know or do not want to know the past, traditions and politics of these two pillars of European despotism.[154]

Following the author's reasoning, the political rapprochement between France and Russia would be considered as meaningful under certain conditions. Nonetheless, in his view, this is highly unlikely due to the fact that the German states and Russia maintain stronger cultural and mental ties which are based on "superstitions" and "monarchical hatreds". In other words, the ideology of reactionary conservatism and the adherence to the principles of royal legitimacy successfully solidified the relationship between these powers. In an analogous manner, a correspondent of *Demokrata Polski* described the reaction of Poles in the Poznań region to the rumours of a possible, new alliance between France and Russia. From the perspective of the newspaper, such a geopolitical rearrangement could barely result in a positive outcome for the Polish independence aspirations. In essence, the German occupant would be surpassed with the Russian one:

> It would be a sin to choose between the invaders of the homeland . . . One can only desire independent Poland, and not a transfer from German to Russian hands, or vice versa. If this was to occur, however, Poles from the Prussian partition would

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[154] "Zasada narodowości w wojnie włoskiej," [The national sovereignty in the Italian war] *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich*, July 16th, 1859, 25-26.

indifferently look at the invading Muscovites, even those who are only orientated towards their self-interest. This is because the Germans do not show the qualities of a civilised nation towards us. They constitute the same burden for us – as if they were Muscovites painted with a European varnish. However, do not let anyone assume that we are sympathetic to Muscovites. God forbid! We did not fall so low, we just wanted to say that no one would regret the German rule and would accept Moscow with indifference.[155]

It is significant to note that Germans and Russians are presented as equally damming alternatives for the Polish lands. By implication, a potential conflict between the partitioning powers would be met with Polish indifference. *Demokrata Polski* strived to call out the gradually proliferating idea among Prussia and Austrian elites that it was their obligation to "civilise" the territories in Central-Eastern Europe. Parts of German elites eagerly subscribed to the idea of "Drang nach Osten" which intended to infuse the "superior" German culture into the eastern borderlands. By stating that there is not so much of a difference between German and Russia cultures, the author deliberately aims at decreasing the reputation of Prussia or Austria. It is particularly striking that he describes Germans as essentially Russians who are only covered with an "European varnish". This plays into the reoccurring notion of Germany's superficial "Westernisation". Under this premise, Prussia and Austria only partially conform to the political norms which are outlined by France and Great Britain as they willingly embrace the socio-political models exported from the "the East".

The deeply internalised, Polish assumption about the ideological, and hence, spatial intertwinement between Russia and Germany persisted until the late 1860s. Jan Wincenty Mazurkiewicz (1813-1887) was a Polish revolutionary and exiled politician, personally involved in the November (1830-1831) and the January uprisings (1863-1864), as well as in Franco-Prussian war (1870-71). In 1869, he published a political pamphlet under the title *Demokracja polska i jej przeciwnicy* [The Polish democracy and its opponents]. Its main argument entailed the need to mobilise the Polish popular masses through the proliferation of democratic principles. Nevertheless, he also paid extensive attention to the evolution of international relations and the way in which the German states and the Russian Empire constituted a cohesive political block of "Eastern" absolutism:

Prussia continues to be what it previously was, not the vanguard of Europe but of Moscow, which expands thorough wide channels of family relationships, intrigue, bribery and threats, so that half of Germania willingly follows the sound of the

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[155] "Korrespondencye, Poznańskie, 11 maja 1859," [Correspondence from Poznań, May 11th, 1859] *Demokrata Polski*, nr 50, May 15th 1859, 198.

Russian trumpet. Austria, which is established in Slavic estates, including the Polish ones, is at the mercy of Pan-Slavism. [It] is terrified by the memories of 1848 and does not know where to seek patronage.[156]

In order to unravel Mazurkiewicz's conceptual map of Europe, it is crucial to recognise that Prussia and Austria are not considered as a force containing Russian influences. Instead, they are presented as a convenient gateway towards Europe. Prussia and Austria's inclination to engage with Russia opens up the possibility of "Eastness" penetrating the heart of the continent. One can relate such a critical assessment of the Polish author to the underpinning paradigm of foreign policy conducted by the Prussian prime minister, Otto von Bismarck. Since the early 1860s Bismarck strived to fulfil the intention of Germany's unification and guard his eastern flank by reaching an agreement with the Russian Empire. The Alvensleben Convention from 1863, which coordinated the Prussian and Russian efforts curtailing the Polish revolutionary activism, served as a way of aligning the interests of Berlin and St Petersburg. In the view of Christopher Clark, "This agreement, by which Prussia and Russia undertook to collaborate in the suppression of Polish nationalism, secured the goodwill of St Petersburg, but it was deeply unpopular with Polonophile liberals and helped to make Bismarck a widely hated figure."[157] By implication, the maintenance of a good relationship with Russia precluded any prospect for the Polish independence. This geopolitical alliance encouraged a Polish response, expressed by Mazurkiewicz, which perceived the attitudes of both powers as two sides of the same coin:

> Whoever wants to understand today's situation more deeply, and the number of such people is growing every day and reaches even those who rule nations, probably does not think that Prussia or Austria could constitute a reliable and permanent barrier against Moscow . . . A suffering Poland [which will become] triumphant [in the future], declares a war to death on the Mongolian-German tsarist regime.[158]

By employing such expressions as "Mongolian-German tsarist regime", the author effectively merges Germanness with "Eastness". "German-Mongolian tsarist regime" seems to be be complicated spatial construct, but it neatly summarises the overarching tendency of the Polish discourse. In the first step, the author conceptualises Russia as the successor of the Mongolian Empire – a clear attempt to detach the Russian Empire from the European path of development. In the Polish historical consciousness Mongols evoked the worst memories of

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[156] Jan Wincenty Mazurkiewicz, *Demokracja polska i jej przeciwnicy* [The Polish democracy and its opponents] (Lwów: Nakład wydawnictwa Mrówki, czcionkami Dra. H. Jasieńskiego, 1869), 84.
[157] Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia 1600 – 1947* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 523.
[158] Mazurkiewicz, *Demokracja polska i jej przeciwnicy*, 84-87.

invasions from the 13th century, which took the form of massive devastation, plunder, and institutional collapse. This assertion is followed by subscribing the German states to the same category of "Asian nations". Through collaboration with Russia, Germany acquires similar "barbaric" qualities.

To sum up, this chapter investigated the ways in which the Polish intelligentsia conceptualised Germany as "the East". Its crucial finding entails the fact that Polish actors strived to construct their ideas about foreign policy upon the broader divide between "the West" and "the East". Employing such a narrative is hardly unexpected, given the extent of disappointment but also repression that Poles experienced at the hands of Russian, Prussian, and Austrian authorities during and after the Spring of Nations. The analysis revealed that the intention to describe Germans as non-Western was fulfilled in a twofold way. 1) Germany could have been perceived as part of the Orient. The references to China or Iran, occurred primarily in the context of Spring of Nations and served to highlight the failure to impose a national unification and a republican system of governance. In addition, the Polish authors also argued that there was something particularly "Eastern" about the way in which Germans treated other nations. By disregarding the Polish independence aspirations Germans revealed their inclinations towards despotism and violence. 2) Moreover, the position of the German states was downgraded through the disclosure of their affinities and ties with the Russian Empire. Here, the Polish intelligentsia argued that Germans resorted to the same violent means as Russia in crushing the Polish identity, whereas the rightful members of "the West" ought to adhere to the norms of civility. Finally, many publications dedicated their attention to the similarities between the absolutist systems of rule in Prussia, Austria, and Russia, which contrasted strongly with the parliamentary culture of France, Great Britain as well as the Polish traditions of republicanism.

Still, imagining Germany as a representative of "the East" is not an obvious conceptual choice to make. It can come as a surprise that such an intellectual process took place. After all, Germany had a well-documented history of being at the centre of European political, intellectual, and economic developments. To give only one tangible example, it seemed very difficult at first glance to undermine the fact that the Holy Roman Empire was the successor of the Roman Empire – one of the cradles of "Western civilisation". Yet, members of the Polish intelligentsia attempted to portray Germany as a spatial element which is profoundly alien to the culture and values of Europe. In my view, two factors made such conceptualisations possible. First, it is necessary to account for the nation-building efforts that took place in the

early nineteenth century. As a part of building national consciousness, nineteenth-century historians, geographers, or anthropologists traced the historical descents of nations. In some instances, German authors distanced the German nation from the influences of Latin or French culture by stressing the legacy of the ancient Germanic tribes. Undoubtedly, the public attention ascribed to ancient figures like Arminius/Hermann, a chieftain of the Germanic Cherusci, reveals the significance of this tendency. German thinkers also sought their intellectual inspiration even beyond Europe by visiting or writing extensively about places like Persia. Nevertheless, the fascination with the Germanic past but also with other non-European cultures, driven by German Romanticism, opened up an opportunity for political opponents to highlight the non-Western side of the German history and identity.

The second aspect is directly related to the nature of spatial concepts such as "the East". Indeed, this emotionally and normatively charged term was used to describe non-European cultures and thus, accompanied European imperialism. However, "the East" could be also utilised in European contexts against actors that did not conform to a common set of values. In this way, the European international society comprised of different dimensions of "stratifications." And as Carsten Andreas-Schulz indicates: "Because of the multiple hierarchies at work, civilisation was mobilised not only against non-western political communities, but within Europe and the 'West' itself."[159] In a similar vein, Manfred Beller convincingly demonstrates, the term "the East" maintained a truly stunning flexibility which revealed itself under differing political circumstances: "Its mythical character is demonstrated, however, by the mobility of the imputation of "Easternness". The idea of despotic empires or cruel hordes threatening true civilisation from the East can be applied in different contexts: China-linked myth of the Yellow Peril around 1900; the terms 'Huns' used in anti-German British propaganda during the First World War."[160] Specifically, the proliferated image of Germans as "barbaric Huns" amongst British public opinion during the First World War informs us very clearly that the Polish attempts to spatialise Germany as "the East" were not an isolated phenomenon.

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[159] Andreas Carsten-Schulz, "Civilisation, Barbarism and the Making of Latin America's Place in 19th- Century International Society," *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 42 (2014), 838-839.
[160] Manfred Beller,"East/West" in *Imagology: The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters*, Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds.) (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2007), 317.

Chapter 3: Where was Germany? In "the West"

Political Conditions and the Mapping of Germany as "the West"

While studying mental maps, one needs to constantly keep in mind that these cognitive representations are anything but stable. In the same vein, Polish imaginings ascribed to Germany were subjugated to constant changes and adaptations. This assumption manifests itself most clearly in the fact that during the late 1860s, Germany became once again conceptualised as a part "the West". As I have already indicated in Chapter 1, "the West" served as a constant source of political hopes and intellectual inspiration for the Polish elites. However, until the 1860s, the Polish intelligentsia embraced a tendency which was termed by Jerzy Krasuski as "paradoxical Occidentalism" which refused to recognise that it was Germany, not France, which stretched westwards to the Polish lands.[161] For the spatial concepts to retain their validity, they need to be connected to the overarching political developments. In that respect, at least several factors stimulated the rearrangement of Polish perspectives on Germany stand out.

First and foremost, Germany became much more powerful. As a result of the major political reshuffle, Prussia, and the future German Empire, acquired profound structural and cultural capital, after winning a series of conflicts with Denmark, Austria and ultimately France. In the words of Hagen Schulze, Prussia under the leadership of Otto von Bismarck carefully exploited the favourable international constellation to rearrange the existing order in Central Europe:

> Growing estrangement and hostility between the powers of East and West left room in the centre of Europe for the kind of political manoeuvring that the political leaders in Vienna had been at pains to eliminate. The crisis of the European system consequent on the Crimean War opened a window – a historical opportunity for the unification of Central Europe such as had never previously existed and was rarely to exist subsequently.[162]

Among European and Polish observers, significant attention was ascribed to the performance of the Prussian military, which started to symbolise the rebirth of the German political significance. Equally important in the new imagining of Germany was the figure of the Prussian prime minister, Otto von Bismarck, who became widely considered as an

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[161] Jerzy Krasuski, *Polska-Niemcy: stosunki polityczne od zarania po czasy najnowsze* [Poland-Germany: Political Relations from the Beginning to the Modern Times] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Kurpisz, 2003), 161.
[162] Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism,* 209.

experienced and seasoned player moving pawns on the international relations chessboard.[163] The era of the unprepared and rapid revolutionary insurgencies was surpassed by *Realpolitik* with its supposedly "cold calculations," rationalisation and anticipation that accompanied every process of decision-making: "if statesmanship meant managing the relationship between forces whose relative strength and reciprocal relations were constantly in flux, then success depended upon acting at specific junctures when the current alignment happened, however briefly, to favour a specific course of action.[164] Bismarck appeared to masterfully embrace this new type of politics as he refined political techniques in order to manage the flux and unpredictability of post-revolutionary political life."[165] Interestingly, political power and military capabilities were usually associated with the liberal empires of Western Europe. During the 1860s the traditional "the West" started to lose its grandeur amidst the emerging power from the "the Centre". The long-term consequences of this stunning development were hard to predict at the time because, as Christopher Clark rightly puts it "relations among European states would henceforth be driven by a new and unfamiliar dynamic." [166]

Second, the Polish definition of Germany evolved. It ceased to entail a broadly defined group of the German states (i.e., gathered within the German Confederation) or German liberal revolutionaries, and started to increasingly encompass Prussia and its allies. This change of optics was a result of the evolving international arrangements within Europe. The grim perspectives for Polish independence during the 1860s and 1870s are summarised well by the Polish historian Marek A. Cichocki: "The fall of Napoleon III meant the long-term elimination of France as an element favourable to Poland in European politics. After the defeat at Sadowa, the Habsburg monarchy was also an increasingly marginalized actor in the European order. In practice what remained was united Germany and Czarist Russia."[167] In addition, Cichocki argues that the decades of politics conducted by Bismarck excluded any prospect of understanding between Poles and Berlin.[168] By implication, Prussia, which embarked on the process of German unification, was still perceived as a fierce adversary, a partitioning force of Poland.

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[163] Cristopher Clark, *Time and Power: Visions of History in German Politics, from the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2021), 148.
[164] Ibidem,148.
[165] Ibidem, 120.
[166] Idem, *Iron Kingdom*, 552.
[167] Cichocki, "Poland – Between Germany and Russia," 30.
[168] Ibidem, 30.

Nevertheless, it could not remain unnoticed that Prussia and its German allies transformed from being the *status-quo power*, intending to uphold the existing European international order, into the *contesting power* which envisioned major territorial changes for its own benefit. Additionally, Prussian achievements in the realm of international relations or economic advancement stunned even its staunchest critics. Given the territorial gains and strengthened reputation, the Polish intelligentsia was forced to somehow include the merging German nation-state into the plans concerning Poland's independence. Anticipating developments on an international scale through the lens of national interests is well described by Jacco Pekelder: "it was clear that these European nations always approached the rise of Germany from their own political agenda and reserved space in their future plans for a united Germany that met their own ideals."[169]

Another factor was related to the Polish view of Russia. It needs to be emphasised that the fluctuation of perceptions between Poles and Germans was immensely dependent on the relationship within the triangle Poland-Russia-Germany.[170] After the period of stabilisation during the 1850s and the prospects of regaining some of the autonomy of the Congress Kingdom in the early 1860s, the January Uprising (1863-1864) facilitated the outburst of hostility between Poles and Russians. Brutal practices of the Russian army against Polish freedom fighters and civilian population once again strengthened the Polish conviction about incompatibility between the Russian character and European values. By the same token, in the direct aftermath of the January Uprising, Russia once again emerged as the chief enemy of the Polish nation and a power which refused to conform to the European political and cultural rules. Prussia under the leadership of Bismarck worked closely with Russia to curtail the prospects of the independent Polish state. The Alvensleben Convention from 1863, which closed and secured the border between Prussia and the Congress Kingdom, was an illustrative example of such cooperation. Still, the authors who steered the Polish political discourse contemplated the fact that consolidation of Germany, under the leadership of Prussia, could facilitate greater antagonism between Berlin and Sankt Petersburg. And they made the justified and ultimately accurate assumption that the alliance between Germany and Russia would not survive in the long run. Without a doubt, opening the possibility of a closer relationship with Prussia-Germany or Austro-Hungary was a matter of further considerations among Polish political leaders in the

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[169] Jacco Pekelder, "Europa en de opkomst van Duitsland, 1830-1871: De Duitse kwestie in Europees perspectief,"*Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 133 (2020): 2, 233
[170] This also one of the main arguments conveyed by Klaus Zernack, *Polska i Rosja: Dwie drogi w dziejach Europy.*

succeeding decades. In this chapter, I would like to argue that two motifs stand out in the Polish imagining of Germany as a member of "the West." 1) The Polish intelligentsia strived to include Prussia and Germany into their ideal of the *Przedmurze* ["the Bulwark"] with Germany performing the role of a shield, protecting Europe from the Russian expansion 2) Given the economic advancement and political consolidation, some Polish authors started to admire and perceive Germany as a model, a "Western" nation-state and a powerhouse which provided the European system with a stimulating impulse.

Creating a "Western" Bulwark against "Eastern" Pan-Slavism

Despite the persisting symbiosis between Russia and Prussia throughout the 1860s, certain political and ideological elements contributed to the expanding rift in their bilateral relations. Among the major worries that occupied Otto von Bismarck's mind was the rising significance of pan-Slavism in Russian discourse and its impact on the Russian foreign policy. The belief in the necessity of the Russian Empire to liberate and establish patronage over all Slavic populations created a major challenge for the security of the Prussian eastern borderlands. Not least, it could serve as a tool of infusing revolutionary attitude among the Polish population of the Poznań province or Silesia, which were controlled by Prussia. In other words, the underpinnings of pan-Slavism directly contradicted the order established by the Congress of Vienna, which, in Bismarck's eyes, was inviolable and satisfactory.[171] That is why, the Prussian prime minster grew anxious about the consequences of the Russian Empire breaking out of its current development roots, as a result of the moral conquests in the Russian society by the "pan-Slavic coup party" (*panslawistische Umsturzpartei*).[172] Essentially, Prussia was forced to balance its anti-Polish rhetoric and policies with a plan of how to counter the plausible alignment between Poles and Russians. The dilemma, which stood in front of the Prussian ruling elites, is neatly encapsulated in a question formulated by the Polish historian Mariusz Kopczyński: Does the immediate vicinity of Prussia, and then the united Reich, and the Russian Empire carry enough danger to be better separated from it with a rickety buffer state ("Pufferstaat")?[173]

While witnessing the above-mentioned tension between the major powers in the region, members of the Polish intelligentsia had a ready-made spatial narrative which, on the one hand,

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[171] Mariusz Kopczyński, "'Absolutyzm' versus 'polonizm': Bismarck, panslawizm a powstanie styczniowe," ['Absolutism' versus 'Polonism': Bismarck, Pan-Slavism and the January Uprising] *Historia i Polityka* 10 (2013): 17, 59.
[172] Ibidem, 57.
[173] Ibidem, 63.

could accommodate the German fears of the Russian expansion, and on the other, justify Poland's restoration.

The concept of *Antemurale Christianitatis* or *Przedmurze* ["the Bulwark"] signified the position of Poland as a rampart which secured Europe from the Russia's intention to expand territorially. It served yet another manifestation of the West-East dichotomy vested in the Polish mental mapping. *Przedmurze* was not only a politically motivated idea which proposed a particular collective security model, but it also brought forward a whole variety of long-lasting cultural meanings about the Polish historical mission. The term itself dates to the early modern period and was coined amidst the pending challenge for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth coming from the Ottoman Empire. Initially, the meaning of *Antemurale* was applied to the countries like Malta, Venice, Crete, or Poland which stood at the forefront of the Ottoman expansion during the sixteenth century. At that time, it became a very useful and illustrative way of describing an external threat encroaching the European space. In the view of Janusz Tazbir, "Antemurale evoked specific associations referring to military architecture. Hence, it was clear to everyone that the fall of the bulwark must mean an approach to the walls themselves, and thus a deadly danger for the fortresses surrounded by them."[174] Beyond its normative and ideological appeal, this spatial concept was utilised by the Polish state to bolster its position in the international sphere: "According to Poles, Europe needed to be constantly reminded of who was guarding the south-eastern outskirts of the continent. It was the only and surest way to gain allies, or at least military reinforcements and subsidies."[175]

The significance of the concept increased even more in the nineteenth century when Poles did not have their own state. The idea of *Przedmurze* involved a clear boundary-making between "the West" and "the East" in the context of the 1860s. However, the Ottoman Empire was succeeded by tsarist Russia as the Polish main adversary. In addition, the previous religious connotations paved the way for more civilisational differentiation with no less dichotomic outlook. Accordingly, it was the aim of this spatialisation to present Russia as a non-European power within the architecture of the continental state-system. Deeply confrontational attitudes of Russian pan-slavists, such as Michail Katkow or Konstantin Aksanov, criticising the Western moral corruption, weaknesses of parliamentary regimes fuelled the Polish assumptions about the unsolvable tensions between European and Russian civilisations. In other words, the more

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[174] Janusz Tazbir, ''Od antemurale do przedmurza, dzieje terminu,'' [From the antemurale to the bulwark, the history of the term] *Odrodzenia i Reformacja w Polsce* 24 (1984), 170.
[175] Ibidem.

Pan-slavism highlighted Russian unique "national qualities," "historical mission" and the need "to go West," the more convincing the *Przedmurze* narrative was, as it articulated the necessity to build political and conceptual wall against "the expanding East." With the growing influence of Prussia, Germany became included in the Polish plans of containing the Russian power. Germany would be protected by the resurrected Polish state or become involved in a common defence of "the wall" that divided "the West" from "the East."

The idea of a spatial separation of Russia from the rest of Europe by forging a collaboration between Poles, Germans and French emerged in the writings of Władysław Czartoryski (1828-1894). Being the son of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski and acclaimed leader of the Polish conservative-liberal circles in exile, positioned Władysław at the heart of the Polish political activism in Paris. Władysław Czartoryski was continuously supporting the Polish independence aspirations through "informal diplomacy" and promotion of the Polish culture. During the January Uprising he took up the role of a spokesperson of the insurgent authorities. In 1861, he published a political pamphlet under the title *Le Rhin et al. Vistule* which was extensively commented by the French and Polish press. Within this political essay the author addressed the growing likelihood of a conflict between France and unifying Germany over the left bank of the Rhine as both sides claimed political and historical ownership over this territory.

While anticipating the potential conflict, Czartoryski embraced the French perspective and envisaged the benefits and difficulties which could derive from the acquisition of Rhine's left bank. Contrary to many French voices of that time, he was hesitant about the prospects of expanding French borders. In his view, the idea of the Rhine as a "natural" French border which entailed historical claims (dating back to the 17th century) and strategic considerations was questionable. Conceptualising the river as a profound military barrier against the German aggression was against Czartoryski's reasoning who asserted that: "Someone could say that the great river is a good strategic border. In the past, you might have thought so, but today nobody should dare to forward such an assumption. May the great water have the steepest shores, today it is no longer an obstacle; and the greater it is, the easier it is to attack."[176] At the same time, the Polish author stresses the fact that the region of Alsace is inhabited by native Germans, which could disrupt the internal relations within France. Instead of advocating a confrontational stance against France's neighbours, Czartoryski proposes a different geopolitical perspective which, surprisingly, envisioned a rapprochement between France and Germany, and especially

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[176] Władysław Czartoryski, "'Ren i Wisła' (Le Rhin et al. Vistule), U Amyota w Paryżu," [Rhine and Vistula: At Amyot in Paris]*Gazeta Wielkiego Xięstwa Poznańskiego*, 12.10.1861, nr 239, 2.

Prussia. In the view of the author, French and German foreign policies ought to be more conscious of greater danger that was looming in "the East":

> So, Germany is wrongly afraid of the dangers of France; let them cast aside their fear and lay down their weapons, and our aversion will also disappear. The Germans are not in danger from the west . . . [but they are concerned about] the eastern border; it is not France, but Russia [that threatens them] . . . If Russia reforms successfully, it will gain the strength that will allow it to push westward. Germany will become its first and surest victim. It is useless to defend the Rhine when [Russia] controls the Oder. This moment should be anticipated [and] we ought to be prepared for it. Instead of the Rhine, which is not attacked by anyone, the Germans should be assisted with a rampart on the Vistula River and get ready for the defence. Instead of supporting the destruction of the Polish nation, Germany should turn this nation into a shield for itself . . . [At the same time, Germans] should gather the scattered members [other German states] and reunite into an independent nation. From this perspective, they should transform themselves from [our] enemies to our defenders.[177]

The dispute over the Rhine is presented by the author as a minor consideration in comparison to the major challenge for the security of entire Europe, posed by the Russian Empire. In this way, Czartoryski strives to make the European states more conscious about "the bigger picture" of international relations. In order to counter the pending threat in "the East", Germany should acquire more strength through a process of national unification and support the re-establishment of Poland. Thus, the path towards the reconciliation between France and Germany leads through the recognition of the Polish Question. Czartoryski adheres to the chief goals of the Polish "informal diplomacy" which entailed instigating antagonism between Russia and the rest of Europe. If the image of Russia as a threat prevails, the resurrection of independent Poland will become the key to maintaining stability on the continent:

> The division of Poland was not only a crime, but also a great mistake on the part of the German states . . . By compensating the damage, they had been drawn into, they would have given Europe a guarantee of proper development. Let Germany, then, stop looking anxiously at the left bank of its most beautiful river . . . Elsewhere is a danger, and it will disappear when both great countries recognise the need to restore, on the banks of the Vistula, this guard of Christianity and the protector of states' freedom and independence.[178]

In the last paragraph, the references to the idea of *Przedmurze* are particularly visible. Czartoryski replicates the already existing argument about the necessity of introducing an

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[177] Ibidem.
[178] Ibidem.

intermediate power in between Prussia and Russia which could protect Europe from the undesired influences of "the Eastern despotism." One also needs to pay attention to cultural meanings which are embedded in this geopolitical idea. Czartoryski presents restored Poland as the ultimate defender of the Latin version of Christianity. This closely corresponds with the older concept of "Antemurale Christianitatis."

An analogical line of reasoning was forwarded by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1812-1887), a Polish conservative writer, and historian. He is best known for novels as well as the epic descriptions of the history of Poland. Nevertheless, he was also actively engaged in the Polish independence struggle as a journalist and member of revolutionary organisations. Kraszewski fled the Congress Kingdom in the aftermath of the January Uprising to avoid Russian repression. After leaving the Polish lands, he settled in Dresden, became a leader of the Polish community, and even obtained Saxon citizenship. Kraszewski throughout his career expressed a deeply critical view of German culture and politics. However, he also agreed that the chief Polish political obligation entailed eradication of Russian influences within the European space. And without the support of Germany this aim appeared unreachable. In his *Rachunki* [The (Political) Bills] (1867), the author provided a broad view of the political situation in Europe and a set of recommendations on how to cultivate the national consciousness among the Polish population. In the initial chapter of the work, Poland was conceptualised as the only reliable barrier for "the West" against "the East":

> The recent transformation of Europe, the increasingly audacious policy of Moscow, vividly revealed the need for the indispensable restoration of independent and strong Poland, which would once again stand as a barrier against the barbarism that threatens to support socialism and the proletariat of the West. Austria only starts to recognise this need. Prussia will also share a similar feeling. [D]espite the friendly relations with Moscow, it will not avoid antagonism with [Russia] . . . In the reality of a threatened [Western] civilisation, against which the young Russia has taken a stance so openly militant, Poland as the front guard and border fortress is inevitable; it is as important to Germany today as it was to France.[179]

It is hardly accidental that the German powers (Prussia and Austria) occupy a crucial stage in Kraszewski's vision of the European order. In his view, these actors only now became aware of the pending question of the Russian expansion. For Austro-Hungary, the Russian threat takes the form of accelerating competition in the Balkans. Prussia's status would become also at stake if it continued to appease the Russian Empire and, subsequently, fail to secure its

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[179] Bolesław Bolesławita (Józef Ignacy Kraszewski), *Z roku 1867. Rachunki: rok drugi* [The (political) bills from the year 1867: the second year] (Poznań: nakładem księgarni Jana Konst. Żupańskiego, 1868), 59.

position in Central-Eastern Europe. A moderate power in between, could take off the pressure from the German states. On an ideological level, the instability created by Russia is twofold. At first, the author employs a commonly reoccurring argument about the "barbarian" aspect that Russia brings into the European politics. However, one is also stunned to notice that the Romanov empire is accused of supporting the movement of revolutionary socialism across European industrialising societies, and hence, bringing more fuel to the Social Question. This kind of assertation most certainly could appeal to the conservative elites governing the states like Prussia or Austria where the anxiety related the rise of labour movement and socialist parties was considerable.

Kraszewski acknowledges that it is especially painful to pick geopolitical sides whilst both Germans and Russians immiserated the Polish nation. Nevertheless, he asserts that if Poland were to choose its oppressor, it would be better off by picking at least a "civilised" one:

> I admit that while having no other possibilities I would rather be a German human than a bloodthirsty, Muscovite animal. Let us suppose for a moment . . . that by saving its independence from an extermination . . . a nation voluntarily agrees to renounce its nationality and assimilates a brotherly national consciousness . . . Then it cannot at least choose a backward and a barbaric nationality for itself as it would drag it several centuries back; [It cannot also agree for] a type of governance which gives no guarantee for the free development of an individual.[180]

The quote above contains consequential insights for the spatial position of Germany. First and foremost, one can clearly deduce that the western neighbours of Poland represent a higher civilisational status than Russia. Another difference between Russians and Germans concerns the embraced system of governance – the Romanov's absolutism does not recognise any form of individual rights whereas Germans, at least, cultivate the tradition of Kantian *Rechtsstaat* – a society and a state which is arranged in accordance with legal procedures and rights of individuals. Western individualism pithed against Eastern collectivism was another means of distinguishing the bodies of space. Within this conceptual framework Germany is evidently perceived a representative of "the West". Accordingly, Kraszewski asserts that any form of the Russian advancement resulted from the appropriation of German ideas. Still, they proved to be unable to change the mentality and organisation of the Russian state: "As little light as it [Russia] received, it undeniably came from Germany and the West. It was the fault of the Germans that, while taking advantage of despotism, they sustained it [and] that they provided

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[180] Ibidem, 127.

the light sparingly; [Not enough] to change the form of a government that was poisoning everything in the bud."[181]

The idea of *Przedmurze* was also not alien to Józef Szujski, a nineteenth-century Polish conservative historian from Cracow, in the Austrian partition. While witnessing the Polish failed attempts to recreate the statehood, he devoted his intellectual life towards tracing the historical origins of Poland's decay and its ultimate collapse. This became the underlying theme of *Kilka prawd z dziejów naszych ku rozważeniu w chwili obecnej* [A few truths from our history to consider at the present time] from 1867. In his view, historical events and tendencies carried a profound impact on the existing international order. Moreover, he asserts that the past experiences positioned Poland as a guardian of the European security:

> Fighting incessantly through the ages, against the barbaric, ever-pressing East, defending every inch of the earth with streams of our best blood, thus shielding Europe, we have acquired the name of the bulwark of Christianity, a name indeed full of glory, of which we can rightly be proud. It is enough to indicate a whole series of struggles and countless battles, beginning with St. Jadwiga, sacrificing her own son to stop the Tatar hordes, all the way to [king Jan III] Sobieski, who saved Vienna [in 1683]. We happily and proudly carried out our mission until those who ought to support us [German states] joined our enemy [Russia].[182]

By evoking concrete examples from the Polish past, Szujski embeds the concept of *Przedmurze* in a broader teleological sense. However, his rhetorical device does not merely serve to solidify the Polish national identity around a peculiar vision of history. Instead, the spatial vision of *Przedmurze* also retains its validity when it comes to the current political situation. The author anticipates that under the current circumstances both Austria and Prussia would join Poland in the fulfilment of their "historical mission": "Five centuries ago, our enemy was Germany, today it is only Moscow. Because only Moscow has an unfulfilled mission ahead of it, and Austria stands in the way of its fulfilment. Prussia may take the side of Russia, but having consolidated once as a German state, it has no interest in oppressing us anymore, because every Western state knows that killing a nation leads to the loss of its own strength."[183]

The conceptual attempt to continuously frame European international politics as the West-East divide suffered from an accelerating tension between France and unifying Germany.

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[181] Ibidem, 189.
[182] Józef Szujski*, Kilka prawd z dziejów naszych ku rozważeniu w chwili obecnej* [A few truths from our history to consider at the present time] (Kraków: W drukarni C.K. Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego pod zarządem Konst. Mańkowskiego, 1867), 1.
[183] Ibidem.

Already in 1867, Zygmunt Gutt (1831-1882) a less-known figure of the Polish political emigration in Paris and a commentator of international affairs acknowledged a potential danger coming from the conflict between these two European powers:

> A civil war, a German war against France would be a fatal defeat [for everyone], but fortunately [such a scenario] is impossible. A war in the name of freedom, progress and civilisation, the war of allied Europe against the barbaric East is by no means a danger - its result is known, its effects would be salutary. Once it begins, it will revive the stock markets, activate capital, and give new impetus to trading operations and industrial turnover. Such a war is not a disaster, it is not a scourge for society. [I]n the words of Napoleon III, it may be compared to the salutary overflows of the Nile, which seem terrible [but] they bring wealth, happiness, abundance.[184]

Rather than focusing on the mutual disagreements, "the West" could revive its sense of moral and material purpose by confronting the Russian Empire. Keeping the relevance of the "Polish-German bulwark" protecting Europe from "the East" became even more challenging as France and Germany became engaged in a direct war (1870-1871). Amid the conflict, the majority of Polish public opinion expressed its support for France, in accordance with the already developed the long-lasting sense of friendship between both nations. Still, there were also voices which deemed the unconditional support of Paris as remnants of Romanticist fantasies. In the views of some, Napoleon III would never play the role of Napoleon I. Accordingly, the Polish nation should formulate a down-to-earth policy which defined its position in the language of "interests" and attainable aims.

This type of intellectual argumentation certainly stood behind an anonymous publication titled *Kilka uwag z powodu wypadków na Zachodzie* [A few remarks about the occurrences in the West] (1870). It is implicitly suggested in the introduction that the author was a citizen of the Russian partition. By implication, the lack of a clearly stated authorship was informed by a fear of a potential persecution in the Congress Kingdom. At first, the author rearranges the traditional Polish perspective of international relations by stating clearly that aligning with France would not bring any desirable outcomes for the Polish cause: "How do we benefit from France beating Prussia? Let the parochial politicians say what they want, I dare to answer: nothing . . . [As] addressing the Polish question by France would require the power [and

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[184] Bolesław Świerszcz (Zygmunt Gutt), P*rasa polska i sentymentalizm polityczny. Odpowiedź Dziennikowi Poznańskiemu i Gazecie Toruńskiej* [The Polish Press and Political Sentimentalism. A Response to Dziennik Poznański and Gazeta Toruńska] (Leipzig: Księgarnia Pawła Rhode w Lipsku, 1867), 15-16.

political capabilities] which Napoleon I exercised. This is impossible today."[185] By effectively reversing the geopolitical optics, the Prussian victory seems much more consequential for the European order: "It is different if we set the question the other way around and assume that Prussia will win in the present battle. The immediate effects are self-evident . . . all of Central Europe will succumb to the hegemony of Prussia."[186] Building on that assumption, the main point conveyed by the author entails the inclusion of unified Germany into the conceptual framework of West-East dichotomy since Germany and Russia started to act upon mutually incompatible geopolitical interests: "A collision between the Germans and Russia is then inevitable, as Moscow politicians have already predicted . . . Both these powers pursue the same goal; one wants to unite the Germanic element together, the other (as for now) seize all the lands inhabited by the Slavs." [187]

Both countries strive to bolster its position within the state-system on the basis on ethnicity but only the expansion of Russia is depicted as an existential threat of Europe. In contrast, Germany could transform into a stabilising force once it reaches it "maturity", after finalising the unification process: "And if any of the European states may threaten with their aspirations for universal rule, it is certainly Russia, not united Germany (not Prussia, which must be modified due to the fusion of all Germans), although newspaper screams are now turning against them; because, apart from the fact that this tribe has reached the necessary political maturity, it cannot cultivate such an expansive and warlike spirit.[188]" Similarly to the argumentation of other authors, the empire under the reign of the Romanovs could instil its absolutist and repressive inclinations into other states:

> Muscovites act in the name of the Pan-Slavic idea . . . The terror of Russia facing the West will increase a hundredfold, because the whole mass of [Slavic] peoples . . . united under the strong unified power of the tsar and encouraged by a supposed historical mission to transform the Latin-Germanic and Romanesque civilisation by adding Greco-Slavic elements will collapse onto the West and destroy all liberal institutions that humanity has so far managed to create through blood and unshakable spirit.[189]

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[185] [Anonymous] Z….. z Korczyna, *Kilka uwag z powodu wypadków na Zachodzie (Kwestja Polska): Głos ze stolicy do wszystkich rozsądnych w Narodzie* [A few remarks about the events in the West (Polish Question): A voice from the capital to all sane people in the nation]. (Kraków: nakładem autora, czcionkami drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego pod zarządem Konstantego Mańkowskiego, 1870), 6-7.
[186] Ibidem, 7-8.
[187] Ibidem, 8.
[188] Ibidem, 9-10.
[189] Ibidem, 10.

The author concludes the analysis with clearly delineated differences between the Polish (Western) and Russian (Eastern) national characters. They were formulated on the premise that territoriality, ethnicity, and history determined the internal socio-political arrangements but also the behaviour of states in the international arena. Given the "Eastern" character of Russia, it could barely contribute to European path towards liberty and progress. This creates a direct ideological link with the notion of *Przedmurze:* *"Poland, in accordance with the spirit of Western Slavic lands, stood for historically developed and traditionally cherished elements of Western civilisation. In contrast, the Moscow tsar created [his state] on the ruins of the Mongolian khanate, and [only] provides Europe with the desire for partitions [and] a centralist-bureaucratic system with [strong] and military elements."*[190]

From the overview provided above, one needs to recognise that Polish authors perceived Germany as a pivotal force in containing the influences of the Russian Empire. This may occur surprising as at that time the Polish-German relations were hostile. Clearly, the negative attitude of Bismarck and the Prussian elites towards Poles is one noticeable example. As Klaus Zernack, a German scholar, rightly indicates "like Frederick the Great a hundred years earlier, Bismarck was able to use the Russian-Polish conflict in the interests of Prussia, and the future Germany."[191] However, without a state of their own, Poles required the German assistance in fulfilling their historical obligation. Thus, Germany, which started to accumulate greater political significance and economic power, was included in the spatial idea of *Przedmurze*.

Germany as a Model Nation-State

While some members of the Polish intelligentsia sought to utilise Germany in their struggle against "the East", others started to perceive the German unification process and the Prussian leadership as a political benchmark to follow. The latter voices were undoubtedly much less frequent. Nonetheless, some elements of the German consolidation could serve as a valuable lesson for Poles. To start off, the political organisation of Germany did not resemble the arrangements from the previous decades. By implication, this was not Germany from the late 1840s - imagined as utterly divided, weak and without a clear sense of purpose. The difference was considerable as at the beginning of the 1870s the patchwork of states, principalities, city-states was surpassed by one, powerful, political organism. The region which

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[190] Ibidem, 12.
[191] Zernack, *Polska i Rosja*, 416.

was historically divided into multiple territorial entities acquired the form of the North-German Confederation (1867) and the German Empire (1871).

These occurrences inspired German authors but also external observants to sketch a new vision of the European state system. First, while experiencing the failures of the national uprisings in 1831 and 1864, members of the Polish intelligentsia started to question the effectiveness of revolutionary attempts. Subsequently, they increasingly paid attention to structural changes in the European international relations which could improve the Polish situation. Second, the Romanticist idealism, which to a great extent informed Polish political choices and alliances, found itself under heavy criticism from a new intellectual trend - Positivism. By the same token, rationalism and pragmatism were instilled in the political realm and took the place of megalomanic and unachievable goals. Even if *Realpolitik* was primarily championed by Prussia's prime minister, Otto von Bismarck, the Polish intelligentsia recognised its elements as possibly beneficial for its own cause. The mutual reinforcement of these factors is convincingly described by the historian Ivan T. Berend who asserts that: "After repeated defeat, however, they opened a new chapter in the nation's history and started nation-building the other way around: a new concept of 'organic work,' or political, cultural, and economic modernization, emerged."[192]

There were several ways in which this ideational background impacted the Polish perspective on Germany. The Polish press, across varying political and geographical contexts, evoked the ideal of deep synergy between Latin and Germanic cultural threads. Feliks Wrotnowski (1803-1871), a revolutionary and journalist, asserted on the pages of Polish conservative-liberal émigré journal *Wiadomości Polskie* that:

> Moscow was subjugated to the East, the Byzantine Empire, and took from it all the elements of religious corruption and moral contamination. Poland was united with the West, with its church, with its Latin-German civilisation, and from there it drew all its strength to improve the dignity of people, to convert and unite peoples. Consequently, the West has its entire raison d'être in the past . . . And woe to those who intend to tear this holy Union down.[193]

In a similar manner an anonymous author of *Dziennik Poznański* – a Polish daily political newspaper issued in the Prussian partition, acknowledged the fact that Germany was evidently

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[192] Ivan T. Berend, *History Derailed: Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2003), 100.

[193] Feliks Wrotnowski, "Katechizm Nie-rycerski," [A non-knightly catechism] *Wiadomości Polskie*, vol. 11, nr 8, February 19th 1859, 30.

a respected representative of "the West" due to its historical traditions and deeply embedded animosity towards Russia:

> Germany is undoubtedly one of the phalanxes of the Western world, one of Moscow's natural enemies, and, in a well-understood self-interest, of Poland's allies. The [true] spirit of the German nation revealed itself in accommodating the remnants of the Polish army in 1831 with fervent sympathy, or considering the destruction of the Polish political existence in 1848 as a crime . . . [I]t is desirable for civilisation and for the future of Europe, that the old German spirit should emancipate itself from its present forms, become itself again, and begin to serve moral and political truths in practice.[194]

At the same time, the fascination with Prussian-German achievements transformed into a noticeable tendency among the Polish conservative circles, especially the ones located in the Austrian partition. This group was commonly labelled as *Stańczycy* or Cracow conservatists. The views which underlined the ideological positioning of this political group were reflected in the series of political pamphlets under the title *Teka Stańczyka* (1869) in which the authors criticised the Polish insurrectionist traditions and embraced a conciliatory stance towards the ruling emperor Franz Joseph II. Their support of loyalism is best captured in the phrase: "We declare from the bottom of our hearts that we stand and want to stand with You, Your Majesty."[195] However, their main political agenda envisioned not only the rapprochement with the liberalising Austro-Hungarian state, but also entailed a much greater recognition of Germany as a noticeable power. In their mental mapping, the unifying state under the leadership of Prussia was bringing an added institutional, geopolitical, and cultural value to "the West."

Stanisław Koźmian (1836-1922), a politician, cultural critic, and historian, was among the most prominent members of the *Stańczycy* group. His intellectual and political recognition peaked during the 1870s and 1880s. However, he had already been an active political commentator in the preceding decades. Polish historian Mariusz Manz has accurately characterised the political profile of Koźmian: "he focused on reaching the most influential circles of public opinion with his message and was convinced that in this way he could really alter the reality. Therefore, instead of political Romanticism, he proposed the so-called Realpolitik. He claimed that the [Polish] nation had lived a fantasy so far and had dreamed more

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[194] "Dalsze uwagi nad obecną sytuacją," [Futher reflections about the current situation] *Dziennik Poznański*, nr 103, May 3rd, 1868, 1.

[195] "List galicyjskiego Sejmu Krajowego do cesarza austriackiego," [The letter of the Galician assembly to the Austrian emperor] December 10th, 1866, https://muzhp.pl/pl/e/1516/list-galicyjskiego-sejmu-krajowego-do-cesarza-austriackiego, accessed on Jun. 3rd, 2022.

than it thought [about reality].[196] Essentially, Koźmian represented conservative loyalism. Nonetheless, this attitude did not necessarily exclude the Polish national aspirations. In his view, the recognition of Polish national separateness could be secured through a compromise with the partitioning powers - Poles were to renounce their aspirations for independence, and the rulers were to guarantee their respect for national rights.[197] In 1869, Koźmian published a series of essays dedicated towards the North-German Confederation in *Przegląd Polski,* a monthly science and literature journal with a permanent political section. The confederation was brought into existence (1867) by Prussia in the aftermath of the Austro-Prussian war (1866). It gathered a variety of northern German states which included kingdoms (like Prussia and Saxony), grand duchies, principalities, and free cities. This new, federal entity was governed in accordance with the premises of constitutional monarchism, which secured the establishment of the national parliament, introduction of universal male suffrage and customs union. Given the scope of political changes happening in Germany, the content of Koźmian's writings considered the internal organisation of the state, mentality of its inhabitants as well as the position within the international state-system. Before initiating the actual analysis, Koźmian distanced himself from the "Polish perspective" in order to "objectively" assess the achievements of other nations. Following his line of reasoning, he introduced at least several qualities which make Germany, under the Prussian leadership, "Western."

In the Polish vision of "the civilised West" a nation had to be governed in accordance with parliamentary rules, bureaucratic impartiality and the rights of individuals that guarantee freedom and prosperity. Only these values could result in greater respect and acceptance within the international sphere. Accordingly, Koźmian asserts that it is precisely the durability of the internal socio-political arrangements that permitted Prussia to expand its power at the expense of other European states: "What kind of factors brought about this happy state of the Prussian monarchy, so unique in Europe today? Here, we do not hesitate to say the wisdom of the government and its internal policies. The Prussian government has always tried to base its own power on the prosperity and satisfaction of the majority of the population."[198] Contrary to the Polish argumentation from the previous decades, Prussia no longer epitomised the Russian-type

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[196] Mariusz Menz, "Rzecz o roku 1863 – argument z historii w myśli politycznej krakowskiego stańczyka Stanisława Koźmiana," [About they year 1863 – an historical argument in the political thought of Stanisław Koźmian] *Klio Polska: Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Historiografii Polskiej* 11 (2019), 14.

[197] Ibidem.

[198] Stanisław Koźmian, "Północny Związek Niemiecki, dzieło hr. Bismarka, przez St. Koźmiana," [North-German Confederation, the work of hr. Bismark, [described] by St. Koźmian] *Przegląd Polski*, vol. 3, nr 10, April 1869, (Kraków: w drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego pod zarządem Konst. Mańkowskiego, 1869), 261.

absolutism but, rather, it was an ideal of a conservative balance, in which the introduced elements of democratic representation did not undermine the role of the traditional elites:

> There are no privileges here, on the contrary, there is complete civil and political equality, and yet the nobility kept their estates and traditions, and even a certain position, thus being neither a burden for anyone, nor a barrier, nor a thorn in the side. In this way, this state, absorbing everything modern, has not completely freed itself from what was good in the old days and that is why it is dominated by the activity and life of modern democrats combined with the fortitude and strength of the Teutonic Knights.[199]

Interestingly, the author perceives the North-German Confederation as a successful combination of the modern institutional organisation and the pre-modern patriotic instincts and traditions. The claim about the "complete equality" contrasts very starkly with the societal reality of the confederation, in which the Prussian class of "Junkers" exercised dominance over the political and economic processes. Still, Koźmian goes even one step further as he compares the state of individual freedom in Germany and France. Traditionally, France was perceived in the Polish political thought as a beacon of political sophistication, institutional effectiveness, and the source of modern human rights, transmitted through a collective, revolutionary effort. Despite this long-lasting intellectual tendency, the conservative author strives to reverse this perspective: "Today, even the ever-fresh charm of liberalism, progress, and new ideas would not surround the French flag planted on German soil. In every respect, Germany is equal, if not superior to France, and even under the Prussian government, political and personal freedom is even greater than under the present-day Napoleonic government."[200] Acknowledging the alleged "German superiority" over France in respect to liberal governance should be considered as a truly exceptional and at the same time tantalising statement for the standards of the Polish political discourse. But the ideological lens of conservatism through which Koźmian assessed the occurring events provides a meaningful explanation. With the distaste for the revolutionary efforts and the anxiety oriented towards the Social Question, unifying Germany could appear as a new political model which fitted in between the Russian absolutism and the French radical republicanism. Essentially, Koźmian intended to encourage the Poles living under the Prussian

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[199] Ibidem, 262.
[200] Ibidem, 259.

partition to participate in this new political project, similarly to the way in which Galicia maintained its position within the Austro-Hungary.[201]

Another factor which indicated the German aptness to become a part of "the West" was related to economic developments. It needs to be stressed that the process of German unification, concluded in 1871, coincided with the accelerating process of industrialisation. W. O. Henderson demonstrates in his analysis of the German economic advancement during the first half of the nineteenth century that: "It was not merely after 1871 that coal and steel, cotton and wool, chemicals and electricity, shipbuilding and shipping, banking and insurance expanded rapidly in Germany. Earlier progress in the days of the Zollverein also contributed to making Germany the leading industrial state on the Continent."[202] A similar recognition can be found in the writings of contemporaries. Koźmian describes unifying Germany as a place where economic growth is consciously stimulated by central authorities: "[The government] never detached its own good from the prosperity of the whole country, above all from its material well-being, it always advocated, so to speak, 'an input economy', not an exploitative one, which is much less exhausting."[203] Moreover, he points towards the close symbiosis between the government and national industries which allowed the implementation of technological innovations. New discoveries, especially with a military potential, assisted the realisation of political goals, outlined by the Prussian state: "The authorities diligently, eagerly, and wisely assimilate everything that constitutes moral and material progress in the world. Economic, social, and even political reforms, great inventions, especially applicable in war, find in it a prudent, not a boastful supporter."[204]

Koźmian's final verdict about the spatial position of Germany on the mental map of Europe went beyond the nexus of institutional and economic considerations. Ultimately, it was the moral qualities that determined the spatial adherence to "the West." Following his previous argumentation, Koźmian perceives Germans as a particularly esteemed nation: "The moral condition of this society shows undeniable superiority over other and European societies. [C]orruption here is relatively lesser than in other parts of Europe. On the other hand, the character and temperament of northern Germans, especially in political terms, ensures their rule

[201] Mariusz Menz, "Z dziejów polskiego konserwatyzmu Od Józefa Kalasantego Szaniawskiego do krakowskich stańczyków," ["." [From the history of Polish conservatism. From Józef Kalasanty Szaniawski to the Cracovian Stańczyk group] *Galicja: studia i materiały* 7 (2021), 231.
[202] W. O. Henderson, *The Zollverein* (Abingdon: Routledge 1984 [1939]), 2.
[203] Koźmian, ''Północny Związek Niemiecki, dzieło hr. Bismarka, przez St. Koźmiana," 261.
[204] Ibidem, 261.

over southern Germany."[205] The employed division between the northern and the southern parts of country are evoked to signify not only the political differentiation (with Bavaria or Baden-Württemberg being traditionally allied with Austria) but also the religious one. German Protestantism with its emphasis placed on the work ethic, dedication but also obedience started to be perceived, around that time, also as one of the sources of the Prussian success.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that mental maps served as a convincing ideological framework if they employed spatial counterexamples. The deeply internalised conviction about the uniqueness of "the West" would turn meaningless without "the East" fulfilling the role of the alien space. Not surprisingly, Koźmian constructs his narrative about the cultural and political advancement of Germany by making stark contrasts with Russia:

> If anyone wants to find out what is a giant without any moral compass, what is a material power, not based on moral power, what is finally a huge and powerful state with a morally sick society, let us look at Russia! On the contrary, in our opinion, the main reason for the power and real strength of the Northern Confederation, and its superiority over other countries, is the moral condition of its society, and the character and temperament of northern Germans.[206]

In the quote mentioned above, the primary conceptual boundary between "the West" and "the East" is encapsulated by the struggle between materialism and idealism. Apart from purely cultural considerations, this form of framing carried political implications. For Koźmian, the incompatible civilisational traits of Germany and Russia, could pave the way for a completely new geopolitical situation in Central-Eastern Europe. At the point, when Prussia was finalising its grand project of Germany's unification, the Polish author already envisioned a great rift between the former allies:

> The antagonism is best felt on the Prussian-Russian border, where . . . constant arguments and disputes, have already resulted in an interpellation to the Prussian chambers [Landtag]. Today Muscovites are so rude, so frolic, so ignoring anything that even in the border zone, in the eyes of the civilised world, they commit rapes and lawlessness, which often painfully affect - in the full sense of the word - Prussian subjects. Prussia is a civilised state, Germany is an enlightened and European nation, and this unheard-of behaviour, contrary to all human notions, outrages them and overwhelms them with horror and fear. Therefore, count Bismarck did not eagerly address a well-known interpellation regarding the re-

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[205] Ibidem, 411.
[206] Ibidem.

launch of the cartel convention with Russia, and limited himself to an evasive reply.[207]

According to the Polish politician, these civilisational differences reveal themselves in such mundane aspects as trading agreements and the organisation of customs at the mutual border. The fragment reveals a profound anticipation, if not even expectation, that Germany under the leadership of Bismarck would abandon the pragmatic approach towards international politics and embrace a more idealistic and ideological stance which requires to protect Europe from the undesired influences of "the East" in Europe. In a way, it was a quite clever way of talking Prussia-Germany into breaking the relationship with its long-lasting partner. At the heart of this assumption stood the evolving position of Prussia within Central-Eastern Europe. By implication, in the view of the author, there was a causal link between German unification and the rising tension with Moscow: "The more Prussia is transformed into Germany, the more the need for an alliance with Russia will cease, although perhaps Russia will be indispensable for them [Germans] to complete the work as a tool. Once the work is finished, the alliance will turn into antagonism." [208] Taking all these elements together, beneath the description of the North-German Confederation, Koźmian enclosed an idealised vision of a "Western state." It was depicted as a political entity which successfully brought together conservative values, modern institutions, and mature national consciousness. Accordingly, the German case was transformed into a meaningful example for Poles. Within the Polish discourse, France or Great Britain exercised the position of a political role-model – a benchmark for Poles to follow. That is why, adding Germany to this group ought to be treated as a considerable break with the previous intellectual tradition. Despite the fact that Poland and Germany had been political adversaries, Germany started to resemble "the West," or even surpassed the previous developmental models, and thus, it earned recognition in Koźmian's eyes.

This stance of the Polish author turns to be even more surprising once we realise that his opinion about Germany evolved in the succeeding decades. As an ardent Austrian loyalist, he became a vocal critic of Bismarck and the war crimes committed by the Prussian forces in France during the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871).[209] As Piotr Wimmers has demonstrated, Koźmian went as far as proposing to align the interests of Austria and France against the rising power of Prussia: "In short, Austria has to collaborate with France in order to quell Prussia's

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[207] Ibidem, 437-438.
[208] Ibidem, 437.
[209] Piotr Wimmers, *Research Report III: The Stanczyk Group during the Franco-Prussian War*, December 15th, 2021, internal communication, 3.

rise to power so that it can successfully defend Europe (and Germany) from the Russian threats emanating from the East."[210] Moreover, while witnessing the intentions to Germanise the Poznań region, during the last decades of the nineteenth century, Koźmian started to view German and Russian attitudes towards the Polish Question as equally detrimental. This assumption is most clearly displayed in his work under the title "O działaniach i dziełach Bismarcka" (1902) ["On the activities and deeds of Bismarck"].

This chapter scrutinised the ways in which the Polish intelligentsia included Germany into its mental map of Europe as a representative of "the West." It started from the premise that the overarching political situation on the continent between 1860 and 1871 provided Polish public opinion with an incentive to consider Prussia and its allies as the force of change in the European state system, facilitators of security or even, in some cases, beacons of political and moral advancements. Hence, it is justified to speak of a major shift in the Polish spatial imaginary.

At least several structural factors stimulated the change of political semantics. Evidently, Germany's unification process was accompanied by a profound acquisition of power and rising reputation in the eyes of the neighbours. From a patchwork of state, a unified nation-state emerged, with military and economic accomplishments. Therefore, attributing qualities of "weakness," "political inability" and the discrepancy between German emotional and political lives seemed no longer feasible. Crucially, Prussia's successes in the field of national unification sharply contrasted with the Polish failed attempts to regain independence, with the January Uprising (1863-1864) in the Congress Kingdom as an illustrative example. The achievements of Bismarck shed new light on the way in which international politics was conducted. Pragmatism in combination with diplomatic manoeuvres overshadowed the ideals of a democratic revolution as the source of nation-forming. During the 1860s, the intent of a Polish popular uprising was challenged by the idea to breach the solidarity among the partitioning powers. In respect to the daily political circumstances, Prussia remained an adversary of Poland. Yet, one could underestimate its power and position on the strategic level. Despite their scepticism and criticism of all partitioning powers, the Polish intelligentsia started to look for an opportunity to undermine the cooperation between the German states and Russia. They anticipated that the old framework of international relations, vividly represented by the Holy Alliance, would cease to exist due to the increasing competition in Central-Eastern

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[210] Ibidem.

Europe. Even though Bismarck managed to secure a close relationship with Russia during the 1860s and 1870s, Polish publicists were right in the long-term perspectives. As the succeeding decades revealed, the rift between the two powers started to grow. This tendency is clearly illustrated by the ultimate decomposition of the League of the Three Emperors in 1887.

Yet, it still needs to be answered how precisely Germany's traits became aligned with the ones of "the West." While considering the German "Westerness" two spatial tendencies can be identified. 1) Building on the anticipation that Germany and Russia found themselves on a collision course, the Polish authors integrated the western neighbour into the idea of *Przedmurze.* Here, the core argumentation entailed that, similarly to Poland, Germany ought to fulfil the role of a political and cultural bulwark against the Russian influences. In the view of figures such as Władysław Czartoryski or Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, the dangers coming from Pan-Slavism as well as the civilisational differences between Russia and the rest of Europe permitted the rapprochement between Poles and Germans. Bolstering Germany's conformity with the standards of the "the West" was not purely idealistic. In return, the Polish authors expected that Germany would support the resurrection of Poland, as an in-between power, capable of shielding Europe from the expansionism of the Romanovs. 2) Another vital trend in the Polish political discourse involved a recognition of Germany as a model Western nation-state. While observing the Prussia's attempt to consolidate Germany, Poles started to realise that this example could display valuable insights, especially because in Germany's case, as Christopher Clark puts it, "it was the nation that gave birth to the state."[211] Especially, within the argumentation provided by Stanisław Koźmian, it becomes clear how the perspective on the North-German Confederation was transformed into a conservative utopia – a country which is modern in political, institutional and economic senses but still adheres to the traditional values, and maintains hierarchical structure of the society.

Overall, the analytical outcomes of this chapter do not necessarily fit into the overarching historiographical narrative concerning the Polish-German relations during the second half of the nineteenth century. It is common, and not without a reason, for the historical literature to emphasise the solidification of external rule over the Polish lands in this period. German historian Klaus Zernack considers the 1860s as one of the most politically challenging moments for the Polish nation: "Together with the solution of the 'German question', by removing the German dualism, Poles - as a nation which, according to Bismarck's calculations,

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[211] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 229.

were supposed to pay the price for the maintenance of his [international] system – [Accordingly, they] were going through the most difficult period of their partition history. The pan-Slavic-Great-Russian oppression from the east was now supported by the radical policy of unified Prussian-German entity, after the creation of the North-German Confederation."[212] Marek A. Cichocki presents this period in a similar manner: "For two decades Bismarck's policies excluded any prospect of an understanding between Poles and Berlin."[213]

These interpretations create a bit of a discrepancy with the primary evidence presented above and, hence, they require further explanation. In a short-term perspective, this is undoubtedly justified to point towards the incompatibility of Polish and German interests, especially the Prussian ones. Prussia was among Poland's partitioners and Bismarck had no other intention to use "the Polish Question" as an effective tool in internal politics and interactions with Russia. However, in the long run, the unification of Germany facilitated the augmenting tension within the camp of the former Holly Alliance. Interestingly, the mid-nineteenth century Polish authors already identified this interdependence. Furthermore, the deployment of spatial ideas such as "the West" and "the East" served to sketch a structural and persisting trajectory of international relations and their cultural and strategic essence. That is why, some members of the Polish intelligentsia did not rule out a possibility of Germany, under the leadership of Prussia, becoming a pivotal player within the West-East divide. However, the momentum of the 1860s did not immediately transform into a durable shift of alliances. Instead, the succeeding decades within German-Polish relationship were marked by accelerating discrimination of the Polish minority, in the form of *Kulturkampf* or Germanisation processes, and the rise of the Polish national movement which willingly highlighted its anti-German character.

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[212] Zernack, *Polska i Rosja*, 420.
[213] Cichocki, "Poland – Between Germany and Russia," 30.

Conclusions

The question about the conceptual location of Germany constantly resurfaced in writings of Polish authors against the background of multiple processes, events, and intellectual tendencies. This thesis explored the Germany's spatial position in the eyes of the Polish intelligentsia. Evidently, the terms such as "the East" and "the West" served to describe the strength, morality, and international significance of the western neighbours within the European state system between the years 1848 and 1871. So far, the existing literature has either investigated the impact of West-East mental mapping strictly on the formulation of the Polish national identity or portrayed Poland as a victim of mental mapping, conducted by others. Crucially, this research considered the Polish historical actors as co-creators of mental maps rather than purely the recipients of other conceptualisations, most notably the German and Russian ones.

On a theoretical level, this thesis used the concept of mental map to analyse spatial imaginaries as a broader and politically consequential phenomenon in the nineteenth-century international relations. Through the lens of this imagined map, Poles effectively perceived the ongoing revolutionary struggles, wars, and diplomatic endeavours. In line with the argumentation provided by Marja Jalava, Stefan Nygård, and Johan Strang, the deployment of spatial imaginaries went beyond the purely cultural considerations. They paved the way for a whole spectrum of strategies that addressed the geopolitical asymmetries (i.e., between Poles and Germans).[214] These strategies were utilised by a specific historical actor. It was not the state, as Poland remained politically partitioned. Instead, public opinion, most notably constituting of the Polish intelligentsia (politicians, journalists, philosophers, and writers), accentuated the Polish voice about international affairs. To effectively contextualise the employed ideas about space, I investigated the primary sources from the methodological perspective of historical semantics.

On the Polish conceptual map of Europe, Germany occupied a crucial position. Germany's political and civilisational status was seen as ambiguous – it was filled with both positive and negative connotations. Its international esteem could be downgraded by highlighting its "inherent weakness of character", "political inability", "barbarity" or boosted by asserting the adherence to "the Latin-German civilisation", being "the European bulwark",

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[214] Marja Jalava, Stefan Nygård, and Johan Strang (eds.), *Decentering European Intellectual Space* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018), 3.

or stressing the increasing German advancement in politics and economy. In the course of the analysis, it became evident that these assumptions were heavily informed by the fluctuating state of European affairs. In this concluding chapter, it is my intention to present the main findings of the analysis as well as reflect on the broader analytical and methodological applicability of mental maps in studies concerning the nineteenth-century international relations.

Initially, I traced the genealogy of "the East" and "the West" in the Polish political discourse (Chapter 1). The partitions, paired with the intellectual impact generated by the Enlightenment, developed profoundly Occidentalist stances among the Polish elites. This is how "the West" emerged in the Polish political thought. At the same time, the development of the "the East" was closely related with international contexts (the Napoleonic Wars and the November Uprising). Accordingly, "the East" started to signify the behaviour, culture, and institutional organisation of the Russian Empire. After 1831, Germany became also included in this mental map. The similarity of experience among Poles and Germans (lack of a sovereign nation-state) created a political bond (engaging in joined revolutionary activities) but also facilitated close intellectual ties which involved imagining geographical space and filling it with emotional feelings.

Nonetheless, the atmosphere of Polish-German brotherhood did not last long, due to the way in which the events unfolded during the Spring of Nations. Given the Polish frustration about the failure of the revolutionary plans and the increasing hostility of the German discourse, a new intellectual tendency emerged among members of the Polish intelligentsia – to portray Germany as an "Eastern" country (Chapter 2). Accordingly, within the works of such authors as Bronisław Trentowski or Karol Libelt, Germany can be imagined as an epitome of the distant "East", by drawing similarities between Germans with Persians and the Chinese, or a representative of the close "East", by comparing Germany to Russia (Wincenty Mazurkiewicz).

During the 1860s, Germany was brought back into "the West" on the Polish mental map (Chapter 3). This was achieved in a twofold way. To meaningfully integrate Germany's culture and political interests with "the West", Polish authors like Władysław Czartoryski or Józef Ignacy Kraszewski used the concept of *Przedmurze* ("the Bulwark") to stress the historical role of Poland and Germany to counter influences coming from "the East". Another way of subscribing Germany to "the West" entailed highlighting Prussia's ability to bring together various parts of the country and merge into a model nation-state. For some Polish conservatives,

like Stanisław Koźmian, Germany from the late 1860s appeared as a successful combination of traditional values with modern institutions.

Main Findings

To meaningfully address the main research question, I divided the findings into three main aspects. First, I identified a causal relationship between the evolving structure of European international politics and the Polish formulation of spatial ideas about Germany. The more Germany was politically aligning with Russia, the more it was perceived, in the Polish eyes, as betraying "the West" and becoming "the East". Through the engagement with the Russian Empire, Germans as a nation lost political, cultural, and moral qualities. At first, the failure of revolutionary means in achieving the national unification during the revolutions 1848-1849, provided the Polish authors with a justification to perceive Germany as institutionally immature, intellectually ignorant, and politically susceptible to the influences of Russia. However, the assertion about Germany's "Eastness" became difficult to sustain when Prussia successfully embarked on the process of German unification, during the 1860s. By implication, the previously deployed spatial ideas had to be adjusted to the overarching political situation. Hence, we may observe that the evolution of the mental map was set within the specific timeframe. In between 1848 and 1871, Germany was conceptually moved from "the East" to "the West". How can we possibly make sense out such divergent opinions? I would like to propose that the nature of mental maps is enclosed in their ability to evolve and adjust to the underlying conditions of international relations. As Maria Todorova indicates, any type of change within a state-system provides an incentive to rearrange the existing spatial interpretations as "[humans] organize the information we receive into patters for which we, as perceivers, are responsible, even as we are often unconscious of them."[215] Crucially, these patterns are based on "the premises of . . . social production and the ideological underpinnings of [their] production, as well as the various forms of interpretation and representation that [they] embody."[216] These norms were subjugated to a constant evaluation and re-affirmation. And this particular feature of mental maps enabled to view Germany in some instances as the representative of "the West" or as the exemplification of "the barbaric East".

Second, it deems appropriate to establish which criteria, within the Polish political vocabulary, determined the adherence of Germany to the "Western" or "Eastern" civilisation.

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[215] Todorova, "Spacing Europe," 64.
[216] Mishkova and Trencsényi, "Conceptualizing Spaces within Europe," 213.

This aspect directly relates to the intellectual mindset of the Polish intelligentsia and its intention to bolster some international players at the expense of others. Despite the deeply differing ideological provenance of the discussed thinkers (ranging from conservative-liberal to republican-democratic), they agreed about what makes a state or a nation "Western", "civilised" and reliable partner on the international arena. Polish thinkers extensively internalised the Occidentalist perspective in which "an orderly, moral, and modern West looking down scornfully upon a disorderly, amoral, and pre-modem East."[217] 1) "Westerness" manifested itself in the political system that a nation embraced. In the idealised vision, European states ought to be governed in accordance with the rules of parliamentarism and democratic representation (Polish conservatives would define the democratic aspect more narrowly while Polish republicans more broadly). By implication, the long-lasting persistence of monarchical absolutism in Germany, and especially in Prussia, made it comparable to the autocracies of Russia or other eastern countries. 2) Significant attention was devoted towards an aspect which can be labelled "the esteem" of a state or nation in international relations. The esteem can be defined as the perceived amount of cultural capital which legitimised actions in foreign affairs. To determine the position of Germany, the Polish authors gave impressionist descriptions of cultural qualities and moral values that made a nation stand out from others. In respect of the Polish view of nineteenth-century Germany, this mode of reasoning was encapsulated by the assertions about the German educational system (Trentowski), cultural legacies (Kraszewski) or values influencing the daily German life (Koźmian). It was a strong belief among these authors that there was a vivid connection between the German national identity and the behaviour of the German states in the international arena. 3) Finally, there were the attitudes that Germans expressed towards other nations and states. Here, the Polish authors defined recognition for the independence of other nations, their self-rule, the right to establish a nation-state as, ultimately, a "Western" thing. In the view of the Polish intelligentsia, countries like Russia did not represent such a stance due to its expansive instincts. Simultaneously, Germans were perceived as a nation which was torn apart between "Western" ideals (cooperating and expressing solidarity with other "oppressed nations") and "Eastern" influences (containing the national aspirations of Poles, Italians etc.).

Third, I would like to highlight the functionality of mental maps. They served not only as persuasive depictions of reality but were also intended to alter the state of international affairs by mobilising the Polish population and influencing decision-makers and public opinion in

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[217] Stolting, "The East of Europe: A Historical Construction," 26.

other countries. The Polish thinkers duly believed that they were able to create a more favourable environment for Poland's independence through the proliferation of ideas and extensive knowledge production about the European space. The division between the two clearly delineated bodies of space ("the West" and "the East") served both as a useful framework to describe the encompassing reality and a persisting ideological point of reference in the Polish plans to regain independence. It permitted the introduction of a specific type of simplification and politicisation of foreign affairs which was subsequently conveyed towards both internal and external audiences. This pivotal relation between geography, politics, and culture was articulated by mobilising symbolic resources to compensate for geopolitical disadvantage.[218] Employing the spatial dichotomy turned out to be particularly meaningful in the context of the mid-nineteenth century. Portraying someone as an insider or outsider of the "Western civilisation" became a common way of conducting foreign politics. In the words of Larry Wolff, "the construct of civilization was so fundamental an aspect of identity, for those who claimed to possess it, that it found its most satisfying modern expression as a standard for others – for other classes, for other nations."[219] Subsequently, Poles, given the lack of their institutional power, deployed the spatial imaginaries of Germany to bolster or diminish its position, in accordance with the political needs. The anticipated dichotomy between "the West" and "the East" went beyond mundane disagreements between countries like Germany and France. The "danger in the East" was supposed to become a unifying theme for European states. In this way, the Polish authors were cleverly aligning with other European powers by painting "the wider" picture of intra-state relations in which political intentionality remained hidden behind the thick layer of moralistic, philosophical, and teleological aspects.

Fourth, one ought to reflect upon the utilised method. Following the insights of the German historian Reinhart Koselleck, I would like to argue that key concepts for political thinking experienced a profound change (*Sattelzeit*) in meaning due to the conditions facilitated by modernity. Moreover, they started to enclose an anticipation, prognosis and expectation that could alter the encompassing reality.[220] This is certainly accurate for the terms such as "the West" and "the East" during the nineteenth century. By employing this methodology, I explored how these geographical terms became politicised, how their meanings shifted against the evolving meanings and uncovered their functionality in the Polish political discourse.

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[218] Jalava, Nygård, and Strang, *Decentering European Intellectual*, 3.
[219] Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 14.
[220] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 22.

Adding to Constructivism in International Relations

The above-mentioned outcomes carry implications for the historical understanding not only of the Polish-German interactions but also of nineteenth-century foreign affairs. Accordingly, it is my intention to present mental mapping as a meaningful contribution to the constructivist view of international relations. Without a doubt, constructivism is a well-embedded theoretical tendency within the field. In contrast to the neo-realist school, it recognizes that culture and ideology facilitate a crucial environment for international relations and, as R. N. Lebov puts, they do more than offer rationalisations for behaviour that actors engage in for other reasons: they provide people with identities that offer meaning, order, and predictability to their lives.[221] These identities retain their importance on the level of intra-state interactions. However, historians have increasingly and convincingly argued that it is not enough to investigate the identity of "the Self" but also the cross-perceptions, how other actors perceive a particular state, nation, or organisation - for instance, how adjacent states viewed the position of Germany. Accordingly, Jacco Pekelder has shown that during the nineteenth century the plans of the German unification gained not only opponents but also significant supporters among British politicians, the French emperor, or Polish nationalists.[222] Stefano Lissi has demonstrated that the idea of "shared fate" fuelled the Italian belief in fundamental commonality between the German and Italian national projects between 1848 and 1871.[223]

But how can mental maps enhance our understanding of international relations? Or to be more precise, how can spatial imaginaries help us untangle and contextualise complex, structural problems such as the German Question?

Political Strategies: If the position of a state (or a nation) within a broader international system depends also on the perception of other, external actors, one still needs to establish upon which premises or criteria the image of "us" and "them" is built. Mental maps can uncover this process as they connect a political emotion with space. They transform bodies of space, geographical destinations into politicised concepts. Then, these newly established notions of territoriality are filled with normative, symbolic, and ideological meanings which enforce justifications for territorial claims, hostilities, or alliances (as we have witnessed throughout

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[221] R. N. Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 16.
[222] Pekelder, "Europa en de opkomst van Duitsland, 1830-1871," 229-254.
[223] Stefano Lissi, *Italia und Germania: The idea of the existence of a "shared fate" between the Italian and German processes of national unification in Italian public discourse (1848-1871)*, Research Master History Thesis, Utrecht Univeristy, 2020, 79.

this thesis Germany could be imagined either as a weak or powerful centre of Europe). Ultimately, mental maps set up the necessary ideational framework which serves to formulate foreign policy. In that way, it is more useful to consider them as political strategies rather than viewing them as simply moralistic, rhetorical expressions. The emphasis on the discourse and the "battle of ideas" is especially related to the peculiar position of smaller states, or even non-state actors, within the broader state-system, because as Virginie Mamadouh and Gertjan Dijkink point out:

> Only very powerful or hegemonic states can link geopolitical visions with an international power practice changing world order. Most other states will use geopolitical representation as a domestic justification for certain (realistic) international routines (like colonialism, neutrality or advancing peace, bridging opposition in the world, etc.) or merely as part of a national identity strategy.[224]

Mechanism of Inclusion and Exclusion: Mental maps invite us to gain insights into the way in which contemporaries viewed the "edges" and "boundaries" of an international system, and in particular why certain territories (and accordingly, states and nations) were included and excluded from it. At least since the Westphalian treaty of 1648, one could have observed enhanced efforts to infuse a set of widely recognised and accepted rules that would govern the interactions between European states. The agreement reached in Vienna, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, provided yet another vital brick of this process. Its main responsibility constituted not only of solely legitimising the fluctuation of power after the fall of Napoleon or solving the pending territorial disputes. Instead, the Vienna Congress, as Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan and Brian Vick indicate, "went far beyond establishing a balance of power."[225] The newly established institutions and empowered actors were embedded in a whole set of ideals, principles and perceptions.[226] This realisation corresponds with the motion forwarded by Iver B. Neumann who portrays international relations as, ultimately, a cultural system which reproduces itself by the ongoing interaction between elites. In his view, the cultural qualities of the system reveal themselves in the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion: "Properties of the doxa or hegemonic symbolic structure can be revealed in a variety of ways, one of which is an investigation of processes of adaptation to the system, and responses by centrally situated agents."[227] Concepts such as "the West" and "the East" were utilised as transmitters of these

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[224] Mamadouh and Dijkink, "Geopolitics, International Relations and Political Geography," 356-357.
[225] Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan and Brian Vick, "Vienna 1815: Introducing a European Security Culture" in *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture*, Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan and Brian Vick (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 2
[226] Ibidem, 2.
[227] Eriksen and Neumann, "International Relations as a Cultural System," 243.

norms and values. With their vested meaning they established generalised patterns of behaviour and justified the worthiness of a state to become a member of "the club". And as Andreas Carsten-Schulz rightly points out the admission to international society was mediated through the so-called "standard of civilisation", which defined interactions in the international realm as a confrontation between "the West" and the more heterogeneous rest.[228] Some states were identified as "rule breakers", and thus, perceived as deeply alien entities, while at other times they were presented as the integral parts of the system.

Alternative security perspective after 1815: However, the problem with the West-East dichotomy, championed by Polish nationalists, is that it lacked the institutional tools of enforcement, and thus, it sought agency and recognition through alternative means (press, public opinion, informal networks). The Polish idea about the division of Europe into two, clearly delineated political and cultural bodies of space stood against the arrangements of the collective management of peace and security established at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The agreements which were introduced after the fall of Napoleon constituted a multi-layered, new "security culture" which is defined by De Graaf, De Haan and Vick as "the sum of mutually shared, and often conflicting, perceptions of vital interests and threats, as well as the institutions and practices through which different agents acted together upon these ideas and expectations."[229] At the heart of the 1815 treaty, stood the commitment towards stability in Central-Eastern Europe through close cooperation between Austria, Prussia and Russia (the Holy Alliance) on the basis of mutually aligned interests, conservative beliefs and fears concerning the revolutionary insurrectionism. The significance of this international design was inscribed it its comprehensive and systemic character, as it addressed an extensive number of issues that were perceived as security challenges: "This effort at collective management was undertaken on the basis of norms and institutions designed to protect Europe against various security threats, including disputes between the states of Europe themselves, internal radical conspiracies, external attacks such as those by North African corsairs and financial and economic anxieties and crises."[230]

Nevertheless, other "regimes of truth" envisioning the international order were also possible. Unsuccessful revolutionaries, secret societies, exiled politicians, and little-known journalists were also capable of imagining and conceptualising the international order as a

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[228] Carsten-Schulz, "Civilisation, Barbarism and the Making of Latin America's Place in 19th- Century International Society,"838.
[229] de Graaf, de Haan and Vick, "Vienna 1815," 2-3.
[230] Ibidem, 7.

complex sphere of interdependencies, moral assumptions, and social practices. Their efforts were chiefly directed towards achieving national independence or unification but the actions that the early nationalists undertook were clearly embedded in the international context.[231] In this vein, the Polish division of Europe into "the West" and "the East" ought to be viewed as an alternative to the systemic solutions provided by the Congress of Vienna. In this interpretation, the threat of a European-wide revolution was swapped with a deeply internalised fear of absolutism, epitomised by Russia. All other, "smaller", elements of the security architecture – such as territorial disputes, processes of national unification, international institutions – were subjugated to the paramount paradigm of containing Russia's power and influence on the continent. The threat of the Russian intervention in Belgium (1830) or the Crimean War (1853-1856) testify to the fact that, in certain contexts of international relations, the West-East dichotomy, was not far from becoming a dominating perspective, not just within the Polish nationalist discourse, but also the broader European level. Essentially, the analysis of the spatial imaginaries expressed by the Polish intelligentsia is informed by the broader calls of historians, like Eckart Conze, to include more explicitly non-state actors in IR historical research.[232]

Finally, I would like to conclude on the note that mental maps are neither exclusively a nineteenth-century phenomenon, nor they signify the ambiguity of Polish-German relations. There is a variety of maps, with differing scope and content, which continue to exercise their influence today. Amidst the war that Russia wages in Ukraine, the meanings such as "the West" and "the East" once again gained political momentum. Without a doubt, the role of the spatial concept of "Novorossiya" in justifying the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 should not be underestimated. [233]The initially nostalgic Russian memories about vacations in Crimea, during the times of the Soviet Union, transformed into a territorial claim and justified the military invasion. Undoubtedly less violent, but also significant examples of mental mapping include the notion of "Eurafrique" which became an important concept for the contemporary French security considerations related to the sub-Saharan Africa.[234] At the same

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[231] David Motadel, "Nationalist Internationalism in the Modern Age," *Contemporary European History*, 28 (2019): 1, 77.

[232] Conze, "Abschied von Staat und Politik?" 41; The author states that: ''Nicht-staatliche, gesellschaftliche oder private Akteure sind insofern politische Akteure, als sie versuchen Einfluss zu nehmen auf kollektiv bindende wertallokative Entscheidungen.''

[233] Douglas Becker, "The Rationality and Emotion of Russian Historical Memory: The Case of Crimea," in *Crisis and Change in Post-Cold War Global Politics: Ukraine in a Comparative Perspective*, Erica Resende, Dovilė Budrytė and Didem Buhari-Gulmez, (eds.) (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 67.

[234] Benedikt Erforth, "Mental Maps and Foreign Policy Decision-making," 38-57.

time in Central-Eastern Europe, there are still temptations to play politically with the ideas of territorial revisionism. For instance, the prime minister of Hungary, Viktor Orban caused a major outrage among Hungarian neighbours by sharing on his Facebook profile in 2020 the map of "Greater Hungary" – the political entity which prior to the First World War included the territories of modern-day Romania, Serbia, or Slovakia. [235]

This is to say that political actors will continuously formulate and adjust international policy in accordance with their peculiarly understood notions of space, encompassing perceptions of security, historical grievances, or imperial projects. These are not necessarily the inaccurate representations of the reality but intentional representations of the reality-to-be. Therefore, we ought to consider them seriously. And if the historical context of the nineteenth century can teach us anything, it is that the mental maps exercise political agency within the *longue durée* perspective. They are here to stay.

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[235] Matthew Holroyd, "Viktor Orban provokes neighbours with historical map of Hungary," Euronews, May 12th, 2020, https://www.euronews.com/2020/05/08/viktor-orban-provokes-neighbours-with-historical-map-of-hungary-thecube, accessed on May 20th, 2022.

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Universiteit Utrecht

Faculty of Humanities
Version September 2014

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