

Meanings of Europe for ethnic minorities and majorities

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Abstract: *What does Europe mean for Europeans, for many parts of Europe or places outside Europe where there are social groups of European origin? The paper attempts to answer these questions through research carried out on fourteen samples of ethnic minorities and majorities of Europeans (2798 interviews) living in the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italians, Slovenes, Friulians), in the Serb region of Vojvodina (Serbs, Hungarians, Slovaks), in the Ukrainian region of Kharkiv (Ukrainians, Russians, Belarussians, Jews), and in the Siberian region of Tjumen (Russians, Ukrainians, Caucasians, Tartars). Each sample was asked about its attitudes to Europe and the meanings of Europa. The main meanings (through attitudes) of Europe were: an area included between the Atlantic Ocean and the Urals, a Christian civilization, the European Union (EU), a common family, the West, the subjugation of some peoples, a common culture, a vague idea. The paper considers the intensity and the relations of all these meanings between the macro-regions, between ethnic groups, and between minorities and majorities. The most important difference among the meanings is due to the macro-regions, first of all, and inside each region the difference between minorities and majorities. At the same level of macro-region also the structure of the meaning is very different. For example, the most important factor (Factor Analysis) in Friuli Venezia Giulia is very simple (the West, EU, common culture); on the contrary in Vojvodina the first factor is more complex. In the Kharkiv region the structure of the first factor is simpler, but different from the Italian content (that is: Europe is overwhelming some peoples and a vague idea); the most important factor (first) is simple for the groups of the Tjumen region, but the structure of the meanings of Europe is composed of the West and a vague idea.*

Keywords: *Meanings of Europa, macro-regions: Friuli Venezia Giulia, Vojvodina, Kharkiv, Tjumen; Ethnic majorities and minorities: Italians, Slovene, Friulians; Serbs, Hungarians, Slovaks; Ukrainians, Russians, Belarussians, Jews; Russians, Ukrainians, Caucasians, Tartars; Factor Analysis.*

Sommario: *Cosa significa l'Europa per gli Europei, di molte parti di Europa o, di luoghi esterni l'Europa dove ci sono gruppi sociali di origine europea? Il paper cerca di rispondere a questi problemi attraverso una ricerca svolta in quattordici campioni di etnie maggioritarie e minoritarie di Europei (2798 persone intervistate). Queste etnie vivono nella regione italiana del Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italiani, Sloveni e Friulani), nella regione serba della Vojvodina (Serbi, Ungheresi, e Slovacchi), nella regione ucraina di Kharkiv (Ucraini, Russi, Bielorussi ed Ebrei), e la regione siberiana di Tjumen (Russi, Ucraini, Caucasicci, Tartari). Ad ogni campione erano richiesti gli atteggiamenti verso l'Europa e i suoi significati. I principali significati (rilevati attraverso gli atteggiamenti) della Europa erano i seguenti: 1) un'area compresa tra l'Oceano Atlantico e gli Urali, 2) una civiltà cristiana, 3) l'Unione Europea (UE), 4) una famiglia comune, 5) l'Occidente, 6) la sopraffazione di alcuni popoli, 7) una cultura comune, 8) un'idea vaga. Il paper considera la diffusione e le relazioni di tutti questi significati tra le macro-regioni, tra i gruppi etnici, e tra maggioranze e minoranze. La più importante differenza tra i significati è dovuta alle macro-regioni, prima di tutto, ed entro ogni regione tra minoranze e maggioranze etniche. Inoltre allo stesso livello di macro-regione anche la struttura dei significati è molto diversa. Per esempio, il più importante fattore (dalla Analisi fattoriale) in Friuli Venezia Giulia è molto semplice (Occidente, Unione Europea, cultura comune); al contrario nella Vojvodina il primo fattore è il più complesso. Nelle regioni di Kharkiv la struttura del primo fattore è il più semplice, ma diverso dal contenuto italiano (cioè: l'Europa è sopraffazione su alcuni popoli e idea vaga); così come il più importante fattore (il primo) è semplice per i gruppi della regione di Tjumen, ma la struttura dei significati di Europa è composta da Occidente e idea vaga.*

Parole chiave: *Significati di Europa; macro-regioni: Friuli Venezia Giulia, Vojvodina, Kharkiv, Tjumen; etnie maggioritarie e minoritarie: Italiani, Sloveni, Friulani; Serbi Ungheresi, Slovacchi; Ucraini, Russi, Bielorussi, Ebrei; Russi, Ucraini, Caucasicci, Tartari; Analisi fattoriale.*

Introduction

What does Europe mean for Europeans, in the many parts of Europe and in non-European places with social groups of European origin?

This article presents the answers given in a survey by fourteen samples of Europeans, involving interviews with 2798 people in the regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy), Vojvodina (Serbia), Kharkiv (Ukraine) and Tjumen (Siberia).

In this survey we identified the meanings of Europe underlined by sociological theory and empirical research. We then submitted these meanings to the scrutiny of people living in regions within the European Union and outside it so as to mark out a system of meanings pertaining to a range of cultures, national politics and economies in four regions in Italy, Serbia, the Ukraine and Siberian Russia. This method was driven by a desire to understand how the meanings are perceived – in complex terms, of greater or lesser importance – in four areas of four countries, since regional complexities to some extent reflect the complexity of a state or a nation. Interviews were conducted with a range of ethnic samples made up of one majority group and two or three minority groups in each region – three or four per region.

The method was specifically designed to achieve at least two objectives. The first was to understand how and to what extent regional complexity reflects national complexity. The second was to interrogate the various samples of majority and minority ethnic groups so as to get a picture of how much the meanings they attribute to Europe converge or diverge and thereby suggest possible cultural policies towards Europe to be pursued by national governments and local authorities so that such policies conform as much as possible to the expectations of the social groups and national societies in question.

The research model to be built was required firstly to define the practical meanings of Europe, secondly to connect the perceptions of the meanings attributed by the regional (and national) inhabitants, and thirdly to compare those perceptions of the meanings of Europe among the various ethnic groups according to the power each of them wield (as a majority or minority) in the society of each of the four regions.

Meanings of Europe, for regional societies and for majority and minority ethnic groups

Meanings of Europe. Theoretical definitions and empirical indications

A meaning is an abstract entity which represents an object or the fact used as a reference for and/or explanation of the concrete object in question (Frigerio 2010: 10588-10609). This idea of a meaning is connected to that of a symbol – according to Cassirer (1979: 80), a symbol is the active instrument of mediation between the concrete and the concept. Using symbolic forms, mankind composes a spiritual universe around perceptible signs which are able to give it meaning (Cassirer 1961: 20; Pieri 2010: 10629-10637; Strykes 2000: 3096-3098).

By way of a premise it may first be asked what the possible meaning of Europe are. One answer is to be found in the fact that the meaning of an abstract entity becomes a concrete reference if the place or context experienced takes on a range of meanings and thereby acts as the symbol of a fully accomplished world – and, in Europe's case, as the extension from a small place to a large place which encompasses many cultural, historical and social varieties of a single global entity. In such a case polysemy takes on the value of a global symbol (Europe) of something else which expresses the social functions of identity, belonging and attachment emerging from a mix of cognitive selection, feelings of security and rootedness in community history. Meaning thus comes to symbolise something socially important by dint of integration in and attachment to the community and society.

It has already been observed that the sources of the symbolism of spaces are to be found in the archetypes of space (*axis mundi* as centre, area, distance, border: see Berthelot 1949; Wheatley 1981; Gasparini 1996, 2000; Eliade 1966; Yi Fu Tuan 1974; Demarchi 1989) itself, in the social relations (see Gasparini 1982a: 204, 2000: 213-226) experienced in that space, and in the history and diachronic of the community, large or small (Gasparini 1982a:187-214; Eliade 1966; Kaschuba 1995: 193), in which people live.

As interpretations of how and what Europe may be, meanings obviously change over time. A great deal of literature has concentrated on the foundation and evolution of Europe and the meanings that have imprinted them-

selves on European consciousness. One example is the consciousness described by Flavio Innocenzi (1997), another is the development of an idea of Europe analysed historically by Kevin Wilson and Jan Van Der Dussen (1995: 13-210), then there are the values and cultures of Europe described by Oliver Galland and Yannik Lemel (2010: 23-40), Pietro Rossi's many "roots" of Europe (2007: 55-74), the construction of United Europe's past and present in Utopias and historical manifestations analysed by Adolfo Morganti (2005) and Josef Langer (2017: 61-68), and future scenarios for the current European Union presented by Alberto Gasparini (2014b: 357-373).

This research project considers the present meanings of Europe in relation to a series of elements: geographical size, political divisions, values and culture, the family, religion, dialectic social relations. We set out to explore the Europe that forms identity and produces attachment in terms of the following possible meanings.

The *first meaning* is the *identification of Europe with the West* (Europe is the West) (Waever 1995: 161, 171-173, 181-187): at the fall of communism the western side of what was the Iron Curtain – with its heart in Italy, West Germany, France and Britain – represented freedom, affluence and the assertion of civil society. The West was where life was good, and it was supposed to be a model.

The *second meaning* has *Europe as the scene of clashes between peoples* (Bettin Lattes 1995: 34-39; Innocenzi 1997; Waever 1995: 181-200, 203; Kaschuba 1995: 194, 196, 198; Gasparini 2004: 36-38) with a similar basic culture but with different local cultures and above all different interests, accentuated by nation-states, their institutions and the peoples of which they are composed. In specific terms this meaning derives from the history experienced by the states of Europe, one of continuous conflict between the political entities of which it was and is composed, and therefore of foreign governments which dominated peoples and regions.

The *third meaning* is based on the *identification of Europe with the EEC, subsequently the European Union (EU)* (Alaminos 2002: 46-53; Waever 1995: 202-205). Evoked by the familiar phrases "being in Europe" and "entering Europe", this meaning is based on the idea that in Europe there is a more European Europe, that is to say a centre and a heart around which there rotates a system of hopes of entering and a system for the dissemination of standard rules adopted by the European Union.

The *fourth meaning* emphasises *Europe as a single cultural entity* (Kaschuba 1995: 193-194, 253-354; Gasparini 2994; Tsvetkov 2015; Waever 1995: 181-200; Den Boer 1995: 44, 62-63; Morganti 2005; Montanari 2002, 2004). A cultural entity means a collection of values, ideas, ways of feeling and thinking, and lifestyles which have taken shape as the result of spreading through the countries of Europe, settling in them for centuries and being synthesised into something specific and unique. Down the centuries the main actors in this process have followed one another on the basis of absorption by expansion, from a centre towards the periphery: from Greece to Magna Grecia and what is now the south of France; from Rome to Spain, France, part of Germany and England; from Germany to central and eastern Europe; from Italy to northern Europe; from Spain to Italy and most of central Europe; from France to the whole of Europe and Russia; from Britain to Europe, and so on.

Initially these expansions mainly involved cultural and intellectual elites and the civil societies formed by them. Over time they formed a common and unique culture with a deep-rooted sense of common history and background, artistic riches, lifestyle, conceptualisation of the individual and subsequently forms of government that emphasised the creative role of civil society, the secularisation of the political sphere whereby power changed from “the grace of God” to the enlightenment of the higher idea (the Enlightenment), and finally to the role of establishing and supporting the framework of rules for the dominant civil society.

The *fifth meaning* is geographical in character, concerning the establishment of the extreme borders within which the single culture and conflicts between peoples have developed. Clearly, reference here is made to the *extreme borders constituted by the Atlantic Ocean and the mountain chain of the Urals*, which divides two immense plains (Szűcs 1996: 7-14; Galland and Lemel 2010: 24-25; Langer 2017: 61-68; Morganti 2005: 48-50; Den Boer 1995: 44; Waever 1995: 173; Alaminos 2002: 47-52; Innocenzi 1997: 41-43).

The *sixth meaning* has *Europe as a common family* (Gasparini 2004; Ortega 1995: 101-124; Kaschuba 1995: 196, 204, 256; Galland and Lemel 2010: 57-80) in which time has seen successive waves of those who command and those who obey. It is thus a Europe seen as a protracted millennial family saga, with the saga as a metaphor for an infinite chain of generations. And in every family, of course, at any given time there is a generation which commands,

others in a less commanding position, and others which obey. There are the old patriarchs, their adult offspring, brothers (old and young), and children; and then there are men and there are women. To continue the metaphor, in the European family there are “patriarch” nation-states, linked medium-sized states (also acting as transmission belts), recalcitrant medium-sized states (dissidents or “black sheep”), and small states; there are political-warrior states, peaceful states, states devoted to commerce and finance, and so on. This may be a new mirror of many centuries of Europe’s past life.

The *seventh meaning* in this analysis is *Europe as a Christian civilisation* (Gasparini 1987: 73-89; Den Boer 1995: 27, 69; Bugge 1995: 131ss.; Magnier 1995: 203-232; Bontempi 2002: 229-264; Galland and Lemel 2010: 41-56, 125-127). It is a Christian civilisation that expanded in Europe for a series of reasons. First of all because Christianity is a religion which 1) serves to undermine the power of the ruling classes; 2) connects man personally to a divine interlocutor, though in certain cases through the mediation of the church; 3) encourages the formation of the idea that man’s relationship with God is the load-bearing structure of society, which means that man can rebel against the state, he may legitimately pursue through his individual actions the path indicated directly (and sacredly) by God, he is convinced that he possesses his own rights independently of his local community, the state and the church, and he is tempted to turn his proximity to and direct contact with God into a substitution for God himself (though only as a “small god” who is his own master from birth to death). Fourthly, the Christian specificity of Europe is supported by the “religious cleansing” of Muslim elements of the population and the isolation of others which do not conform to Christianity, such as the Jews. At the same time Christianity, as a religion connecting man directly to God (though the connection is mediated by churches) through his faith and works, is increasingly secularised. That is to say man, in his social and operational identity as an individual, must recognise that everybody has the right to connect directly with God and, since everybody acts in society, everybody must recognise that others may interpret and act upon the principle of doing social good in the best possible way (best because of the direct connection with God). This has two consequences. The first is that such actions must have contents and results of direct benefit to the life of community, the city and society (and God remains an ultimate and ideal reference in everyday situations orientated towards inter-

mediate goals only indirectly connected to God). The second is that precisely because each individual is connected to God he may rightfully decide on his own approach to social questions. In other words, social actions have only an indirect reference to God, and everyone is the bearer of his own truth in the social actions he carries out. The consequence is the secular nature of social and political action, and Christianity, which is a root of Europe, itself takes on secular connotations. In point of fact we see an idea of Christian civilisation for Europe which has over the centuries conducted a sort of religious cleansing against neighbouring faiths, has fragmented into a number of forms, and ultimately has assumed fairly or highly secular characteristics.

The *eighth* and last *meaning* considered here is the undefinability and inexpressibility, perhaps affective, of *Europe considered as a "vague idea"*. In this case "vague" may indicate a feeling, not capable of expression in words, of affection for the idea of Europe, because it is all or only some of the above meanings, but also others which cannot be put into words. Here "vague idea" may indicate simple attachment, and thus emotional and value-orientated "noise" or, perhaps to a greater degree, a context, a stage, a container for Europe as a culture, Christian roots, a geographical expression, political formations, the nucleus of something bigger (the West), and so forth. It is clear that this meaning, precisely in the function of context, emotional background noise, inexpressibility, may play an essential role for an understanding of European peoples' attachment to Europe.

Meanings of Europe as seen by regions and ethnic groups

The meanings of Europe expressed by people – or rather samples of interviewees – represent the perceptions of ethnic social groups living in regions within countries. These meanings stem from cultural "constructions" of history, values, identities, attachments to values past and present in social cultures, personal and inter-personal experiences, and so on. Precisely because of these various origins some meanings are more settled than others, some more compatible than others, some more intensely felt than others. The meanings of Europe are thus a collection of archetypal, traditional, modern, forward-looking and aspirational elements experienced within societies.

The groups interviewed reside in four European regions: Friuli Venezia Giulia in the republic of Italy, Vojvodina in the republic of Serbia, the Kharkiv *oblast* in the republic of Ukraine and the Tyumen *oblast* in the Russian Federation. All four regions are peripheral within their countries and three of them are national border regions.

The peripheral position of the four regions corresponds to their location on the *internal borders* of their respective countries. Friuli Venezia Giulia is a long way from the metropolitan areas and power centres of Milan and Rome. Vojvodina is a long way from Belgrade, as is Kharkiv from Kiev. Tyumen is far removed from the central Moscow-St. Petersburg axis. From this peripheral standpoint the meanings of Europe may be influenced not only negatively but in a positive sense in comparison with the national cultures of their respective countries.

The four regions' peripheral position on their *external national borders* increases their complexity. To that position with respect to the national centre is added the area's specificity in terms of cultural plurality, a sense of belonging to a specific culture shared by populations beyond the border, and membership of more than one ethnic and social group in a plurality of cultures which give a unique character to feelings of empathy in international relations and towards a range of groups in the national state, the neighbouring state, and towards Europe in general and its meanings (Gasparini 2014a, 2017).

The selection of regions peripheral in their respective countries and the inclusion in the interviewed samples of majority and minority ethnic groups thus endow this research with particular significance. It is possible to highlight the social and cultural diversities expressed in the putative meanings of Europe and in a more general sense to endow the scientific analysis with a greater complexity of factual knowledge and of explanation of the various meanings of Europe.

These, then, are the reasons for the choice of the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, which borders on Austria and Slovenia; the Serbian region of Vojvodina, which borders on Croatia, Hungary and Romania; the Ukrainian region of Kharkiv, which borders on the Russian Federation; and the region of Tyumen, located in western Siberia and sharing a border with Kazakhstan.

Within each of these regions a number of ethnic groups were interviewed.

Friuli Venezia Giulia has a resident population of 1,217,872 (2017) and is composed of four provinces (Pordenone and Udine in Friuli, Gorizia and

Trieste in Venezia Giulia), in which the biggest towns are Trieste (204,234 residents) and Udine (99,341 residents). The native populations are the Italian majority, whose language of education and use is spoken by the region's entire population; the Friulan minority, whose Rhaeto-Romance language is spoken by about 600,000 people in the region's western provinces of Pordenone and Udine; the Slovene minority (between 61,000 and 80,000 people) living in the east of the region close to the Slovene border; the German-speaking minority living in the northern part of the region (province of Udine) near the Austrian border. From these ethnic groups were chosen three similarly-sized samples of residents: from the Italian majority and the Friulan and Slovene minorities.

The Vojvodina region is located in the north-east of the republic of Serbia. Its capital is Novi Sad, on the Danube, and its resident population (2015) is 1,881,357; it shares borders with Croatia, Hungary and Romania. Its autochthonous ethnic composition reflects its neighbouring populations (Croats, Hungarians and Romanians). The region's history is bound up with the Austro-Hungarian empire and the immigration of Germans and Catholic Slavs from Baden-Wurtemberg (Schwabians) and Slovakia respectively. In 2011 the ethnic majority was Serbian (66.76%) and the minority groups were Hungarian (13%), Slovak (2.6%), Croatian (2.43%), Romanian (1.32%) and German (0.17%). In the research project the samples of interviewees were from the Serbian majority and the Hungarian and Slovak ethnic minorities (Bankovic 1994: 11-17).

The third region is the Oblast (province) of Kharkiv, in eastern Ukraine. It is inhabited by 2,701,200 people, of whom in the 2001 census 70.7% were Ukrainian, 25.6% Russian, 0.5% Belarusian and 0.4% Jewish. The rest of the population was predominantly Caucasian: Armenians, Azeris, Georgians and Tartars. The Jewish population used to be much more numerous; in 1926 it made up 19.5% of the total, but since the wartime Holocaust and post-war emigration to Israel the number of Jews living in the Kharkiv Oblast has constantly diminished. Four samples of the Kharkiv population were interviewed: the majority Ukrainians and the minority groups of Russians, Belarusians and Jews. For the purposes of comparison, each group of interviewees was numerically similar. The samples were drawn from rural areas, small and medium-sized towns and the urban district of Kharkiv.

The fourth region is the Oblast of Tyumen, located in a remote and peripheral (and gas-rich) area of Russia in western Siberia, lying on the fluvial system comprising the Tyumenka, Tula, Tobol and Irtysh rivers. The Oblast's administrative authority stretches from the Kazakh border to the Arctic Circle. In 2010 the region had a population of 3,339,755 people, of whom 720,575 were registered as residents in Tyumen, the capital, in 2016. In ethnic terms the region is 73.3% Russian, 7.5% Tartar – the original autochthonous population, 4.9% Ukrainian and 3.3% Caucasian. Here too, the number of interviewees per ethnic group is not proportional to its size, but this does not preclude the formation of useful comparisons. The composition of the four samples included interviewees from various areas of the Oblast: the urban districts of Tyumen, Surgut and the rural area of Nizhnevartovsk.

Research methods and locations

The methods used in the research were fairly complex. They comprised the following three stages.

Sample formation

In each of the four regions sampling was divided by ethnic groups, making up a total of 14 groups, and geographically – rural areas, small and medium-sized towns and large towns or cities.

The total of 2,798 interviewees was composed of 14 samples from four European regions. The first, in the European Union, is the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (1); the second, in the Balkans, is the Serbian province of Vojvodina (2); the third is the region of Karkhiv in the Ukraine (3); the fourth is the region of Tyumen in the Russian federation (4).

1. Financed by the Italian National Research Council (CNR), the survey was carried out by a team in Department of Human Sciences at the University of Trieste directed by Alberto Gasparini, Giovanni Delli Zotti and Moreno Zago. Interviews were conducted with samples from ethnic-national groups in

Friuli Venezia Giulia: Italians (272 interviewees), Friulani (141) and Slovenes (187), making a total of 600 interviewees.

2. The research was conducted by a team led by Mirosljub Radojkovic and Srbobran Branković at the Institute of Political Studies in Belgrade. Interviews were carried out with samples from three ethnic-national groups in Vojvodina: Serbs (195 interviewees), Hungarians (222) and Slovaks (132), making a total of 549 interviewees.

3. The research was carried out by a team from the University of Kharkiv directed by Vil Bakirov. Interviews were conducted with samples from four ethnic-national groups in the Ukrainian region of Kharkiv: Ukrainians (209 interviewees), Russians (200), Belarussians (200) and Jews (200), making a total of 809 interviewees.

4. The research was carried out by a team led by Klara Barbakova from the University of Tyumen. Interviews were conducted with samples from four ethnic-national groups in the Siberian region of Tyumen (Russian Federation): Russians (265 interviewees), Tartars (258), Ukrainians (181) and Caucasians (136), making a total of 840 interviewees.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire presented common themes in each region, plus some specific features regarding each region. The themes were as follows: (1) basic values; (2) ethnic group membership; (3) nation of citizenship and Europe; what the nation is, *what Europe means*, what Europe should be; (4) national ethnic groups for Europe, the distance between group of membership and other groups. These themes were transformed into statements/indicators distributed on Likert scales. In this paper the indicators are taken as possible meanings of Europe for each of the regions and ethnic groups in question.

Processing of data collected

The data were analysed according to distribution by region and by ethnic group, then by bivariate variable analysis and lastly by multivariate analysis

in the form of factor analysis for each of the four regions. General use was made of Pearson correlations between two variables, whether they were a relationship between two single variables or between a single variable and a single factor.

Intensity with which the meanings are perceived by European groups

To what extent are the above meanings real? The answers to this question were obtained by asking the interviewees in our fourteen ethnic-cultural samples whether they were very much, fairly, not much or not at all in agreement with each of them.

Meanings of Europe, in general terms

The options chosen by the interviewees (from Friuli Venezia Giulia to areas further east) result in agreement (fairly and very much) with two groups of meanings and another more marginal one

Table 1. Meanings according to % very much in agreement

Meanings of Europe	% very much or fairly in agreement
5 th Atlantic-Urals area	59.9
7 th Christian civilisation	55,4
3 th European Union	53.8
6 th A common family	51.1
1 th The West	41.2
2 th The subjugation of some peoples	35.1
4 th A single cultural entity	32.7
8 th A vague idea	28.3
Average approval of meanings	44.7

The *first group* comprises the geographical demarcation (59.9%), Christian civilisation with all the characteristics mentioned above (55.4%), the European Union as an organised political-economic entity (53.8%), and the structured biological-generational metaphor of the common family (51.1%). These four meanings make up a synthesis of containment within extreme borders, religious and cultural roots, an organised reference point and macro-ethnic kinship roots.

It may be termed a synthesis because it contains essential elements of a form of unity. This result has value if considered in the light of the preamble to the Constitution approved by the European Union, over which there was a long debate. This is emphasised by Christians, Jews (as will be seen in the sample of Jewish people in the region of Kharkiv) and Muslims (as shown below in the sample of Tartars in the region of Tjumen) alike.

The *second group* comprises meanings with a lower level of agreement than the first. They are Europe as the West (41.2%), Europe as the subjugation of some peoples by others (35.1%), and Europe as a single cultural unity radiating out from some European countries to others (32.7%).

In general terms these three meanings may be interpreted as being centred mainly on relations between Europe's internal components and on the dialectic contents of those relations: the West as a reference point for all the rest of Europe on the strength of its values of liberal democracy, the individual and affluence; the struggle against subjugation among European peoples; cultural unity resulting from cultural globalisation spread from a central area (Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Britain) through all European countries (through elite and intellectual culture).

Lastly, with the lowest level of agreement, there is the meaning of Europe as a vague idea. The interpretation of Europe as noise, context and something inexpressible was less frequent. Interviewees were more inclined to express their definitions of Europe in terms of the other meanings proposed.

In other words (still at a general level) the meanings attributed to Europe tend to be specific and based on some definable elements rather than implicit and vaguely and holistically referring to emotional factors.

Meanings in the four regions

Agreement (at the two levels of intensity) with the meanings proposed may be summed up in the following percentages:

Table 2. Meanings according to very much and fairly in agreement in four European regions

Meanings of Europe	% very much or fairly in agreement in the regions				
	<i>Friuli V.G.</i>	<i>Vojvodina</i>	<i>Kharkiv</i>	<i>Tjumen</i>	<i>Overall</i>
<i>Europe is</i>					
5 th Atlantic-Urals area	77.5	71.0	33.1	66.7	59.9
7 th Christian civilisation	58.2	67.9	57.9	42.0	55.4
3 rd European Union (EU)	48.5	60.0	55.7	51.8	53.8
6 th a common family	60.1	69.3	32.3	51.3	51.1
1 st the West	49.7	63.6	51.5	5.6	41.2
2 nd the subjugation of some peoples	38.8	43.9	10.6	52.6	35.1
4 th a single cultural entity	29.1	63.3	41.9	5.5	32.7
8 th a vague idea	35.2	55.2	21.7	12.7	28.3
<i>Overall mean of meanings</i>	<i>49.6</i>	<i>61.8</i>	<i>38.1</i>	<i>36.1</i>	<i>44.7</i>

Some meanings meet with general approval in the four regions, while for others the approval is uneven.

On average interviewees' approval of the eight meanings may be said to be generally very high in Vojvodina (an average of 61.8% agree with all eight meanings, with a maximum of 71% and a minimum of 43.9%); on average it is fairly high in Friuli Venezia Giulia, though rather uneven (49.6%, with a maximum of 77.5% and a minimum of 29.1%); it is fairly low and markedly uneven in the regions of Kharkiv (38.1%, with a maximum of 57.9% and a minimum of 10.6%) and Tjumen (36.1%, with a maximum of 66.7% and a minimum of 5.5%).

This may mean that all the meanings are approved (even Europe as a vague idea) or that there is a selection among them. So as to read such upward or downward trends, due among other things to a generically optimistic

culture or an equally methodological cultural pessimism, we may relate each of these approval percentages (fair or high level of agreement) to the average approval percentage, making the average percentage equal to 100. The result of the table above is thereby transformed into the following table (with each percentage related to the average of 100).

Relating (standardising) agreement with the meanings of Europe to 100 provides the considerable advantage of making the percentage agreement for each meaning comparable for the regions in question. That is because each percentage has a new average of 100 and each one may be read as a difference (plus or minus) from 100. Now an initial interpretation of the data may be carried out for each of the meanings.

Europe appears to be defined by the demarcation of its external borders (the Atlantic and the Urals) most markedly for the inhabitants of an extreme region of Europe – the Siberian part of the Eurasian Russian Federation. In Tjumen the standardised number is 184.8%. Second place for this meaning goes to the inhabitants of a region in the original nucleus of the European Union: Friuli Venezia Giulia recorded a result of 156.3%. Noteworthy here is the fact that an external region and one integrated in Europe perceive Europe in the same way, unlike the regions in between (Vojvodina and Kharkiv); this indicates two convergent ways of interpreting the borders (external and internal) and their ability to demarcate Europe.

Table 3. Meanings of Europe according to the standardised % of agreement and the four regions

Meanings of Europe	Standardised % of agreement meaning and the four regions (very much/fairly in agreement)				
	<i>Friuli V.G.</i>	<i>Vojvodina</i>	<i>Kharkiv</i>	<i>Tyumen</i>	<i>Overall</i>
<i>Europe is ...</i>					
5 th area between the Atlantic and the Urals	156.3	114.9	86.9	184.8	134.0
7 th Christian civilisation	117.3	109.9	152.0	116.3	123.9
3 th European Union	97.8	97.1	146.2	143.5	120.4
6 th a common family	121.2	112.1	84.8	142.1	114.3
1 st the West	100.2	102.9	135.2	15.5	92.2

2 nd the subjugation of some peoples	78.2	71.0	27.8	145.7	78.5
4 th a single cultural entity	58.7	102.4	110.0	15.2	73.2
8 th a vague idea	71.0	89.3	57.2	35.2	63.3
<i>mean = 100</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>mean</i>	<i>(49.6)</i>	<i>(61.8)</i>	<i>(38.1)</i>	<i>(36.1)</i>	<i>(44.7)</i>

Europe as a Christian civilisation is above the mean (100) in all the regions, an indication that this meaning is broadly perceived.

It is most marked in the Ukraine (152.0%), where the Orthodox church has a large following but also non-Christian interviewees such as Jews – their agreement with the perception of Europe as a Christian civilisation is the highest of all the fourteen samples (165.3%). People in the Tartar community in Siberia also consider Europe as a Christian civilisation.

The identification of Europe with the European Union (EEC, EU) is more widespread among people in the Ukraine (146.2%) and Siberia (143.5%) than among ethnic and national groups inside or in proximity to the EU. This may be read as an index of a low level of awareness about what the European Union is and means. Something similar is the case for the identification of Europe with the West, which is very strongly perceived, perhaps excessively so, by the groups living in the eastern Ukraine (Kharkiv – 135.2%). By contrast, the perception of this meaning is very weak in the groups interviewed in Siberia (15.5%), which points to an unclear idea of what the West means among those who are separated from European Russia and eastern Europe.

The idea of Europe as a common family is above the average of all the meanings in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Vojvodina, and is particularly marked for the Siberians (142.1%) but much less in the Ukraine (84.8%). Here again there is a contrast between those who see Europe in biological-generational terms (the Siberians, with a consequent form of nativism) and those who see it more as a cultural (and national) entity (the Ukrainians).

Indeed, the perception of Europe as a single cultural entity is widespread among the Ukrainians (110.0%), and much less marked in Italy (58.7%) and above all among those least touched by that entity – the Siberians in Tjumen (15.2%).

The subjugation of some peoples by others bulks large for those looking at Europe from outside, which are the people of Siberia, including those of European origin – Russians, Ukrainians, Caucasians and perhaps the Tartars (145.7%). Eastern Europeans such as the groups in the Kharkiv region are the least inclined to identify the subjugation of peoples (27.8%), a sign that they idealise relations among the peoples of Europe.

Lastly, the idea of Europe as a vague idea has little resonance, and here too the lowest degree of recognition is to be found in Tjumen (35.2%), where there is little feeling of context, background noise and attachment to explain the inexpressibility and vagueness of Europe.

To sum up, over the four regions the spread of meanings seems to be somewhat diversified. In Friuli Venezia Giulia the most recognised meanings of Europe (with percentage peaks well above the mean (= 100) are in its borders (from the Atlantic to the Urals) (156.3%), the common family (121.2%) and Christian civilisation (117.3%). In the Balkans (Vojvodina) most of the meanings are acknowledged (with the exception of Europe as the subjugation of peoples), but not much above the average – which itself is fairly high. In the Kharkiv region the prevalent meanings are Christian civilisation (with the highest approval of 152.0%), the political dimension of the European Union (146.0%), the attraction of the idea of the West (135.2%) and cultural unity (110%). The groups interviewed in the Tjumen region emphasise an idea of Europe as defined by its geographical limits, ending at the Urals (184.8%), the subjugation of peoples as a mark of European history (145.7%), the existence of a common family with the atavistic metaphors implicit in the succession of generations (142.1%) and lastly Europe as a political model exemplified in the European Union (143.5%).

Looked at another way, there is a configuration of four models of meaning, emphasising, from inside the European Union to its periphery and outside it: 1) its context, religion and the metaphor of the family (Friuli Venezia Giulia); 2) the combination of many meanings with no particular peaks of identification (Vojvodina); 3) Christian civilisation as the roots of Europe, the West as a point of reference and the EU as a political model (Kharkiv); 4) Europe's demarcating borders (Atlantic-Urals) the subjugation of peoples, the "nativism" of the family and the political model of the EU; that is to say a synthesis of meanings adding up to Europe as a "confined" entity defined by elements

which are relational (subjugation) and biological (in the family-generational metaphor) rather than cultural (Tjumen).

Meanings, by ethnic groups

Another way of analysing the meanings attributed to Europe is in terms of the views expressed by ethnic groups. This perspective is important because it links the national micro and national macro scales. In history and from a theoretical standpoint there has always been a sort of attraction between these two extremes since macro entities, in exchange for loyalty, have always granted considerable room to micro entities and have tended to restrict their expansion to a number of general spheres, values and rules, leaving ample interpretative and active scope to the local. This is akin to the logic of a culture spread on a large scale, strong in character but limited to functions of coordination, reference, spurring, and legitimisation of dominance – and in adopting a defensive position it becomes a sort of weak culture. It thus stands in contrast to circumscribed ethnic group culture which is weak because it has no pretensions to impose on its neighbours, but this “understatement” gives it the strength to prevail on its home ground. Such a relationship between macro and micro is strengthened by functions which are complementary between the two levels. Such a relationship is different from that which obtained, and still obtains, between the national norm (the nation state) and the ethnic groups which compose it, in which the prevailing forces are competition and fear (expressible to varying degrees) that a small ethnicity may threaten the national norm (and that the national norm may threaten the small ethnicity), in turn threatening the legitimisation of its dominance and freedom of action.

These premises gave rise to the division of the four regional samples into samples of ethnic groups with significant standing in the regions in question. In Friuli Venezia Giulia the study centred on the Italian ethnic-national group (the majority), the Friulans (local majority, national minority) and the Slovenes (ethnic minority with a national state beyond the Italian border). In Vojvodina the groups are the Serbian majority and the Slovak and Hungarian minorities. In the Kharkiv region (Ukraine) the groups are the Ukrainian majority and the Russian, Belarussian and Jewish minorities; the last of these groups was

included because the Jewish community is large, well organised and with a strong sense of identity. In the Tjumen region (the Ob/Irtish area of Siberia in the Russian Federation) four groups were studied: the Russian majority and the Tartar, Ukrainian and Caucasian minorities¹ (5). Of these groups only the Tartars are basically indigenous (though not all of them), while the others migrated from Russia and, under Stalin's rule, from the Ukraine and the Caucasus.

In cultural and above all religious terms, four groups are markedly Catholic (Italians, Friulans, Slovenes and Slovaks), one is predominantly Catholic with a Protestant presence (Hungarians), six are markedly Orthodox (Serbs, Ukrainians in the Ukraine, Belorussians in the Ukraine, Russians in the Ukraine, Russians in Siberia, Ukrainians in Siberia), one is Christian with a Muslim presence (Caucasians) and the Tartar group has a Muslim majority. There are clear cultural pluralities here, and that may be an invaluable factor in a better understanding of the meanings of Europe under analysis.

The data were again processed according to a standardised percentage set at 100 so as to compare the fourteen ethnic groups (see Graph 1). The results suggest a number of considerations that may be summarised in the following points.

1) The attribution of importance (very/fairly) to the eight meanings in question is in general evenly spread, but more marked (above the average of 100) in thirteen of the fourteen ethnic groups in the case of Europe as a Christian civilisation. Only among the Serbs is the percentage for this meaning lower than 100 (96.2%), while among the Jews (non-Christians) it is 165.3% and for the Orthodox groups it is also high (from 154% to 118.4%). They are followed by the Muslim ethnic groups (Tartars and some of the Caucasians). Christian civilisation is emphasised by non-Christians (Jews) as the acknowledgement of a situation, and by Orthodox and Catholic groups as members of Christian communities.

After the recognition of Europe's Christian character, the next meanings, in order, are the political-geographical significance of the European Union and the Europe's Atlantic-Urals borders. For these, eleven groups showed an identification greater than 100 and only three less than 100.

1 The Caucasians interviewed comprised 56 Georgians, 39 Azerbaijanis, 23 Armenians, 11 Chechens, 4 Ingush, 3 Ossetians.

It is worth pointing out that the groups who attach less importance to Europe as the European Union are those already in the EU – Italians and Friulans – and the Serbs, who are still a long way from it, despite its geographical proximity. The Atlantic-Urals idea of Europe is identified to a high degree or a low degree by groups living just inside or immediately beyond the borders so defined. The groups in Siberia consider it a defining characteristic of Europe, those in the Ukraine do not consider it relevant.

Graph 1.1. Perceptions of the meaning of Europe expressed by the fourteen ethnic groups, in decreasing order of standardised of percentages (mean = 100),

EUROPE IS ...

The West		Subjugation		European Union	
Jews U	(151.5)	Russians S.	(159.4)	Caucasians S	(167.5)
Ukrainians U	(138.9)	Tartars S.	(159.2)	Ukrainians U	(152.7)
Russians U	(128.6)	Ukrainians S.	(154.2)	Tartars S	151.6)
Belorussians	(123.1)	Caucasians S	(110.6)	Russians U	(148.2)
Italians	(109.8)	Serbs	(88.5)	Jews U	(143.3)
Hungarians	(109.0)	Friulans	(88.4)	Belorussians	(140.5)
Serbs	(101.6)	OVERALL	(78.5)	Russians S.	(137.2)
Slovaks	(99.1)	Slovaks	(78.1)	OVERALL	(120.4)
Friulans	(97.1)	Slovenes	(77.0)	Ukrainians S	(118.7)
Slovenes	(93.0)	Italians	(68.4)	Hungarians	(111.1)
OVERALL	(92.2)	Hungarians	(43.2)	Slovaks	(104.8)
Ukrainians S	(22.3)	Russians S	(34.3)	Slovenes	(101.1)
Caucasians S	(21.0)	Belorussians	(31.1)	Italians	(97.8)
Tartars S	(11.7)	UKrainians U	(28.4)	Friulans	(94.8)
Russians S.	(7.8)	Jews U	(16.5)	Serbs	(76.6)

Legend: U = Ukraine; S = Siberia

Graph 1.2. Perceptions of the meaning of Europe expressed by the fourteen ethnic groups, in decreasing order of standardised percentages (mean = 100)

EUROPE IS ...

Cultural entity		Atlantic to Urals		Common family	
Hungarians	(119.9)	Ukrainians S.	(196.6)	Tartars S	(164.4)
Jews U	(115.7)	Russians S	(189.6)	Ukrainians S	(160.9)
Ukrainians U	(112.5)	Caucasians S	(179.0)	Russians S	(156.3)
Russians U	(106.8)	Tartars S	(173.7)	Friulans	(131.2)
Belorussians	105.7)	Slovenes	(166.0)	Slovenes	(123.2)
Slovaks	(100.7)	Italians	(163.0)	Serbs	(117.5)
Serbs	(89.0)	Friulans	(140.8)	Slovaks	(114.5)
OVERALL	(73.2)	OVERALL	(134.0)	OVERALL	(114.3)
Slovenes	(59.6)	Serbs	(121.3)	Italians	(108.6)
Italians	(59.4)	Hungarians	(114.0)	Russians U	(103.8)
Friulani	(57.8)	Slovaks	(109.6)	Hungarians	(103.4)
Caucasians S	(21.3)	Belorussians	(100.7)	Caucasians S.	(86.8)
Tartars S	(13.4)	Jews U	(93.7)	Belorussians	(84.6)
Russians S	(13.3)	Ukrainians U	(83.6)	Jews U	(78.5)
Ukrainians S	(13.1)	Russians U	68.7)	Ukrainians U	(72.9)

Legend: U = Ukraine; S = Siberia

Graph 1.3. Perceptions of the meanings of Europe expressed by the fourteen groups, in decreasing order of standardised percentages (mean = 100)

EUROPE IS ...

Christian civilisation		Vague idea	
Jews U	(165.3)	Serbs	(108.8)
Russians U	(154.0)	Caucasians S.	(104.8)
Ukrainians U	(152.4)	Slovaks	(81.4)
Belorussians	(138.1)	Hungarians	(77.1)
Russians S.	126.3)	Belorussians S.	(75.9)
OVERALL	(123.9)	Italians	(74.6)
Hungarians	(122.8)	Friulans	(74.0)
Italians	(119.2)	Slovenes	(63.8)
Ukrainians	(118.4)	OVERALL	(63.3)
Friulans	(116.2)	Ukrainians U.	(59.1)
Slovenes	(116.2)	Russians U	(56.4)
Tartars S.	(112.2)	Jews U	(34.7)
Slovaks	(112.1)	Ukrainians S	(14.8)
Caucasians S	(108.1)	Tartars S	(12.8)
Serbs	(96.2)	Russians S	(9.9)

Legend: U = Ukraine; S = Siberia

Another value recognised (over 100%) by many groups (10 out of 14) is Europe as a common family – a family, as explained above, more biological and naturalistic than others. Particularly high in this recognition were the Tartars (164.4%) and the Siberian groups, followed by the Friulani and Slovenes.

Europe as the West and Europe as a cultural entity scored generally around the average (100.0%). The Jews and Ukrainian minorities were those most inclined to recognise these meanings, while the Siberian groups showed the opposite tendency.

Europe as a vague idea was recognised more by the Serbs and Caucasians and less by all the other groups. Europe as the subjugation of peoples is recognised most by those living east of the Urals (the Siberians). Among those less inclined to share this value, the Jews scored a mere 16.5% compared to the standardised average of 100.

2) The second point to emerge is that the three groups in Friuli Venezia Giulia find themselves in an intermediate position with regard to the meanings, except that they are less inclined than others to see Europe as the European Union. This means that for them the meanings of Europe are more cultural than political.

The groups in Vojvodina also identify with the meanings of Europe less than others, with the exception of Europe as a vague idea – as noise, background, something inexpressible (Serbs and Slovaks in particular).

The groups emerging at the extremes of the importance attached to the eight meanings are those in the Ukraine and Siberia. The Ukrainians (Ukrainians, Russians, Belarussians, Jews) identify Europe as the West, a cultural entity and Christian civilisation, with much less emphasis on subjugation, the Atlantic-Urals borders and a common family. The Siberian groups (Russians, Tartars, Ukrainians, Caucasians) show a similar split in emphases, but in a contrasting sense: they see Europe as subjugation, the European Union, Atlantic-Urals and a common family; much less as the West, a cultural entity and a vague idea.

3) The above observations should not be interpreted as lack of (statistically) significant differences between the regional ethnic groups. This is shown by the fact that in cross-referencing the percentages of identification with the meanings for the ethnic groups in each of the four regions, the “chi - square” (χ^2) indicates a significant difference (between the theoretical and empirical distribution) in seven out of the eight meanings (the exception being Europe as a cultural entity) among the Siberian groups (Russians, Tartars, Ukrainians, Caucasians), and in five meanings out of eight (exceptions: Europe as the West, Atlantic-Urals, Christian civilisation) among the groups in Vojvodina (Serbs, Hungarians, Slovaks). For the groups in Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italians, Friulans, Slovenes) and the Ukraine (Ukrainians, Russians, Belarussians, Jews) the significant distances between the groups regard only two and three meanings respectively. In particular the Friulians emphasise Europe as subjugation

more than the Italians do, and the Italians emphasise Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals more than the Friulans.

How can the above be interpreted, especially the differences between the groups in Vojvodina and Siberia? An initial generic consideration is that the ethnic groups in these regions have developed sensitivities to and forms of awareness of Europe which are markedly complex, even though they are relatively homogeneous compared to ethnic groups in other regions and parts of Europe. In Vojvodina there is a certain divergence in the attributions of meanings to Europe between Hungarians and Serbs, while in Siberia the divergence is between Russians and Ukrainians on one side and Tartars and Caucasians on the other. Further consideration would clearly lead to the identification of the explanatory variables in these groups' history, consolidated inter-group relations, religion and culture.

Reciprocal independence and interdependence of the meanings of Europe

At this point in the analysis it may be observed that meanings of Europe are part of an integrated whole of features distinguishing a concept and a culture. This means that the eight meanings here considered can be grouped into larger bodies which configure meanings broader than each of the eight single ones.

These underlying groups of meanings may be identified by recourse to the correlations between the meanings and then to the factors produced by factor analyses carried out on the four regions and the fourteen ethnic groups (See Table 4).

Some of the results are summarised in Graph 2, which shows the contents of the first three factors for each region. For each of these factors the explanatory power (explained variance) is shown and consideration is given to the correlations between the meanings of which the factor is composed.

Under each of the meanings are variable dimensions/factors which indicate how Europe is perceived, interpreted and experienced in its many geographical areas. These are essential conceptual dimensions locally enriched with particular combinations of markers.

Table 4. Rotated component matrix of the loadings of the 8 meanings of Europe, according to the varimax method, and according to the factors of the four regions (Friuli V. G., Vojvodina, Kharkiv and Tyumen)

Europe is	Friuli Ven. G.			Vojvodina			Kharkiv			Tyumen		
	Factors			Factors			Factors			Factors		
	1^	2^	3^	1^	2^	3^	1^	2^	3^	1^	2^	3^
West	.47	.13	.02	.16	.81	.02	.09	.77	-.01	.71	.13	.20
Subjugation	.01	.04	.18	.83	.09	-.07	.64	.10	.16	.11	.48	.11
European Union	.72	.09	-.03	.08	.57	.15	.05	.52	.25	.18	.02	.54
Single cultural entity	.52	.06	-.01	.02	.07	.64	-.08	.05	.60	.13	.25	-.10
Between the Atlantic and the Urals	.01	.56	-.02	.32	.25	.23	.36	-.04	-.09	-.00	.19	.13
Common family	.16	.24	.23	.54	.06	.20	.27	.11	.48	-.05	.28	.02
Christian civilisation	.27	.42	.07	.00	.11	.68	-.26	.10	.46	.07	.36	-.02
Vague idea	-.07	-.07	.46	.60	.13	-.11	.56	.17	-.09	.67	-.12	.06
Percentage of explained variance	24%	15%	14%	29%	20%	15%	24%	21%	14%	21%	18%	13%

The dimensions of the meanings in the four regions regard first of all (first dimension) a sort of identification between Europe as the West and as the European Union, and thus between forms of political organisation and a central authoritative nucleus of Europe. The second dimension is the identification of Europe as a Christian civilisation and a common cultural entity. The significant correlation between the two meanings, which in Vojvodina and Kharkiv is particularly high ($r = 0.43$ and 0.34 respectively), means that the religious value of Christian civilisation is diluted as it becomes part of a common cultural entity that is Europe. The third conceptual dimension derives from the fact that the meanings of Europe as the subjugation of peoples, its Atlantic-Urals extent and a vague idea are sufficiently closely linked to form a broader meaning: the vague idea of Europe is in fact a container of ideas of Europe of a spatial and geographical nature, with peoples who have historically been in states of conflict and conditions of exploitation. The noise of the vague idea mentioned initially to define this meaning of Europe is actually a socio-spatial context of emotions rather than inexpressibility.

In sum then, there are three dimensions underlying the meanings of Europe, reciprocally independent in each of the regions and common to all of them, European and non-European alike. The first is secular-political (the West and the European Union); the second is cultural, in which the common culture is identified in Christian civilisation; the third is socio-spatial with a generic and vague context (subjugation of peoples, Atlantic-Urals, vague idea). Since the dimensions of meanings are independent (produced by the factors in each region), the implication is that the European citizen has modern and fairly isolated views in terms of the practical realities and ways of conceiving and experiencing Europe – regarding politics and everyday life, culture and identity and the European socio-spatial context. The correlations between the variables making up each of the dimensions of meaning are very high.

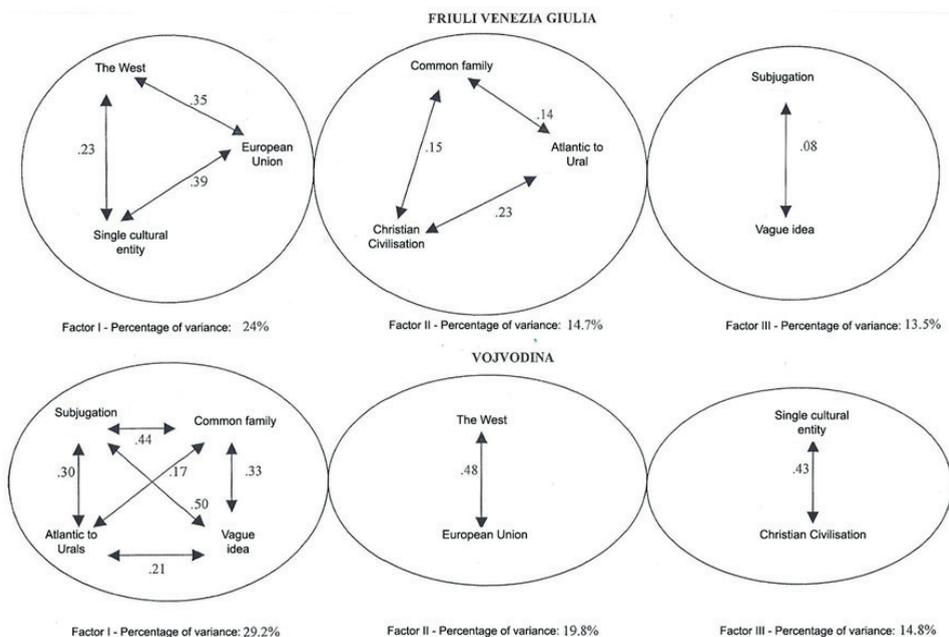
In each regional context the three general dimensions of meanings present some privileged relationships with other meanings around the common structure, which form highly specific configurations for each of the four regions. A reading of Graphs 1 and 2 enables us to analyse the main features of each of these configurations. The two extremes are represented by Friuli Venezia Giulia and Tjumen, with Vojvodina and Kharkiv in fairly similar intermediate positions.

For the people (Italians, Friulans and Slovenes) living in Friuli Venezia Giulia the most important factor correlates with and distinguishes from the other meanings those connected to politics and everyday life (Europe as the West and as the European Union: $r = 0.35$), but they are closely integrated in Europe's common cultural entity ($r = 0.39$ with the European Union and 0.23 with the West). That is interesting because it indicates that 1) the West and the European Union are of a piece with the cultural dimension of Europe; 2) that cultural image is somewhat detached from the idea of Europe as a Christian civilisation. Christian civilisation (second factor) rather takes on a meaning of attachment to a metaphorical common family, which is located in the space between the Atlantic and the Urals. In other words Christian civilisation turns out to be more connected to the meanings of belonging ascribed to the family than to membership of a single great culture, with the values, objects and norms which denote it. Lastly, Europe as the subjugation of peoples and as a vague idea are both isolated (independent) in a “non-factor”, the third. In addition to accounting for only 13.5% of the total variance, this factor acts as

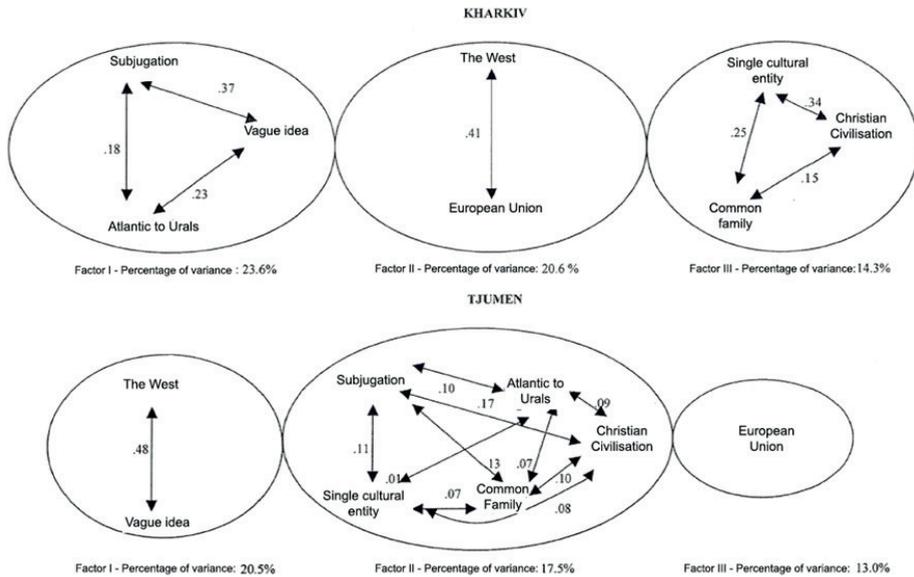
a dimension independent from the other two, comprising meanings that for these Italian citizens have very little in common ($r = 0.08$).

In Friuli Venezia Giulia, therefore, the only region in the European Union, the political and spatial factors (the first and second) are augmented with cultural values which are identified less with Christian civilisation because the latter is rather the product of a deeper spirit characterised by reproductive relations (of the personality and social man) represented by the family (though in this case Europe can be a family only metaphorically). Lastly, the subjugation of peoples is very weakly connected to Europe as a vague idea.

Graph 2.1. - Correlations between meanings which from the first, the second and the third factors, extracted by factor analysis for the regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia and Vojvodina



Graph 2.2. - Correlations between meanings which from the first, the second and the third factors, extracted by factor analysis for the regions of Kharkiv and Tyumen



As already observed, Vojvodina and Kharkiv present structures of independent meanings which are very similar for all three factors. In the first the subjugation of peoples is strongly connected to Europe as a vague idea. In the second the West is connected to the European Union. In the third factor Christian civilisation is connected to the common culture.

In these two regions people perceive this structure of meanings with a significant intensity of the link (correlation) between the meanings, but they combine the meanings in slightly different aggregations. In Vojvodina the variables within each factor are highly correlated: the correlation (r) is often found to be between 0.50 and 0.43; in Kharkiv the highest correlations are between 0.41 and 0.34. What is more striking is that in Vojvodina the meaning of Europe as a common family reinforces the idea of Europe as the subjugation of peoples and as a vague idea, thereby emphasising the asymmetrical and dialectic relations obtaining between generations in a family (especially a traditional one). By contrast, in Kharkiv Europe as a common family strengthens the idea of Europe as a Christian civilisation and a single cultural entity, thereby emphasising the profound emotional and formative impact of individual social belonging that the family expresses and – above all – has always expressed.

Lastly, the independent (factorial) dimension of the meanings of Europe perceived by the Russians, Tartars, Ukrainians and Caucasians in the Tjumen region seem to emphasise views of Europe from outside, from Siberia, which are rather different from the inside view of the residents of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

On this it should be said firstly that the real number of factors (independent dimensions) is two, not three, because the third factor is made up of a single meaning, which is the European Union: this is a “mute” meaning which has no link to the other seven. Secondly, the first factor strongly connects ($r = 0.48$) the idea of Europe as the West with Europe as a vague idea. The vague idea therefore seems to mean nothing (not emotion or noise) other than the West and its context. Thirdly, the other five meanings go to make up a single dimension/independent factor (second factor), but with reciprocal links (correlations) which are very weak and lead to a new interpretation of the idea of Europe as the subjugation of peoples. Such subjugation of peoples by other peoples is bound less to Europe as a vague idea than to the asymmetrical relations obtaining in the (common) family ($r = 0.13$) and in particular to Christian civilisation ($r = 0.17$), thus interpreted as an ideological context, and to the common culture ($r = 0.11$), which has had the function of underpinning the subjugation of weaker peoples by the strong. In other words, for the Tjumen groups an outside view of Europe (first factor) appears to be accompanied by a stereotyped image of meanings used to signify Europe beyond the Urals, where they identify a subjugation of peoples, a Christian civilisation, a common family, a single culture and a space which begins at the Atlantic and ends at the Urals.

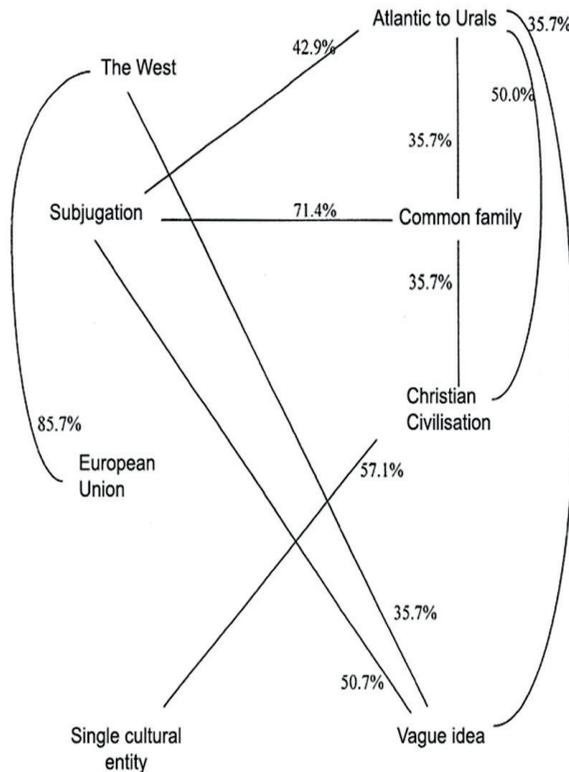
At this point the analysis conducted thus far could be extended to cover each of the fourteen groups singly. Since such detail is not possible here within the constraints of this article, it must suffice to observe in general terms how the eight meanings of Europe combine in independent factors/dimensions. The most frequent combination (Graph 3) is between Europe as the West and as the European Union, identified by twelve out of the fourteen ethnic groups. Other frequent combinations are Europe as the subjugation of peoples and 1) the common family, in ten ethnic groups; 2) Atlantico-Urals, in six groups; 3) a vague idea, in seven groups. Europe as a Christian civilisation combines with a single cultural entity in eight of the fourteen ethnic groups, with Atlantic-Urals in seven groups, and with the common family in five of the fourteen groups.

Para-operational conclusions

Perceptions of each of the meanings of Europe have been identified in the four regions and the fourteen ethnic groups comprised in the study. The next step was to examine the extent to which these meanings are interconnected and the extent to which they are independent. We may conclude with some thoughts on the usefulness of the results in terms of cultural policy.

Knowing the extent to which a meaning is commonly perceived is important for the orientation of cultural actions. It also enables initiatives to be taken to strengthen meanings which are considered positive and weaken those which are deemed negative.

Graph 3. - Percentages of paired combination of meanings in any given factor of the fourteen factor analysis of the fourteen ethnic groups



Following such an analysis it is useful to know how the meanings are aggregated, how they combine and whether they are independent, since it allows policy makers to understand whether an initiative implemented to strengthen (or weaken) a meaning may in fact strengthen (or weaken) another meaning, or other meanings, of Europe. Knowing the existence of combinations or independence among meanings makes it easier to plan and implement the best strategies to make Europe figure more prominently in people's minds and emotions now and in the future.

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