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**Bridging the Post-Soviet and the Postcolonial**

How can the Soviet colonies be located within the Postcolonial discourse?

A case study of Poland and Romania

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## **Abstract**

This thesis will use qualitative research methods in order to bridge the gap between the Post-Soviet and the Postcolonial studies. Over the past years Postcolonial literature began dominating Universities across the world. The theories presented by Postcolonial scholars are gaining more legitimacy in the international arena, providing an insight into the identity crisis experienced by the global society. This piece will analyse the two main concepts presented by Postcolonial scholars: the Empire and Modernity. The concepts will be examined in the light of Post-Soviet literature. The interrelation of Postcolonial theory with the narrative on Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe will unveil the extent to which U.S.S.R can be considered as a colonial Empire. The Soviet rule did not only have the negative consequences on the material and social infrastructure of Eastern European nations, the colonial power has also contributed to the creation of a stereotype of “Eastern bloc” and the belief in a clear cut divide of Europe, which also is referred as the “Iron Curtain”. Such stereotypes still inhabit the imagination of many across the world. Nevertheless such conception of Eastern Europe is inaccurate as portrayed by the comparison of the historical narratives from Romania and Poland in the later part of the thesis. The article will conclude with the manner in which these stereotypes have been resisted within and outside of the Eastern side of the “Iron Curtain”.

## **Introduction**

Scholars question whether Soviet Union and its satellite states can be located in the Postcolonial paradigm. It is asked if the project for world socialism pursued by Moscow can be equated to the colonial hunt of Western European powers. There are multiple reasons for the gap that exists between the Post-Soviet and the Postcolonial studies. Scholars fail to recognise Soviet influence as strictly colonial; the topic of race which is central in the Postcolonial analysis is not highly visible in the Soviet drive for power. Additionally, a vast amount of de-colonial movements were supported by the communist bloc. The Soviet involvement with the colonial resistance could have possibly led to the omission of the Soviet Empire within Postcolonial theory - how could an actor who highly supported de-colonial struggle be considered as a coloniser? Thus it can be said that Postcolonial critique reduces itself to Western European colonial

experience. This leads to a skewed comprehension of concepts found within Postcolonial studies, demonstrating that much research done within the discipline is grounded in limited analytical factors.

Nevertheless, an increasing number of academics who analyse Soviet influences during and after the Cold War see plenty of similarities between the Western and Soviet colonialism. The Soviet colonial expansion used similar tools as the British or the French. An enormous amount of cultures and heritages has vaporised, economic resources of the colonies have been drained, and the social structure of the colonised populations underwent drastic transformations. Hierarchies have emerged, with some enjoying the privilege of the colonial gain more than the others. Russia still maintains close links with the former Soviet states, the former Empire does not hesitate to use force in order to keep the rebelling societies under own influence. The recent events in Ukraine or Georgia demonstrated that Russia is not ready to step down. On the other side, the West as many would call it, still engages in a form of epistemic violence, the discourses emerging from the academic, political and public circles are induced with generalizations. The imagination of the West is inhabited by forms of thinking which reproduce colonialism. The drive to categorize, dismiss and influence cultures and communities by the ones who hold the power in the world system is unveiled once we critically engage with the knowledge reproduced by the powerful. Such scrutiny is at the centre of Postcolonial studies and is vital in portraying the way power is structured across the globe.

This project will counter the omission of the Post-Soviet experience in the Postcolonial analysis. The thesis will present the way in which the gap between the Post-Soviet and Postcolonial studies can be bridged. The first part of the article will introduce the Postcolonial theory, focusing on the concepts of Empire and Modernity. The introduction will also provide the critique found within the Postcolonial scholarship, centring on Bhabha's contributions to the Postcolonial studies. This will establish a theoretical framework which will be placed in the context of the Soviet colonialism. The location of the Soviet experience in Postcolonial discourses will reveal the way the division between the West and the East was established during the Cold War. The concepts of Modernity and Empire will present the colonial homogenisation of the U.S.S.R and its satellite states. Bhabha's critique will be essential here, as the scholar

exhibits the technicalities behind the processes of cultural homogenisation. The junction of the Postcolonial and the Post-Soviet will give an understanding on the way the division between the “West” and the “East” has emerged. The legacy of such division is still visible in the manner in which Eastern Europe is imagined in public and academic discourses. In order to undermine such homogenisation, the third chapter will compare the experience of Poland and Romania during the Cold War, specifically focusing in the last decades of the communist regimes. The contrast between Poland and Romania will portray the significant flaw in the categorization of experiences of societies in Eastern Europe under a single entity. The project will be concluded with a brief analysis of the way such homogenisation has been resisted with the use of culture.

### **Defining Postcolonialism**

Postcolonial theory examines the consequences of colonialism located within different societies across the globe. Postcolonial studies are constantly changing - this derives from the interdisciplinary nature of the field. The scholarship encompasses works from anthropology, literature, international relations, cultural studies and area studies. The main argument behind the Postcolonial theory is that there is a flaw in the belief that emancipation from colonial dominance brings an automatic balance in the society. In this sense, independent nation states, which would be placed within the category of “Postcolonial”, are experiencing high levels of social inequality, economic underdevelopment and an impeded cultural infrastructure. Thus, the Postcolonial critique indicates the way colonial legacy surfaces in the independent states, as well as the former Empire (Zarycki, 2008: 23). Ama Ata Aidoo<sup>1</sup>, a Ghanaian Postcolonial academic and the former minister of culture correctly indicates that the ‘post’ in the Postcolonial signifies, that since the end of colonialism, the world has been installed with regimes of power that are supposedly different from the colonial structures. (Mongia, 1996: 2) Nevertheless, such regimes uphold the global order initiated by colonial powers in a masked form. Moreover, the “post” directs attention away from the

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<sup>1</sup> Aidoo is also renowned for her contribution to the West African literature. Aidoo’s work highlights the tensions between African and Western world views. The most famous novel *Our Sister Killjoy* touches upon the themes of black Diaspora and colonialism, the protagonist travels to Europe for a “better quality” of education. Upon arrival, Sissie discovers that the African Diaspora buys into the notion of Western superiority by embracing material possession. The book also presents the way the black Diaspora is economically impoverished in comparison to other members of the society. Overall Aidoo’s literature encompasses the way the thoughts and traditions of the colonizer are instilled into the minds of the colonized.

current discursive, political and economic inequalities which are found in the world system. Apart from Aidoo's critique, the term "Postcolonial" is juxtaposed in two different spheres: the first is a marker of the changes that follow the period of official decolonization, including the changes in the intellectual approaches to colonialism, the second sphere replaces names like "Third World" or "Commonwealth", terms which until recently dominated the colonial discourse analysis, worldwide literature and the discussion on migrants who exist within the "first world" states. (ibid) Therefore, the goal of Postcolonial scholarship is to alter the way we understand cultures, nations and communities which have been suppressed by colonial manoeuvres. This is done in the course of creating spaces, where the colonised are able to regain a voice taken away by the colonial power (Thompson, 2010: 1)

In order to understand the theoretical framework of Postcolonial studies, the term "colonialism" should be defined. The term is based on the Latin verb *colere* meaning to cultivate, inhabit, and care for. Colonialism still possesses such connotations, but as the literature presents, these connotations are interpreted by scholars in a multitude of ways (Steinmetz, 2014: 59). This derives from the assumption that "colonialism" can be defined on cultural, social or economic grounds. Nonetheless, it can be universally agreed that colonialism is a form of domination, it is a way of controlling territories and/or behaviours of individuals or groups. This domination is dissected into two categories: intergroup and intragroup. The criterion applies to cultures which are heterogeneous or homogenous. Intergroup domination refers to the processes found within culturally heterogeneous groups. This was visible in British Empire, where the British settlers possessed power over the colonised populations, which were culturally different from the colonizers. The intragroup domination convolutes the domination located in homogenous societies. This is apparent in communities with a clear class or caste distinctions, where hierarchical arrangement of power, status and wealth are performed by the population (Horvath, 1972: 48). In this way the control of individuals and groups relates not only to economic exploitation but also as a culture-change process (ibid). Thus, colonialism should be understood as a way of conquering the material property and minds of populations enclosed in and also outside the colonies.

*The Empire*

The majority of Postcolonial scholarship analyses “modern” colonialism which emerged in Western Europe. This form of colonialism dominated during the enlightenment period, where European ethnic groups began a transformation into national entities. This was achieved through the attachment of culture, law, language, literature and tradition to a specific territory. The European nations commenced conquering lands located outside of the continent. This was done for economic and political gains and resulted in the establishment of colonial Empires (Thompson, 2008: 1-2).

The role of the colonial Empire is central to Postcolonial scholarship. Edward Said<sup>2</sup>, whose works centre on the structures of Western Empires presents the way colonial domination is achieved through the dichotomization of global territories. This is achieved through the separation of colonial territories into the metropolitan centre and the periphery. The periphery in this case is exploited and controlled by the metropolitan centre. As argued, the main occupation of the metropolis is the “implementation of settlements on a distant territory” (Said, 1993: 9). For example, in the case of Dutch colonial history, the Netherlands would be the metropolis whilst the distant colonies located in South East Asia would signify the periphery. The split facilitated successful subordination of the Dutch colonies, despite the large distances between the colonial state and the colonies.

As presented, colonialism refers to domination on both material and mental grounds. The conquest of the minds of populations exhibits that the Empire facilitates the ideological, linguistic, cultural as well as psychic processes over own populace. This is vital for the survival of the colonial domination as the conquered societies are constantly changing, reflecting the rule, resisting the power and interacting with the colonial structures. In this sense the core has to continuously shape the peripheries and vice versa, presenting that the relation between the core and metropolis is flexible and responsive. This approach to understanding the Empire presents that colonial power cannot be attributed to just a big state which encompasses varied territories.

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Said was a literary theoretician, he lectured English, History and Comparative literature at Columbia University. Said was mostly renowned for his book *Orientalism*, where he focused on the cultural representation during Western colonialism. The work relates to the foundation of Western thought toward the Middle East, where produced images of “the Orient” and the creation of “the far East” served as a way of justifying colonial expansion.

Accordingly, the Empire should be comprehended through its own specific characteristics, which do not necessarily resemble the “traditional” genealogy of a state. (Steinmetz, 2014: 58).

The research on the structure of the Empire helps in comprehending the way populations and territories are arranged in accordance to the policies of the metropolis. The continuation of the Empire is supported by complex processes, actors and institutions which maintain the colonial dominance. The constant expansion of the colonial boundaries and the changing nature of the Empire exhibits the need for a regime that does not have temporal boundaries. Therefore the inhabitants of the Empire are made to believe that the Empire is not a historical consequence but something that is static and not malleable. Thus, the rule over human nature creates the world which is inhabited by the citizens of the Empire (Hardt&Negri, 2000: xv). This is unveiled through the concept of Modernity.

### *Postcolonialism and Modernity*

The concept of Modernity is a vital aspect of Postcolonial scholarship which aids in understanding colonial domination. Modernity is directly linked to the Empire. The concept sustains the position of the Empire and is one of the most powerful tools that the colonial power possesses. The concept exhibits the way metropolis establishes an identity of the colonised and the colonisers. This is done through the separation of the population into the category of The Occident and the Orient. The colonizers are presented as the Occident whilst the colonised as the Orient. The Occident is imagined by the characteristics like modern, superior, civilized, whilst the Orient is portrayed as backwards, savage, primitive, and needing to catch up with the developed Occident. The role of the Occident is bringing modern civilization to the Orient. This binary is produced in accordance with the belief that Modernity is a temporal and geographical a dimension, where the Occident experienced the transformation from pre-modern to modern. This has happened at a specific point of human history and only applied to societies which were geographically located in Western Europe (Maybelin, Piekut, Valentine, 2014: 4).

Modernity is sustained through the reproduction of knowledge and imagery about the Orient. Such reproduction is also referred to as the “othering” discourse. The Orient is



objectified by the Occident and placed in a subordinate position. Such knowledge is internalised by the inhabitants of the Empire. The imposition of the new identity upon the Orient and the Occident is achieved through eradication of any knowledge that “the Orient” has come to possess about itself up until colonialism. The cultural, linguistic, and ideological heritage of the colonial population vanishes and is deemed inferior. The “othering” discourse is reproduced through the colonial apparatuses of knowledge production, economic exploitation, political institutions and the media. (Said, 1993) This uncovers the way in which the Empire is registered within multiple spheres of social activity as well as the manner in which the Empire succeeds in control of a diverse range of actors. The disclosure of knowledge which the colonized held about themselves and its replacement by colonial discourses is essential when examining the concept of Modernity. By looking at the way the colonized identity is tamed in the Empire, we can comprehend the way colonialism extends economic exploitation and moves to the domination based on a more personal ground.

The Empire’s hold on the discourse of Modernity portrays the colonial dependence on fixity. This fixity applies to the construction of the Orient, although the Orient is reconstructed through many stereotypes, its identity always seems to appear as fixed. This, of course is vital, as without a fixed cultural identity, it would be hard to reproduce the knowledge about the colonised as well as maintain their subordinate position. Homi Bhabha<sup>3</sup>, in his analysis of colonial literature<sup>3</sup> argues that the stereotypes and the images of the Orient produced by the metropolis ought to be read in terms of “fetishisms”. For the scholar, the aforementioned myth of advanced colonial historical origination is illustrated through cultural purity and priority. The myth therefore serves as a way of normalising multitude beliefs and split subjects which are entangled within the colonial discourse. The myth of Modernity - a representation of the colonial and the colonised subjects as pure, highly relies on the production of difference between the two. The knowledge of difference constitutes the identity of The Occident and the Orient. The binary can materialize through the process of the differentiation. Therefore difference

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<sup>3</sup> Homi Bhabha contributes to Postcolonial theory through his works on culture and nationalism (*Nation and Narration* 1990, *The Location of Culture* 1994). The scholar’s critical approach to national ideology as well as cultural studies encourages a new approach to representation and resistance. Bhabha’s works deconstruct the way cultural differences are produced, demonstrating the colonial elements in nationalism and culture. Bhabha contests the essentialist readings of nationality and culture. The arguments are produced with the use of complex criteria of semiotics and psychoanalysis.

serves the colonial power as a tool for inducing dominance. For Bhabha, in order to comprehend the anatomy of colonial discourse, the stereotype that is continuously reproduced and fetishized needs to be located. In this way the colonised are denied the capacities of self-government, independence and modes of civilities based on Western values. The denial is maintained through the internalization of the fetishized images created by the colonial discourse (Du, Hall, 2011: 38-52).

The reproduction of colonial discourses through the fixed images of the colonised demonstrates the issue of "singularity". The positioning of heterogeneous actors in singular category reveals the problem of representation. As already exhibited by Bhabha, the concept of Modernity reduces myriad of cultures to a one pure, authentic entity. This reduction feeds the interest of individuals who engage in the dichotomization of these identities. As argued by Clifford, images of one and another are constituted in specific historical relations of dialogue and dominance (Hallward, 2001: 23). Nevertheless, the dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized also creates a space for the disarticulation of the voice of the authority. The process of splitting of the Orient from the Occident is grounded within the production of differences. Such production is based on categories like race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, or location. During the split, the oppressor or the dominating actor is also constituting own identity. In the case of Western colonial powers this is done through the discourses of superiority located within the concept of Modernity. The period of the constitution of the identity of the colonizer creates space where the colonised or the oppressed, are able to gain an insight into the subjectivities located within these process. In this way, Postcolonial critique is able to materialise, the knowledge about the colonised which is made available during the identity construction allows us to operationalise colonial dominance.

Bhabha's contribution to Postcolonial theory is essential in understanding the way population of the Empire assimilates the imposed power structures. Although the presented Postcolonial concepts emerged as a result of the analysis of Western European forms of colonialism which took place at the beginning of the enlightenment period, the technicalities found within the concepts can be applied to the experience of communities which found themselves under the Soviet rule after the end of the Second World War.

### **Soviet Union on Postcolonial terms?**

Soviet colonialism was a project which intended to spread socialism around the globe. The Soviet Empire existed across the Asian and the European continent. Along with its allies in Latin America and Africa, the communist party was able to compete for the hegemony with capitalist democracies in the West. One notable difference between the colonial pursuit of the Western democracies and the Soviet Union was the territorial growth. The expansion of the U.S.S.R differed from the Western powers as the Soviet expansion was based on proximity, rather than pursuit of colonies across the seas. Nevertheless, Soviet colonialism, just like Western colonial hunt was grounded in economic exploitation, the spread of the colonial culture, and the inducement of colonial political systems. This chapter will link the Postcolonial theory with the “Soviet experience”. The analysis will relate concepts like the Empire and Modernity to the project of socialist expansion. Such examination will unveil the extent to which Soviet Union can be located in the Postcolonial literature.

#### *The Soviet Empire*

As presented, the Empire is constituted through five main processes: economic exploitation, imposition of colonial ideology, linguistic and cultural domination as well as psychic subjugation (such as making the colonised believe in their inferiority). These processes adapt to the changing nature of the Empire. The metropolis which can be regarded as Russia (with Moscow as the central unit), ruled over its peripheries: the Soviet states as well as the satellite nations. The metropolis utilized all of the aforementioned processes for its control. The economic exploitation is visible in the way in which Russia lobbied the colonies for more profitable trade agreements. The linguistic and cultural domination presents itself in the way Russian was imposed as the official language across the Soviet Union and the manner in which satellite states were “Russified”. The psychic subjugation of the population is clear in the way Russians and the Socialist ideology were constructed as superior by Soviet leaders and the intellectuals.

The economic exploitation of the colonies by Russia is visible by the disparity within the foreign trade before and after the establishment of the Soviet Bloc. By 1947 the Soviet bloc countries took over a one half of the exports of Russia while, supplying around one third of the commercial imports. This is disparate to the 5 per cent of shares in the foreign trade that these states had with Russia prior to the start of the Second World War. As argued, throughout the exchange of goods, Russia used own bargaining position to receive favourable prices. (Black & Helmreich, 1966: 717-18). Although the Soviet colonies were supposed to be treated as a unified economic organism, an issue of providing increased priority over natural resources to the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic is one of most evident examples of the unequal economic relations between Russia and the colonies. The traditional motive of imperial expansion, the quest for land and natural resources is visible in the incorporation of Ukraine and Kazakhstan into the Soviet Union. As argued by Kappeler, natural resource was “the main reason for the Russian absorption of Kazakhstan” (Keppeler, 2001: 322). This portrays the metropolis/periphery division within the Soviet Empire from an economic perspective. The denial of economic diversification to the Soviet colonies which favoured the position of the Russian republic, as well as the exploitation of the resources of the republics undermines the values of socialism that were so meticulously promoted by the Soviet bloc.

The ideological, cultural, linguistic and psychic domination in the Soviet Empire is clearly visible in the waves of “Rusification” of the colonies. The legal right of each racial group to the territory of its own was one of the basic principles of the U.S.S.R. Satellite states were also allowed to maintain a certain degree of autonomy from the Union. At its prime years, as a result of the policy of territorial allocation to different racial groups, the Soviet network consisted of 15 fully fledged Soviet Republics, 20 Autonomous Republics, 8 Autonomous Provinces, 10 National Arenas and National Districts and National Village Soviets on a lower level. Nevertheless, many of such networks have been dismantled. The Volga-German and Korean national districts were abolished in fear of anti-colonial resistance supported by non-communist German and Korean regimes. Kalmuck and Chechen republics have been taken apart due to the alleged disloyalty of the inhabitants towards the Soviet Authority or the Shorian National District disappeared due to the indigenous population being outnumbered by Russian

settlers (Kolarz, 1964: 25). The active eradication of the ethnic republic, provinces, arenas and districts in favour of Rusification is only a preliminary example of the way colonial ideology was imposed on different ethnic groups located within the Empire. Nevertheless, such imposition would not be possible without positioning of the metropolis as superior to the colonised populations. This is unveiled once the concept of Modernity is applied to the Soviet Empire.

### *The Empire's Modernity*

The Postcolonial concept of Modernity exhibits the way the culture of the coloniser is positioned in opposition to the culture of the colonised. Through its application, we can thoroughly understand the way colonial dominance was induced on ideological, linguistic, cultural and psychic terms. Firstly as Bhabha portrays, in order to achieve a stable colonial rule, the colonised populations must be homogenised. A fixed stereotype of the colonised needs to be reproduced in order to establish the coloniser's superior position (The Occident/Orient dichotomy). Throughout the Soviet Empire this is visible in two aspects. The first, being the already mentioned Rusification, where Russian nation was established as the most advanced in the entire Empire. The second aspect applies to the perception of socialism as being the most progressive economic and ideological system in the history of humanity. This was the master narrative of the U.S.S.R and highly resembled the Western European quest of Modernity. The socialist narrative was used to create the meaning for socialism as a historical project. As Peteri argues, the narratives reproduced by the colonial power, presented that in social development, socialism surpasses capitalism and is placed before communism, individuals enclosed within the Soviet sphere of influence, participated in a transitory society, being more advanced than capitalist communities. (Peteri, 2008: .931). The two factors enabled the segregation of populations which initially did not adhere to the Soviet colonial rule, creating a difference between the colonisers and the colonised.

The separation of the Occident from the Orient is visible in the symbol of Russia as an "Elder Brother", which was utilized in the national ideology across the Soviet colonies. The invention of the term "Elder Brother" resembles the images of Western European colonisers as more civilized, modern, advanced, and superior. The term was incorporated into Soviet history-writing, literature and art before the Second World

War. The discourse was attached to the belief that Russians are superior to any other nation in the Soviet Union, this is also described by Stalin in a speech from 1945, where Russian people are referred to as “the most outstanding of all the nations forming the Soviet Union” (ibid: 27) Furthermore the image of the Occident is also reproduced in works of Pankratova, a leading Russian historian who elaborates on the representation of Russians as superior. The scholar argues that Great Russian People have made an unparalleled and unselfish contribution to the cultural and economic development of all nationalities within the U.S.S.R. Moreover, Pankratova portrays that the communities in the U.S.S.R ought to be grateful for being conquered, as otherwise, the populations would not be able to come in contact with the “advanced culture of the Russian people” (ibid: 28)

These discourses were employed in order to suppress local ethnic groups during Rusification. Additionally the use of local languages was prohibited across the Soviet republics. Languages like Lithuanian or Ukrainian were banned (Carey & Raciborski, 2004: 221). Moldovan for example was purged of Western European words. Soviet scholars asserted that Moldovan, which originally is a Romance language, was Slavonic or at least of mixed Slavic-Romance origin (Kolarz, 1964: 38). The Rusification resulted in an ethnic split in the Soviet Union, for example, after the imposition of Russian language in Ukraine, “a Russian labourer could feel superior to a Ukrainian intellectual” (Carey & Raciborski, 2004: 221). The manoeuvres portray the way the Russian metropolis attempted to dispose the dominated communities of cultural heritage in order to employ colonial ideology.

Furthermore, in the case of satellite states, the absence of ethnic Russian groups and greater autonomy presented itself as a barrier for the assimilation of the discourses of the Occident. Nevertheless the colonial power managed to transfer such ideas through the political institutions of the state, which eventually controlled the knowledge production industry. For example in Romania, the Soviet culture produced and reproduced itself through the repeated reference to symbols and traditions which were placed in the category of “Soviet”. This was accomplished by editing books, centralisation of the Romanian print industry, the export of Russian literature and guidelines for writers to become accustomed to the writings of Marxism-Leninism. Therefore, writers were required to master the Soviet narratives, becoming the

“fighters on the front of building socialism.” (Fatu-Tutoveanu, 2012: 87) The reproduction of colonial discourses transcended the knowledge industry.

The initial phases of colonialism met resistance from satellite states, Yugoslavia for example was reluctant to completely submit to Soviet discourses, the same applied to states like Czechoslovakia. As a response, the colonial dominance was introduced through the reorganization of the state institutions, where the holders of state offices were required to join the communist party. Secret informers were placed in national ministries, reporting any non-conformist behaviour to the deputies. The deputies were responsible for maintaining communication with higher party representatives. Additionally the communist party of the Soviet Union placed representatives in all of the satellite states. (Bruegel, 1951:33) The presence of the Soviet authority within the satellite states grants the manner in which colonial discourses were permitted to be reproduced. The introduction of the Soviet culture through state institutions, media industry, literature and language, exhibits the way Soviet dominance transcended multiple realms of the society. The creation of a superior image of Russian republic, as well as justification of the colonial project through the theory of advanced socialism corresponds to the previously discussed Postcolonial concepts. The instruments used for colonisation portray the way differences between the colonised and the colonisers were construed. The satellite states, along with communities in U.S.S.R were homogenised under the project for a socialist hegemony. The Soviet and satellite states were now recognized as a singular static entity, even with the considerable differences between the nations.

### **Homogenising Soviet colonies in the West**

Through the imposition of the Soviet ideology, linguistic rusification, export of colonial culture, reproduction of superior/inferior images of the colonisers and the colonised, the Soviet power contributed to the creation of a homogenized entity of the Eastern Block. This identity was universalised not only in the environments experiencing the Soviet domination but also across the whole globe. Outside of the Empire, stereotypes about the Eastern bloc would be reproduced in order to create a clear cut division between the capitalist societies and the communities under the Soviet influence. There is an evident clash between the colonial discourses emanating from countries in

Western and Eastern Europe. Populations which would position themselves as superior to the communist regimes would identify with the category of the West. On contrary, Soviet Union and its colonies also used the same discourses to differentiate from the capitalist democracies. In addition, not all inhabitants of the satellite states believed in the superiority of the Soviet Union. As argued by Maybelin, Piekut and Valentine (2014) Polish people have disregarded the Soviet Union as backwards and positioned Poland as a more advanced society than the coloniser. In the conducted interviews, the respondents situated Poland as closer to Western societies, but not yet as advanced as the West. This unveils the complexities which emerge when attempting to bridge the gap between the Postcolonial and the Post-Soviet. Nevertheless it is clear that the use of Modernity by the Soviet Empire created a condition for the reproduction of fetishized stereotypes of the communist states. Such imagery is still upheld across the globe. This chapter will review the extent to which Soviet colonialism led to homogenisation of satellite states within one category, regardless of the differences across the Soviet Empire. This will be done by reviewing the geopolitical division reproduced by scholars, the idea of an “Iron Curtain” posed by politicians, and the examination of works by British journalists and travellers.

The geopolitical division during the Cold War represents the way in which the mentioned homogenisation was upheld in the capitalist democracies. This is visible in the common denotation of the first/second/third world division used by scholars, politicians and media during the Cold War. Even today, International Relations text books manifest such segregation, Kegley in his 706 page introduction to world politics for International Relations students describes the categorisation of countries during Cold War as following: First World as “industrialized great powers such as Europe, North America and Japan”, Second World consisting of “the Soviet Union and its allies in other communist countries” and Third World as countries which failed to grow economically, if compared to the first and the second world (Kegley, 2011: 104). Interestingly, the scholar uses the connotation of great powers when referring to the First World. When describing the second world, Kegley suggest that countries in the Second World “embraced communism and central planning” for economic growth (ibid). The two examples portray the way firstly, the division into first and second world is of a hierarchic nature. First world as the great powers which instrumentalized a free



market economy, contrasted with the countries which embraced communism, as in the sense that communism was something that all of the countries in the Second World War voluntarily adopted. The categorization of the globe into the three worlds is the most adequate example of the critique presented by Bhabha. This unravels the manner in which dozens of different cultures and populations were represented as one entity. Although such stratification no longer dominates the scholarship, Kegley's appraisal of the first world as "great powers" portrays the extent to which the legacy of this division still inhabits the imagination of many scholars.

Apart from the geopolitical division presented by Kegley, the term "Iron Curtain" portrays an example in which the "East" and the "West" was imagined". The "Iron Curtain" had both material and symbolic meanings. The material meaning referred to the border between the democratic and the socialist Germany. Nevertheless the symbolic meaning of The "Iron Curtain" needs to be emphasised, as it stressed the split between the East and the West, highlighting the differences between the two constructed entities. The use of "Iron" is deliberate, as it describes the division as permanent, iron is a metal which is not easily malleable. This exhibits the way the symbolic use of iron makes the East-West division seem as static, the East is different from the West because an iron cuts across the two identities. The division dismissed the possibility of transgressing the curtain for the interaction of different entities, it premised itself upon an isolation of discourses from the West and the discourses from the East and vice versa. The term was firstly utilized by Churchill. As suggested by the British prime minister, the curtain was "an insurmountable and impenetrable" divide between the Christian capitalist and the controlled barbarian communist world (Peteri, 2004: 113). The barbarian world was assimilated in the minds of the inhabitants of the East. In a study which was conducted three years after the fall of communism in Poland, students were asked to describe the West and the East using various adjectives. The West was described as developed, rich, civilized, clean, colourful, happy whilst the East was referred to as less developed, poor, primitive, backward, gray (Galbraith, 2004: 61). The "Iron Curtain" portrays the way in which the dichotomy between the East and the West was materialized. Populations were made to believe that such division cannot be transcended the East was the antagonism of the West. The "barbarian" communist

societies were completely different from the West, who was described as Christian, advanced, developed, industrialized.

The extent to which the “inferior” stereotypes about the Eastern bloc inhabited imagination of the populations is not only visible through the survey of the students in Poland but is also portrayed in the writing of the BBC journalist Tom Fort and a British traveller Edward Enfield, who both visited Poland after the its democratic transition. In the introduction to his book, Fort uses the metaphor of the weather in order to exhibit the dissimilarities between northern Europe and “the East”, as written “although we happened to have the same weather, Eastern Europe was still a faraway place” (Fort, 2010 : 1). In this context, Fort provides an example of the way in which Eastern Europe is imagined through a cultural, historical and political gap. The reference to the East as a distant place relates to the discourse of the solid dichotomy between the two parts of Europe.

The texts by Enfield also indicate the way the East has been imagined by the West. In the description of his travels through the Polish countryside, Enfield presents the way farming was done in Poland. For the traveller majority of the farming “had an almost feudal look” (Enfield, 2008: 103). In addition, Enfield also draws comparisons to the Polish communist past, he finds the contrast in the design of the houses in the villages, which he describes as having “a sort of ex-totalitarian hopelessness about them” (ibid: 100). In addition, throughout the book, Enfield makes constant comparisons of Poland to Britain, suggesting the level of development in his home country. In his description of the countryside, his reference to the feudal techniques used by Polish farmers was juxtaposed to the farming methods in Britain, where the techniques used in Poland are considered as “medieval”. The works by Fort and Enfield reveal the extent to which imagined differences are reproduced in the West, and the way the constructed identity of the homogenised East is sustained even after the end of communist regimes. The two works provide empirical evidence for Bhabha’s argument on the way identity is produced by difference. The identity of the former satellite states in this sense is shaped and reproduced by factors that are external to them. It can be argued that the experience of societies with colonial power led to the production of such stereotypes and images about these societies. Nevertheless such division is deemed inaccurate once a comparison of Poland and Romania during the communist regimes is made.

**Poland and Romania, stark differences, the same category**

The homogenisation of the East is itself a very problematic process. The belief that countries under the official Soviet rule shared the same experiences is invalid. There is sufficient evidence that the subjugation to the Soviet colonial rule varied around the U.S.S.R and its satellite states. Romania and Poland for example would be placed within the aforementioned category. This is surprising, as the two countries share different historical experiences. The cultures of Poland and Romania vary significantly, this is noticeable in for example the official languages of the countries, Romanian is a Latin language whilst Polish belongs to the Slavic group of languages, signifying cultural differences which the two languages will embark with their origin. Romania and Poland are of course not the sole examples of the creation of a shared “Eastern” identity. Latvians, Hungarians or Crimean Tatars and many more were also interlinked with the Postcolonial discourses, where the colonial norms were exported to the subjugated populations in order to sustain the dichotomy between the metropolis and the periphery.

In order to comprehend the flaws in the construction of the “East” several factors related to the communist societies have to be taken under consideration. These factors are: geographical position – proximity to the metropolis, political structure of the country/republic, relationship with the coloniser, culture, and economy, historical experiences of the population prior to colonialism, pre and post-colonial structure of the society. This section will compare the economic, political and cultural factors of Romania and Poland, granting an insight into the vast differences between the two satellite states. This will serve a foundation for the argument against the reproduction of the colonial identity. Most of the debate will relate to a specific time period, which ranges from the seventies until the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early nineties.

The Soviet satellite states can be grouped into three types of communist regimes, based on the analysis of the previously mentioned factors. These categories consist of: bureaucratic-authoritarian communism which prevailed in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, nationally-accommodating communism which was present in Poland and Hungary and Patrimonial communism found in Romania and Bulgaria. From the economic aspect, the patrimonial communism introduced in

Romania after the end of the war prevailed on a top down approach to modernisation. This was due to the high share of the agricultural industry in the Romanian economy, and scarce amount of private enterprise. The urban stratum of the population was low due to the population's engagement in the agricultural sector (Petrescu, 2011: 17). Therefore the introduction of communism was equated with the process of industrialization for Romanian economy. The modernisation in Romania based itself on the creation of state owned enterprises, completely subsidized by the government. The newly emerged industries created workplaces for many Romanians, who became not only dependent on the state owned firms but also relied on the state in the provision of welfare like housing, healthcare or education. The agricultural sector in Romania was fully collectivized (Rosu, 2002 : 2-4). There were attempts to liberalize the Romanian economy in the late 1960s, when Alexandru Birladeanu unsuccessfully tried to reform the economy. The failure was a result of a strong popular support for the centrally planned economy which had a big share in country's industrialization and the welfare system (Petrescu, 2011: 22). The Soviet elites used modernisation as a way of exporting dominance, the economic developments were used to prove that modernity under the banner of state socialism was brought to Romania by the U.S.S.R, hence the public supported the socialist economic model.

The Romanian economy has not been highly impeded by the population loss during the war (the population of Romania decreased by 12% between 1930 and 1948). Thus, the workforce has not suffered significant alterations. Statistically, Romania's evolution of GDP per capita was relatively low in comparison to Poland, the average yearly increase in the GDP was around 0.40 compared to Poland where the increase was weighted at 0.60. By 1989 the GDP per capita in Romania summed to 3,941, whilst Poland's GDP stood at 5,684. The average daily consumption of calories in kcal in Romania in 1989 was at 3252, whilst Poland consumed 3464. The daily consumption of animal protein stood at 56.1 in Poland and 38.3 in Romania, exhibiting significant differences between the two countries. Nevertheless there was a small gap in the values added in manufacturing between the two satellite states, Poland's value was estimated at 836 and Romania's at 778 USD per inhabitant. The biggest contrast between the two states lies in the statistics on cars per 1000 inhabitants, in 1989, 119 poles possessed a vehicle, whilst only 50 Romanians had a car. This is over a half less than the amount of

cars found in Poland. Significantly, there is more data which contrasts economic developments in Poland and Romania, where Romania is posited in a peripheral position, below the average for socialist countries. This is visible in the evolution in GDP per capita and the access to luxury good in both of the countries (Ivanov, 2016: 25-27).

At the beginning of the communist regime, the political structure in Romania premised itself on the Soviet communist model. The industrial sector was not significant, there were a low number of labour unions, overall the population was not sufficiently represented in the political structures, and consequently the communist parties were small, not playing a significant role in the political arena. Thus a lot of power was given to the leader, who maintained a relationship with the Soviet Union. The religious sphere was dominated by the Greek Orthodox Church, which obeyed the political power (Petrescu, 2011: 17). The communist elite in Romania instrumentalized national ideology in order to uphold own position in the society, at the beginning, this was based on the appropriation of Soviet style values, but this changed by the end of 1960s. The discourse of tradition and values was visible in the political spheres. The Romanian elites after 1972 pursued an intensified policy of independence from the Soviet Union. This is evident in the dictatorship led by Nicolae Ceausescu, which began in the 1970s. Ceausescu's politics were largely intertwined in the building of a multilateral developed socialist society.

During the beginnings of Ceausescu's rule it was believed that socialism in Romania was at its advanced stage. The centrally planned economy and the collective agricultural sector as well as the welfare state indicated that Romania, in comparison with other socialist countries was far ahead in the strive for communism. As illustrated in the programme of the Romanian communist party from 1972, the regime attempted to combine the 2000 years of the history of Romanian people and their values in order to provide a revolutionary perspective in the struggle of the establishment of a new socialist world order (Programme of the Romanian Communist Party, 1975: 11-12). Likewise, the programme hindered the opening of cooperation with Western Europe. In the section on foreign policy, the communist party stated that it "will most consistently work for broad cooperation among all European state, based on full equality, mutual observance of independence, non-interference in internal affairs." (Ibid: 203). The policy of non-intervention was already visible four years prior to the programme where

the Romanian officials condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, making Romania the only country in the bloc to go against the Soviet decision makers. This granted Romania agency within the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and also opened channels for dialogue with states external to the Soviet spheres (Vataman, 2010: p.71). The political transition from people's democracy to People's Republic undermined the image of Romania as the most docile of satellite states, the Stalinist triumph over nationalism which surfaced for nearly twenty years in Romania was in crumbles (Fischer-Galati, 1957: vii).

The Romanian policy makers steered away from the Soviet influence, challenging the Soviet project. The cultural heritage in Romania has also undermined the colonial power. The attempt of Sovietisation was countered by the existence of Romanian culture itself. Romania has a long history of philosophy, literature and art, which premises itself on Latin values. The Romance origins of the language exhibit the closeness of Romanian culture to countries like France, Italy or Spain, rather than the Slavic states. This is visible in the Romanian art and literature, which until the Second World War significantly intersected with French intellectual produce. The French intellectual stimulus of the Romanian culture revealed itself particularly through Poetry and criticism produced by Romanian intellectuals. The transnational exchange of literary tradition between Romania and France is visible through works by Jean Yonnel, Emile Cioran or Marie Ventura (Fischer-Gelati, 1957: p.172). During the Soviet influence, Romania just like Moldova experienced a process of de-latinization. The colonial institutions like the Ministry of Art were ordered to approve any published works, Romanian artists were required to belong to a union in order to receive a ration card which served as a form of payment for their works. The main task of Romanian writers based itself on representation of the fight for socialism. Through Soviet realism for example, the government encouraged artists to reproduce portraits of communist leaders. During the regime, supposedly Slavonic influences in Romanian heritage were discovered by intellectuals (Ibid: 173-174).

The Sovietisation of culture took a different course during the dictatorship, the attempt to revive a new form of national solidarity required intellectuals to reproduce discourses which proved Romania's exceptionalism. After 1976, most of cultural activities that took place in Romania had to be part of the national festival and a praise

of the nation and the supreme leader. For example after the launch of the 1974 communist party programme the party devised a national song festival "Cintarea Romaniei" which played an important part in forging a new national spirit of Romanians. It is believed that the festival initiated a grand cultural-ideological umbrella for all of cultural activities which took place every year after 1976. The songs in the festival served to reproduce a new version of history, in which the party's achievements were the continuation of the heroic deeds of medieval Romanian rulers (Petrescu, 2009: 535). Throughout the dictatorship, the censorship initiated after the end of the war was maintained. This is visible in the Romanian cinema industry, where the screening of any movies had to be reviewed by the government. Interestingly, the censorship applied even after Romania re-established relations with "the West". Movies like Hitchcock's *North by North West*, Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* or *Two for the Seesaw* were introduced to the Romanian audience, however the movies were "operated" on by censors before being released to the public (Scheide, 2013: 12). The cultural policy in Romania, along with the alterations made throughout the dictatorship exhibits the manner in which political dominance was imposed. The insight into these processes grants an understanding on the way the project for socialist nation was constructed, at first on Moscow's terms and at second as designed by Ceausescu and his followers.

It can be argued that Poland shared a different relationship with Soviet colonialism. The communist regime which the Polish society has experienced is classified as nationally-accommodating. This relates to the economic and social infrastructure of Poland prior to the regime. Firstly, Poland was significantly industrialised before the eruption of the war, which led to the obliteration of the rural and urban divide. There was a considerable number of an educated class which worked in state institutions. The working class in Poland was visible but not specifically organized into a movement, in the form of unions. Prior to Soviet colonialism, a proportion of communist parties operated in Poland, the parties appealed to some groups of individuals working in cities. The level of industrialization in Poland challenged the communist party once it established its power. This was due to the fact that the party could not claim the credit for industrialisation, like in Romania. The presence of robust state institutions before the war contributed to the lessened level of the institutionalisation of the communist party. This led to the inability of the party to influence the society through a hierarchic

organization and a disciplined working class. Moreover, majority of Poles were Catholic, as Catholicism was highly incorporated into national ideology throughout the decades leading to the Second World War. Unlike Romania, the Church did not obey the communist orders, partaking in the opposition movements which undermined communist order prior to 1989, but this will be analysed later. Thus, in comparison to Romania, at the beginnings of the regime the population in Poland enjoyed more social economic and cultural autonomy (Petrescu, 2011: 17).

One stark difference between the economies of the two countries is the state of agriculture that the Soviet powers encountered upon the colonization. Poland out of the all the satellite states was considered to be dominated by small agricultural properties. The existence of a noteworthy amount of private enterprises before the nationalisation of Polish industries posed a challenge to the full completion of industrial collectivization. The collectivisation, due to the existing small agricultural properties was conducted at a slower pace in comparison to other socialist countries (Ivanov, 2016: 23). Additionally, the communist authorities faced an issue of insignificant labour force and the reconstruction of destroyed cities, Warsaw and Wroclaw were razed to the ground during the war, whilst the conflict led to a loss of 11 million Polish citizens, amounting to around 35% of the population (Ibid: 22). Thus the differences between the Polish and Romanian experiences, prior to the Soviet colonialism are already visible in the social and economic infrastructure. Nevertheless, it can be argued that one of the biggest contrasts between the two countries is the political structure during the beginning of communist and in the period of the dictatorship in Romania.

As mentioned, the political structure in communist Poland was different to the one in Romania. The embedded historical and cultural roots of Poland made the society immune to forced political transformations. Stalin recognised the resistance faced by the Polish communists, the leader feared that “politically vanquished population might yet impose its culture on the conquerors” (Kemp-Welch, 2008: 17). The anticipation of the opposition from the society is visible in the way in which Stalin debated upon the manner in which the communist party should establish its control in Poland. It was chosen to call the communist party the Polish Workers Party, which later became the United Polish Workers Party (PZPR) after a merge with the Polish Socialist Party. Unlike in Romania, the communists could not claim the credit for modernisation in order to



win the sympathy of the population. The political campaign of the PZPR thus revolved around the expulsion of the Nazi occupiers from Poland, achievement of national freedom and the establishment of people's democratic power. Such discourses were ordered by Moscow, moreover the party was required not to echo the Soviet constitution but rather highlight the consolidation of liberty and independence of Poland. Consequently, in contrast to Romania, the communists in Poland were not allowed to exhibit that a course of Sovietisation is carried out by the state (Ibid: 19).

The discourses on liberation of the society propagated by Polish communists failed to eradicate social resistance. Throughout the communist political leadership, the party members had to deal with several severe crises of revolutionary fractions which took place in 1956, 1970, 1980-81, as well as shorter upheavals in 1968 and 1976. The intensity of the revolts was at peak after 1970s. Whilst the dictatorship in Romania was evolving and a new form of socialism was being promoted by the regime, Poland was experiencing an economic downturn. The bad financial management by the government, excessive investment, external debt as well as the worsening food crisis contributed to the rise of protests by the workers, the fury was diverted against the political elites, who were envied for enjoying more privileges than the workers themselves (Sanford, 1983: 17-19). More workers joined independent trade unions, which extensively questioned the powers, contributing to the fall of communism in the next two decades.

One prominent actor in the political structure of the society was the Church. The Catholic Church maintained a degree autonomy from the communist powers. The relationship between the two was tense, as the Church was involved in the resistance movements. The anxious relation between the PZPR and the Church can be portrayed by the assassination of Jerzy Popieluszko, a priest who openly declared support for the opposition movements. Popieluszko was killed by three agents of the security service of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs in 1984. The important role of religious figures like Popieluszko is entrenched in national identity, as Soviet colonialism was not the only time where the Church participated in a resistance movement. During the partitions of Poland after 1795 the Church was a guardian of Polish nationalism which equated Catholicism with patriotism (Elberts, 1998: 818). The Church was not a constant enemy of the communist state, the relation between the two was somehow ambivalent. At the

beginning of the regime, both of the actors cooperated with each other, the Catholic periodicals were permitted to be published by PZPR, and the party used the Church in order to collect supporters. By 1950s the attitude between the two has changed, Church's publications underwent censorship and the Catholic radio programmes were suspended, the communist party openly attacked religious institutions, in 1956 PZPR ordered the arrest of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński and 900 priests and bishops, seeing the actors as a threat to the social order. The harsh relations changed yet again in 1956, where the regime sought help to solve the unstable situation after the workers revolts in Poznań. This led to an agreement with the Episcopate by the end of the year (Ibid. 819). The ambivalent relation between the state and the Church persevered until the late 1970s.

By 1980s the Church became associated with freedom. At that point the Church did not only function as a religious space, but also a human rights defender and a shelter for truth against political censorship (Borowik, 2002: 241). This function was greatly linked to the Solidarity movement, which was the first non-socialist labour union in the communist occupied Europe. There was a link between the movement, the Polish Church and John Paul II, who was the first Polish pope elected in the Vatican. It is argued that this connection resembled the similarities between the conception of work and dignity of workers promoted by Solidarity and by the Church, as noted by Cardinal Wyszyński in one of his speeches: "Man must not only work he also has the right to live in dignity and to work in dignity" (Hoyack, 2015: 39). These values were vital for the movement, which sought to secure more privileges for the workers. By 1989, the Solidarity movement, along with its leader Lech Wałęsa successfully negotiated the first free democratic elections in Poland, exhibiting the importance of the movement in the transition to the democracy as well as the extent of the role of the Church who up until now is considered as a pioneer of communist resistance.

As demonstrated, both of the satellite states shared different experiences with the communist regime. The Soviet colonialism unified the countries under the power structure emerging from the metropolis, placing the satellite states within a category. Nevertheless the diversity found within the Empire undermines such order. The created singular entity of the Eastern Block during Soviet colonialism appears as inappropriate once we analyse the differences between the societies in the Soviet

Empire. The barbaric East behind the “Iron Curtain” and the societies needing the guidance of the Russian brother possess different histories, cultures and languages. As presented, the images reproduced by both the Western academics, journalists and politicians as well as Soviet powers are imagined. The distant East does not exist, there are too many differences between the satellite states in order for them to be recognised under a singular entity.

Upon the beginning of the colonial regime Romania had a bigger share in the agricultural sector, which significantly influenced the structure of the state. Poland on the other hand, had bigger shares in manufacturing and industrialisation, which influenced the state of the bureaucratic institutions in the country. The economic factor has significantly influenced the resistance towards the regime, the Soviet power did not use industrialisation as a form of justification of colonialism in Poland. This varied to Romania, where people were made to believe that industrialisation was brought to the country by the Soviet ruler.

Another stark difference between the two countries was found in the political developments. The relationship of the communist party with the metropolis in both of the countries varied. Romania in this case stands out of many satellite states due to the experienced dictatorship. Ceausescu’s policy retracted from the one of the Soviet Union, giving Romania increased agency in the Empire as well as the international arena. Moreover, Soviet discourse of enlightening Romanian people with a form of communism was undermined by a new socialist exceptionalism. It was believed that Romania advanced the rest of the Soviet states by reaching a new form of socialism. Whilst Romania was experiencing such stark transformations, the PZPR party was facing multiple revolts in the society. More protests were ignited and the Church played a significant role in the labour movements, with eventually led to the crippling down of the communist power.

Such differences serve to counteract the reproduction of the colonial identity of the two countries. Nevertheless, the reproduction of the “Eastern” identity has been undermined in multiple cases. Despite the propaganda laws and the curb on intellectual property, the culture was striving, in many times also being used as a form of resistance. In this case such resistance not only undermined the communist regimes but also dealt

with the image of the East created on the Western side of the “Iron Curtain”, which, once closely scrutinised was not solid enough as transnational cultural networks pertained.

### **Striving culture, resistance and undermining the “Iron Curtain”**

Intellectual life in the satellite states has been largely subsumed by the communist regimes. Although intellectual freedom was curbed, a significant number of cultural figures engaged in forms of anti-Soviet resistance. For Gabriel Liiceanu, culture was a form of transgression in the totalitarian society. The philosopher argued that culture in such environment becomes political in nature. The attempt to attach political significance to culture, served as a way of combating the alleged passivity that was found within the Romanian society, specifically in the intellectual class, where lack of solidarity against the regime was low if compared to other communist countries like Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Poland (Preda, 2013: .5). However the resistance by the intellectuals was still evident, Constantin Noica, a renowned Romanian scholar, throughout his nine year house arrest (for supposed encouragement of young people to forge identity papers), received people who were interested in his academic knowledge, which was not accessible in Romania due to the propaganda laws (Plesu, 1995: 70). The professor taught continental philosophy to his visitors, making sure that the youth has access to knowledge which was prohibited during the regime. Through his actions, Noica contributed to prolonging the pre-communist culture in Romania, which was considerably rooted in Western philosophical values. Therefore, culture in Romania served not only as a way of homogenising the socialist identity and exporting Soviet ideology, but also as a form of resisting the propaganda imposed by the communist party.

In Poland culture also made a significant influence in the transition to democracy, where the socialist cultural policy was increasingly challenged during the late sixties. The countermovement emerged in intellectual circles, ranging from universities to theatres. The prohibition of the *Dziady* play, based on Mickiewicz’s classical drama is an example in which art and culture was used as a form of resistance of the regime. In 1968, the Warsaw National Theatre marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian

revolution, the play by Mickiewicz was exhibited, causing anti-Russian sentiments which evolved from the passages of the play. This alarmed the authorities, and led to the ban of the play across Poland. The society responded by collecting signatures in a petition to bring back the play. Although this can be interpreted as symbolic resistance, many intellectuals supported such action. The petition resulted in 3,000 signatures being brought to the parliament. The Polish writers union which counted 400 members made a sharp attack on the PZPR's cultural policy, which was upheld even after the petitions and signatures were collected (Kemp-Welch, 2008: 148-150). This example demonstrates the manner in which literature and art was used as a form of resistance. This resembles the situation in Romania, however in the case of Poland the higher autonomy enjoyed by the society allowed for such movements to materialize to a greater extent.

The cases of Romania and Poland exhibit the way in which culture was utilized in order to resist Soviet colonial forms of knowledge. Nevertheless cultural and intellectual circles have also transgressed the idea of the "Iron Curtain". The growing research on transnational tendencies during the Cold War demonstrates the manner in which the East/West divide was countered. Despite the institutional isolation of the two spheres, cultural exchange was still present, even if both of the spheres competed in propagating own visions of culture. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are one of the most famous examples on the way cultural and ideological borders have been crossed in Cold War Europe. Headquartered in Munich, the radios served as a way of informing populations of Eastern Europe on the developments behind the curtain. The project was sponsored by the U.S government and aimed at providing "free media in unfree societies". It had a relatively high listenership, although it is hard to measure the numbers of individuals who tuned to the radio, a case study from two days following the Chernobyl disaster presents that 36% of the population of the Soviet Union used the radio in order to present accurate information on the tragedy, which was not covered by the official media in the Soviet Empire (Parta, 2007: 57). The data gives an overall idea on the popularity of the broadcasts. Apart from the news reports, the radios frequently aired broadcasts on cultural developments on both of the sides of the curtain. Books which were prohibited by the communist regimes were read to the audiences. The Eastern and Western intellectual class ensured that the listeners had an access to cultural

developments on both of the sides of the curtain, thus, broadcasts were not solely limited to news.

The radios were not the only source of the exchange of information across the curtain. A journal project was initiated in 1952 which aimed at an exchange of knowledge between the émigrés from the occupied Eastern bloc as well as the intellectuals who were located on both of the side of the curtain. The issues of *News From Behind the "Iron Curtain"* supported by the Free Europe committee and Free Europe Press contained articles written by individuals who inhabited both sides of the curtain. The journal contained information about the intellectual, artistic, political and scientific developments across the continent. The regular contact between the émigrés, and "Western" and "Eastern" intellectuals aimed at furthering the ties between Europeans on both sides of the curtain, enhancing the idea of cultural similarity, which at the time was disrupted. The journal was not a sole example of the manner in which cultural exchange operated during the Cold War. Movement of Literature was also facilitated through the established publishing houses, in which the intellectuals in exile were active. This unveiled itself through the Polonia Book Fund, which published books from Poland and attempted at bringing them across the border or the Free Europe Press which translated the texts of pre-Soviet literature to other Eastern European languages, in order to make the texts available to Soviet dominated countries. Another example is the way in which Gorge Orwell's *Animal Farm* has been translated and distributed across the Eastern Bloc (Kind-Kovacs, 2014: 226-228). The circulation of the literature presents the way intellectuals across Europe resisted firstly, the Soviet dominance and secondly the belief in the solid division between the two sides of Europe. The extensive exchange of knowledge between the two spheres in Europe unveils the manner in which culture was used as a form of resistance. The exchange aids the argument of the inappropriate separation of East from the West in Europe, exhibiting that the "Iron Curtain" is a concept which is not accurate. Interestingly, from the aforementioned examples we can draw that the curtain was not Iron, but as Peteri (2004) presents can be referred to as Nylon.

## Conclusion

The “Iron Curtain” still occupies the minds of many, creating a one identity of Eastern Europe. Postcolonial theory counters such homogenisation. The scholarship offered on the analysis of colonial legacy provides the tools to unravel the way in which Soviet dominance was juxtaposed in the colonised communities. The concepts of Empire and modernity portray the manner in which identity cuts across societies. The divide into the metropolis and periphery reproduced fixed identities and imposes them on the populations which are enclosed within the boundaries of the Empire. The Postcolonial critique exhibits that the Empire should not be understood solely on economic terms.

Empire is a backbone of colonialism, visible in multiple spheres of society, transcending economy and inhabiting culture, heritage, and every day practices. Without the Empire, the subjugation of multiple populations in the world would not be possible. The Empire utilizes the tool of “othering”, assimilating the colonial forms of thinking in both, the periphery and the metropolis. The submission to the knowledge is presented in the concept of Modernity. The concept demonstrates the manner in which images and knowledge about the colonised and the colonizer is constructed. Modernity gives an insight into the way in which such knowledge is regulated, the changing nature of the Empire creates junctures which can impede the colonial order. This is tackled through fixity. The images of the colonised and the colonisers produce fixed identities. These identities as Bhabha would argue are produced in forms of stereotypes, which tend to be fetishized. The colonies do not possess the power to intervene in such production, as they are stripped of capacity to self-govern and independence. This leads to the internalization of the identity provided by the Empire. The fixed images homogenise multitude of divergent populations. The disclosure of access to own history aids in the assimilation of such images in Empire. The colonised are encompassed in this viral of colonial knowledge. Although more is done to counteract the dominant discourses, the former colonies are still not sufficiently represented on their own terms.

The concepts of Empire and Modernity can be applicable to the Soviet imperial project. The urge to spread socialism across the world can be equated to the civilizing mission, a mean by which the Western European powers justified colonialism. The exploitation of resources by Russia throughout the existence of the Soviet Union and the imposition of

Russian culture throughout the Empire are the starkest examples of the Russian colonial project. The attempt to “Russify” multitude of populations shows the way fixed identities were imposed on the colonised. The undertones of superiority carried by the symbol of Russia as an “Elder Brother” and a great nation in the Empire resembles the way the Occident and the Orient have been constituted. In societies where a full imposition of such entities was not possible, the Empire integrated the division through the management of culture. This was done through the use of intellectuals, state institutions and the media. The control of press and publishing enabled the advancement of Soviet propaganda.

Such colonisation enclosed the Soviet colonies within a fixed category. The Sovietization or the Russification of many societies established a general identity of the colonised. Such homogenisation split the world into two: “The East” and “The West”, the former was attributed to communist societies, whilst the West posed as the representative of capitalist democracy. In order to maintain such division the term “Iron Curtain” was facilitated, exhibiting that the divide is fixed, separated by a solid material. The use of such stereotype inhabited the imaginations of populations enclosed in both of the sides of the curtain. The term presents the way homogenisation of entities is facilitated. In this aspect, Satellite states for example faced a wave of Sovietisation imposed through the modification of own cultures. At the same time such Sovietisation was legitimized in the other side of the curtain, by academics, politicians, writers, artists and the media. This stereotype still inhabits the imaginations of many, as presented by the works of Fort or Enfield.

In this project such homogenisation is countered by the comparison of Romanian and Polish experiences under the Soviet rule. By juxtaposing two countries, the concept of “Iron Curtain” has been undermined. The solid East or the Soviet Block behind the curtain was not a one fixed entity. The stark differences between the satellite states portray the rigidity of the homogenisation process. As presented, Romania and Poland foresaw two different types of communism, the conditions encountered in the countries prior to the colonisation highly contributed to such variance. On economic grounds Poland had an established industrial sector; whilst Romania’s economic activity was dominated by agriculture. Throughout colonialism, Romania’s industries were modernised, and the strong welfare system contributed to the general support of the



communist policies. The case of Poland was contrary, the already established industrial sector, and strong state institutions prior to Soviet influenced established conditions for social upheavals. This leads to the comparison of the two countries based on resistance. Interestingly, it can be argued that the resistance of the Soviet domination in Romania was achieved throughout the dictatorship. The dictatorship secured greater agency for Romania and drew the country closer to the West. On the other hand, Polish society resisted the regime through unions and most importantly the Church. The Church played a significant role in the collapse of the regime.

Additionally, unlike in Romania, the Church has enjoyed a degree of autonomy during the rule of the PZPR. The culture in the two countries is also another argument which counters the attempt to homogenise the satellite states. Romanian and Polish culture, language and heritage are different, this was also different throughout the Soviet colonialism. Romanian culture was highly influenced by Ceausescu's policies. The drive for a new form of socialist nationalism in Romania exhibited a move away from the cultural policies of Soviet Union. Intellectuals and artists had to engage in the production of a new form of national pride, which ought to strengthen Romanian solidarity. This was not visible in Poland, as culture served as a form of negating the communist domination. Moreover, cultural and transnational networks demonstrate that the curtain was porous. The exchange of information between intellectuals across Europe unveils the subjective nature of the divide. Culture was used as a form of resistance of Soviet domination and Western epistemic violence.

Through the comparison of Poland and Romania, the project questions identity formation. Postcolonial theory, when bridged with Post-Soviet studies display the importance of a critical approach to every day discourses. The colonial legacy in this aspect is visible in the way countries are grouped, knowledge about cultures is generalized and the way different actors as factors contribute to the establishment of such entities. Our imaginations are inhabited by images and stereotypes of the Other. Without the Other, we would be unable to perform our identity based on national, ethnic or religious grounds. It is essential to grasp the way in which our societies are constantly polarised, even during intensified global interaction. In order to achieve dialogue in our society we need to be aware of the external influences which add to who we are, only then we will see how difference is exploited by the power hungry.

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