



## Orientalism and the Geoculture of the World System: Discursive Othering, Political Economy and the Cameralist Division of Labor in Habsburg Central Europe (1713-1815)

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### Abstract

*This article addresses the question of to what degree the concept of geoculture can be brought in line with research on Orientalist stereotypes and imaginary. Following Said's original definition of orientalism discourses of the 18th-century political economy are reassessed by focusing on their perception of spatial hierarchies in Eastern Europe. This article reconsiders these discourses as an active factor in the struggle for power and a tool in the hands of the geopolitical interests of absolutist monarchs in Prussia, the Habsburg Monarchy, and Russia in the age of mercantilism, as demonstrated by the Partitions of Poland-Lithuania. By focusing on the Habsburg Monarchy between the Spanish War of Succession and the Congress of Vienna, it is demonstrated here that, territorial landlocked empires within Europe used a similar language as colonial maritime empires in order to justify their geopolitical expansion and territorial domination of Eastern Europe. In a second step, it is shown that this discourse was part of the geopolitical culture of the World System and was instrumental in setting ideological conditions for cameralist-driven institutional transformations in favor of the core regions within the Habsburg dominions in Central Europe.*

**Keywords:** Geoculture; orientalism; Central Europe; spatial inequalities; cameralist division of labour



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## **Geoculture, Orientalism and the World System in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections**

Among some historians, supporters and critics of World Systems Analysis alike, the notion of the World System is perceived skeptically, as being at odds with other currents of historical scholarship. Apart from prompting the more general debate on the relationship between systemic and agency-driven approaches, which are especially relevant for political and social history, the cultural and linguistic turn also came to increase the perception that a chasm existed between approaches (Middell 1994). It does seem, however, that the obvious affinities of the World System approach with cultural and political histories are all too often overlooked: Hans-Heinrich Nolte's works have opened up numerous possibilities of not only building bridges between different approaches, but also of neatly integrating political, social, and cultural history into the systemic approach (Nolte 1993: 2005). Another way to close the divide between the systemic narrative and historical subjects, both on the individual and collective levels, is to integrate social-cultural anthropology into the analysis of World Systems (Forte 1998: 32-33). In addition, some researchers insist upon the World System approach having room for further development; therefore, the analysis of peripheral and semi-peripheral actor groups, who sometimes remain at the margin of Immanuel Wallerstein's narrative of the Early Modern age, may be easily incorporated into the existing guidelines of World System narratives (Adamczyk 2001; Dhogson 1993). Moreover, there is a lot to say in favor of Nolte's idea of combining research on regional or national stereotypes with World System analysis (Nolte 2002).

This comes very close to the question that this article aims to discuss: Without neglecting the abundant bibliography on stereotypes, nation-building and mental maps, in this case stereotypes will be regarded in close relationship to the structural claims of world-systemic approaches. In a broader context, the relationship between culture, knowledge and power, between imaginaries and social structure in the context of empire will be explored, following the ideas first proposed by Foucault and Bourdieu (Dirks et al 1994: 10, 15, 17, 29) as well as Said (1993, 2003). To what degree did stereotypes and images of otherness not only reflect spatial disparities between centers and peripheries, but also acted as formative devices, directly affecting the shape of regional hierarchies? In other words, to what degree, and in which form, did perceptions of cultural otherness become tools for legitimizing and justifying an unequal world order?

Wallerstein himself proposed a concept that could be essential for this perspective. The geoculture of World Systems addresses the impact of political economies, institutional setting, and cultural identities on the division of labor and on center-periphery relations. The geoculture of World Systems can therefore be used as an analytical tool for the examination of the multiple factors that shaped the construction of unequal hierarchies (Wallerstein 1992).

The fourth volume of Wallerstein's world-system history points out that the French Revolution was a breakthrough for the geoculture of the World System. The revolution resulted in new ideological premises and altered the prevalent social configuration, both of which were essential conditions for the rise of centrist liberalism as the system's predominant ideology and main check to conservatism and socialism over the long 19<sup>th</sup> century, between 1789 and 1914 (Wallerstein 2011: 1-19). The revolutions of 1848, in turn, were the point of departure for the emergence of the working class as a historical subject on a world-wide scale and, hence, greatly contributed to deepen the divide between liberals and socialists. The 1848 revolution was, therefore, the first event to set limits on the imperative for equality, the first event to act upon the contradiction that existed between its own postulates and their obvious theoretical and practical limitations. While class, race, and gender set the limits to the equality claims which characterized the 19<sup>th</sup> century, within the context of the progressive expansion of civil-rights, race and "civilization" were the main concepts with which Europe's political domination and the unequal division of labor in Asia and Africa was legitimized (Wallerstein 2011: 86, 88-90, 156-217). It is worth taking this focus on geoculture further, in both chronological and thematic terms: First, some attention should be paid to the pre-1789 configuration of the World System in order to explore what kind of geoculture was behind the expansion of the World System before it took the aforementioned turn toward a centrist liberal configuration. Secondly, it is interesting to examine how this socio-political order legitimized the World System and its steady expansion into new territories, an expansion which transformed the spatial and socio-cultural configuration of the system.

According to a reading of Wallerstein, one might assume that from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century mercantilism played such a legitimizing role. Since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, "to the extent an ideology seemed to prevail, it was statism, the *raison d'etat*" (Wallerstein 1974: 67). However, the (nation)-state as the basic unit for the political organization of global capitalism appears to be a necessary but not a sufficient prerequisite for the expansion of the World System. This seems to point to a more general pattern, according to which cultural debasement, political domination and economic exploitation went hand in hand (Said 1993: 6). Following such a perspective means accepting that "the construction of cultural boundaries and political demarcations occurs within a larger context of power politics and contentions for the control of productive resources" (Forte 1998: 41).

One of the main factors of cultural division before 1789 was religion. The exclusively Christian nature of the World System until the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Nolte 1993: 56) played an important role in the expansion of the system both to the east and the west. Early European colonialism in the Americas was facilitated by the Roman Catholic Church, which provided the Iberian monarchies with the tools to construct the idea of a civilizing

mission and a feeling of superiority, a phenomenon in which clergymen participated actively (Weber 2004: 24). After the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) the system took a secular as well as a confessionalist turn, including cultural boundaries in a complex interplay between religion, the emergent proto-national identities, and new secular ideas that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century came to be influenced by Enlightenment thinkers and the meta-category of civilization (Nolte 1993: 58, 71, 98; Nolte 2001: 14; Carey and Trakulhun 2009: 8). In turn, subaltern groups, such as slaves or women, were defined as being close to a state of “nature,” which was a way to justify their subjugation under the Western European male order (Nolte 1993: 72). While secularization was a key factor in the transformation of the geoculture of the World System in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was within this secular framework that modern racism, mainly towards Africans and Asians, marked the beginning of a truly distinct phase of colonial domination and the repression of alien cultures: political misgovernment and mass plundering of natural resources after 1878.

It is important to stress that secularization and racism were mutually linked phenomena (Wallerstein 1992: 146-148; Hobsbawm 2002: 56-83). The different nature of the geoculture of the World System in each of these periods corresponds with different political economies. Thus, while mercantilism can be associated with the increasingly secular justification of inequality based on “civilization,” secular liberalism was built on the hegemony of the doctrines of free trade, and inequalities appear as a result of the operation of free market forces, symbolized by Adam Smith’s “invisible hand.” Here again, ideas of civilization, but increasingly of race, played an important role in justifying unequal developments. These cultural differences were not drawn between “Europe” and “the rest of the world.” Both the religious and the increasingly secular definitions of difference (both through “civilization” and race) had an effect on the expansion of the system within Europe as much as beyond its borders. The key question thus arises: How did this way of legitimizing inequality work on the micro-level; that is, how did images of “the other” reflect, influence, and construct political economies and the unequal division of labor? The present article explores this question mainly by analyzing a variety of sources that are linked to the political-economy discourse—from published works and descriptive statistics to travel accounts and governmental reports, internal files and public decrees. First, the theoretical foundations for the combination of orientalism and world-system analysis will be explained. Afterwards, the case of the Habsburg Monarchy will be introduced, with a particular focus on the nexus between orientalist discourses and economic change. Finally, orientalist practices which were part of the strategy used in order to give shape to the internal division of labour in Habsburg Central Europe will be studied.

### **Orientalism as Essentialist Spatial Othering: Stereotypes and Hierarchization of Space in the World System During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

The 18<sup>th</sup> century, the age of reason and mercantilism, seems like an interesting case study for this enquiry: How were spatial inequalities created and reproduced by the legitimization of the pre-equality discursive imperative? In this case, Edward Said's concept of orientalism appears to be particularly suggestive: "a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said 2003: 3). Said focused on how the construction of the Orient preceded the Western political, economic and military domination of the Middle East, which ultimately led to its formal colonization in the wake of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Said 2003: 35, 39). This sequence of events outlines the affinities between postcolonial (dominants/subalterns) and World System analysis vocabularies (center/periphery). British colonial rule in Egypt starting in 1882 largely based its "authority" to "speak" about and on behalf of the Orient on superior knowledge; that is, British authority relied upon a discourse constructed around the alleged superiority of British "civilization" (Said 2003: 32-34).

The correlation with economic conditions is quite clear, although Said was silent about both the impact of materiality on texts and the broader social context within which this discourse was disseminated (Turner 1994: 7, 18). Nevertheless, Said himself points implicitly to this relationship when he writes that, Egypt "was until its annexation by England, an almost academic example of backwardness; it was to become the triumph of English knowledge and power [...] British exports to Egypt equaled those to the whole of Africa; that certainly indicated a sort of financial prosperity, for Egypt and England (somewhat unevenly) together" (Said 2003: 35). Thus, the relationship between orientalist discourse and socioeconomic processes can be studied on the basis of the scheme outlined by Said, but this has to be systematized and developed in a more detailed fashion in order to be placed within the framework of world-system analysis. In consequence, strategies of othering will be analyzed in relation to the position of the corresponding territories in the world-wide division of labor. Also, the analysis will examine how negative stereotypes reflected a certain position within the world-system or if they in fact contributed to the emergence of a core/periphery-structure, for example by providing the geocultural legitimation for the system.

Although the aforementioned example corresponds to the process of colonization of Africa and Asia by European powers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the pattern appears earlier. The 18<sup>th</sup> century had already bred arguments that legitimized an unequal division of labor (Boatcă 2015: 79). Said (2003: 22) finds a fundamental shift in the orientalist discourse in the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which largely coincides with Wallerstein's timing for the emergence of a new centrist liberal geoculture of the World System. Other authors point to the importance of Enlightenment concepts, among which the key idea of "civilization" stands out. Since the 1750s, the French physiocrats

used the term frequently in their writings on commerce and wealth. According to them, economic success was linked to a set of behavioral norms that could be summarized under the umbrella-idea “civilization,” which was increasingly used to denote refinement of manners and behavior. From that moment, the term became a meta-category for the comparison of different peoples around the globe, linking economic, political, social and cultural categories (Wolff 2007: 10-11; Wolff 1995: 12-14). This was a tremendous change: The creation of a secular, universal category for the evaluation and classification not only of societies, but also of spatial entities. Moreover, the category could be easily instrumentalized for the legitimization of the unequal division of labor that characterized the World System, serving both pre-1789 (mercantilism) and post-1789 conceptions (liberalism). The notion of “civilization” appeared a few decades before the system embraced liberalism as its new leading principle, and thus it can also be regarded as part of the transformative process toward the imperative of formal equality and persisting socio-economic differentiation (Nolte 1993: 101). The universal code of “civilization” versus “barbarism” notwithstanding (Said 1993: xxv), different nation-states espoused different orientalist discourses, without this contradicting the general tendency to other the “oriental” (Turner 2000: 6, 8; Turner 1994: 5). Also, orientalism was not an entirely new paradigm for the world-system as the perception of indigenous cultures in the Americas since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century demonstrates which can be labelled “occidentalism” (Boatcă 2015: 79).

Analytically, the bridge between both axiomatic paradigms—World-System and orientalism—may be described by the concept of mental mapping. Mental maps are imaginative geographic constructs that spatialize cultural stereotypes, *e.g.* by depicting the contraposition between “civilized” and “barbaric” peoples. These maps largely coincide with the classification of centers and peripheries, as Maria Todorova (1997) and Larry Wolff (1995) have demonstrated regarding the placement of Balkan-centered discourses in the emergence of a discourse on Eastern Europe and the construction of Eastern Europe in the political and cultural notions of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Western European Enlightenment respectively. Enlightenment concepts shifted spatial divides: The axis between the Occident and the Orient was increasingly identified with the line that divided Eastern and Western Europe, to the detriment of the north-south-divide which had prevailed so far. Said (2003: 54) makes this point explicit when he writes about the “hard-and-fast distinctions as ‘East’ and ‘West’ which were the basic meta-categories for the “imaginative geography of the ‘our land – barbarian land’ variety [...] to set up these boundaries in our minds.” Larry Wolff (1995: 7-8, 43, 165, 185-186, 357) has pointed out the affinities between Said’s (2003: 49-73) orientalizing and the discursive construction of Eastern Europe as a spatial category, subordinated to the “West” and suffering from a deeply-rooted “backwardness” that Western concepts outlined as a distinct notion. This underlines the possibility of applying orientalism as a specific form of mental mapping to the territories of Eastern Europe as well as Asia.

Although Wolff openly rejects World System analysis and sees it as a variation of the discursive “invention” of Eastern Europe (Wolff 1995: 8-9), his book effectively linked orientalizations with the unequal division of labor between Eastern and Western Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The discourse of the Enlightenment, expressed in a variety of formats from travel books to philosophical treatises, related the meta-categories of “civilized” and “barbarians” to archetypal signs of economic underdevelopment: bad roads, an allegedly lazy population and a “wild, uncivilized nobility,” to name just a few. In 1772, Madame Geoffrin published a book about her trip to Warsaw six years earlier, in which she wrote “[...] roads that were not roads, going to bed in stables where it was necessary to evacuate the beasts to make a place, inedible bread, detestable water” (Wolff 1995: 254); Voltaire, for his part, addressed the French ambassador in Warsaw, Pierre Henin, in the following terms in 1761: “I still give five hundred years to the Poles to make the fabrics of Lyon and the porcelain of Sévres” (Wolff 1995: 261).

In modern terms, we might speak of a deficient infrastructure, insufficient productivity of the labor force, social inequalities, and mass poverty. However, these phenomena were embedded in a narrative of cultural hegemony and largely essentialized, as Voltaire’s time framework for Poland catching-up with France clearly indicates. Hubert Orłowski (1996) made a similar reading of the German discourse on Poland in a broader temporal framework, which covers the period between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Here, the reference to the social and economic aspects is accentuated even more. From the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the term “Polish economy” (*Polnische Wirtschaft*) became a general meta-stereotype for the German perceptions of the neighboring Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in which a number of negative categories were bundled together. At a later stage, this discourse was instrumental in legitimizing German rule over partitioned Poland between 1772 and 1918 (Orłowski 1996: 12, 60, 64-65, 313-314), thus once more linking cultural images not only to geoculture but also to geopolitics (Said 1993: 7). It is important to stress that it is not so much the description of poverty, social inequalities, and deficits in production that made this discourse orientalist, but the essentialist framework within which they were presented as natural and unchangeable. This is also the reason why it is not sufficient to state that stereotypes, for example bad and dirty roads, also can be found regarding Western countries (Struck 2004); it was the function that these respective discourses had that is relevant. Even when positive transformations occurred, according to the framework set out by dominant Western European powers, they were interpreted as the West’s own achievement for bringing “civilization,” rather than the result of subaltern efforts (Orłowski 1996: 314). From the early 18<sup>th</sup> century civilization as a meta-category gradually became a yardstick with which to measure the state of progress and development of societies and a tool to rank them in a hierarchical taxonomic order (Chakrabarty 2005: 8-9).

On a linguistic level, this is expressed by a comparison of Eastern Europe with colonial spaces in America and Australia: In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith claimed that the Mexican Aztecs and the Peruvian Incas were, at the time of their colonization by Hernan Cortés and Francisco Pizarro, respectively, more ignorant of the arts, agriculture and commerce than the Ukrainian Tartars (Wolff 1995: 272). Travel writers compared serfs in Russia and Poland with black slaves in the Caribbean (Wolff 1995: 81, 86), and the Polish population was labeled “orangutans” in a satirical text published in 1780, after the First Partition of the Commonwealth (Anonymous 1780). This links the orientalist discourse and the geopolitical interest of Prussia, the Habsburg Monarchy, and Russia in carving up Poland-Lithuania between 1772 and 1795 (Wolff 1995: 185) and is directly reminiscent of Said’s claim with regard to the Middle East and, especially, Egypt (Said 2003: 39, 80-83, 86, 92).

This situation underlines the relationship between orientalist images and the geopolitical expansion of three empires on the European continent. Although it has to be stressed that Russia was also subject of orientalizing practices without being geopolitically subordinated, as the above-mentioned example demonstrates. This imaginary, nevertheless, played a key role in legitimizing the alteration of national borders in particular if this was in violation of the principles of international politics and territorial sovereignty, as was the case with the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Orłowski 1996). Territorial sovereignty and international treaties had been the leading principles of the geoculture of the World System at least from the Peace of Westphalia (Wallerstein 1992:145).

The Polish-Lithuanian case may be an episodic event in which the circumvention of international standards was justified by a forced Partition Treaty, thus dispelling the widely held impression that three major states had violated the rules of international policy. Yet, Orientalism was also part of the geoculture of the World System on a much more general level, and it provided a language and a vocabulary with which to frame spatial hierarchies in combination with political sovereignty and an unequal division of labor. In other words, the structure of centers and peripheries was justified by orientalist explanatory schemes. This is transparently shown in the way orientalist-based arguments were used to justify the position of a formally not colonized geographical area such as Eastern Europe.

The analogies that the contemporary discourses drew between the Eastern European regions and the Latin American colonies reflect this hierarchization of space in the perspectives of Central and Western European intellectual elites, government bureaucrats and rulers. Orientalist imaginaries offered the opportunity to design civilizing missions, which included the implementation of development policies (Schröder 2005: 28-30). These alleged modernization reform programs were inevitably intertwined with the interests of the “civilizing” states, whose bureaucracies and nascent civil societies were both involved in the construction of these images

and receptive to this kind of perception. Larry Wolff (1995: 267-268) reports the example of the French physiocrat Nicolas Baudeau, who in 1767/68 envisaged that Poland-Lithuania's economic problems could be addressed by liberalizing trade and introducing a property law. However, he and other physiocrats saw that the country's future was in agricultural production and claimed that its crafts (but also its agriculture) were in a precarious state; Baudeau was interested in fostering grain exports to France, which according to his plans, could build up reserves to feed its population for three years.

This clearly demonstrates that the formulation of economic reform programs for other regions was part of the center-periphery structure between Western and Eastern Europe. The orientaling element here is the unchangeable nature ascribed to relations that were perceived as "backward." Accordingly, poverty in the periphery can at best be reduced within the existing parameters of a peripheral economy, which is inevitably intertwined with the core's economic interest in maintaining the same economic model that stood in the background of the reforms. In the end this meant prolonging the periphery's status, in open contradiction between official claims and political practice.

### **Economy and Political Economy in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Habsburg Europe**

These frictions can be seen even more clearly in the Habsburg Monarchy's political economy. The Habsburg dominions acted as a bridge between Central and Eastern Europe and are in general classified as a semi-periphery (Wallerstein 1974: 85, 171, 181, 185, 197, 307-308; Wallerstein 1980: 232; Komlosy 2003: 15; Kaps 2008). Since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Habsburg dynasty had a wide range of territories under their control. These territories were very different from one another, not only in terms of legal status, but also in terms of their socio-economic profile. After the reunification of all Austrian and Bohemian territories under the Viennese Habsburg line, in 1620 and 1665 respectively, and after the Siege of Vienna in 1683, the Habsburgs started their eastern expansion in alliance with Polish, Saxon and Bavarian forces, pushing back the Ottoman Empire towards south-eastern Europe (Ingrao 2000: 3, 9, 75-83; Macartney 1968: 3, 6).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, the dominions of the Habsburgs included a multiplicity of territories under a single polity. Among them, Upper and Lower Austria, Styria and Bohemia or Silesia (until 1740), were close to qualifying as core areas, due to their socioeconomic characteristics, in particular commercial services and their crafts and proto-industrial sectors. In these areas, metal and textile production was integrated with international markets, especially in Eastern and Western Europe, but also the Ottoman Empire, Atlantic Africa, and the Spanish and British colonies in America (Pohl 1963: 126-129; Klíma 1959-60: 6; Kriedte 1983: 83; Weber/Schulte-Beerbühl 2011: 80-83). Other core areas under the Habsburgs were territorially detached from the rest of the monarchy, for example Lombardy and the Southern Netherlands,

which the House of Habsburg had acquired at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713). These regions may be regarded as core areas even within a European or global context (Macartney 1968: 11, 33; Vocelka 2001: 94, 113). To the semi-peripheral areas we may add the largely agricultural Carniola, a large part of the Adriatic Littoral, Carinthia and Tyrol, although metal industries and mining were sources of prosperity in the case of Carinthia and Tyrol, respectively. The eastern regions of the Empire can easily be defined as peripheral: These were agricultural regions where a severe regime of serfdom prevailed. Peasants managed little land for themselves, since the vast and growing majority of landed property was in the hands of the aristocracy. Towns were few and small, craft production limited, and commerce was poorly developed. This zone included large tracts of Hungary, as far as Transylvania, the Banat of Timișoara, and Croatia. Later, the Habsburg peripheral zone expanded further to Galicia (from 1772), Bukovina (1774) and Dalmatia (1797) (Dickson 1987/vol.1: 115-116; Balázs 1997: 125-132; Macartney 1968: 6-9; Kann 1974: 121-123; Kaps 2015).

The 18<sup>th</sup> century is a key period in which this interregional division of labor was accentuated further. Politically, most of the territorial growth of the Habsburg Empire was to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire (1683-1699, 1716-1718); military success laid the foundations for the political incorporation of the eastern peripheries. In addition, the annexation of Galicia after the First Partition of Poland (1772) can be considered the start of a new phase, after the Empire's loss of Silesia to Prussia (1742).

The political economy of the Habsburg Monarchy between the Spanish War of Succession and the Congress of Vienna was mainly characterized by three elements: a) the creation of an internal market; b) the mobilization of labor, still largely locally, for both agriculture and industrial production, which was in part directed to trans-regional and international markets; and, c) the consolidation of the state in financial and military terms (Komlosy 2003: 12, 33-45; 103-106; 133-145; Dickson 1987; Pieper 2012; Hochedlinger 2009).

Economic policies were to a large extent inspired by the cameralist paradigm that took the lead in shaping economic policy within the Habsburg Monarchy since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Ingrao 2000: 92-94). According to the cameral sciences commercial exchange should be promoted in order to foster agricultural and industrial production and increase general prosperity and, the revenue of the state. Cameralist theoreticians such as Johann Heinrich Gottlieb von Justi and the Viennese professor Joseph von Sonnenfels argued for an active role of the state in the promotion of factories and the creation of the necessary institutional conditions for productive activities, including customs reforms, the abolition of commercial privileges, favorable fiscal policies, the reform of serfdom and the redistribution of land, the construction of infrastructures, and the promotion of an educated workforce (Freudenberger 2003: 86-87; Balázs 1997: 75, 80, 84). Obviously, other economic theories, such as physiocracy and early liberalism, also had an

influence upon the Habsburg political economy, but to a much lesser extent than the cameralist doctrines (Báalazs 1997: 27).

After the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, cameralism developed a particular concern with space, owing to the increasing trans-regional integration of the European economies. Thus, trade and the circulation of goods turned into a central factor for cameralist ideas, which saw the exchange of goods as a tool to balance affluence and scarcity. In pursuance of this axiom, cameralist theoreticians proposed measures in support of trade. In this sense, trade connected regions with different productive profiles and even contributed to shape these different profiles as they became progressively more entangled. Late cameralists were very aware of spatial differentiations and the increasing connectivity of local and regional economies, and argued for economic policies aimed at reducing regional imbalances. This approach followed the cameralists' general guidelines that pretended to promote social redistribution and equality (Sandl 1999: 280, 282, 284, 295).

The economic development of the Habsburg Monarchy during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, stresses the obvious contradictions in these ideas: economic development occurred but exacerbated the regional differences. Central government institutions concerned with economic policy, mainly the Court Chamber (*Hofkammer*), but sometimes also the Directorium in publicis et cameralibus (1749-1761) and the Bohemian-Austrian Court Chancellery (*Böhmisch-Österreichische Hofkanzlei*, since 1761), fostered proto-industrial development, mainly in textiles (wool, linen and cotton): They granted tax privileges and subsidies to big manufactories, reduced guild restrictions to the introduction and/or the expansion of industrial production (1754), abolished internal custom tariffs (in 1775) as well as all private bridge, road and waterway tolls (in 1783/84) and introduced increasingly protectionist legislation (in 1784 and 1787/88) (Freudenberger 2003: 17, 61-62; Hassinger 1964: 73-74, 83; Sandgruber 1982: 94-95; Otruba 1981: 101). The success of these policies led to a significant increase in the proto-industrial production of linen, silk, wool and later also cotton in northern Austria and Bohemia, and eventually also in other provinces. Iron production grew constantly in Styria, equaling England's total output in 1767, and glass production expanded, mainly in Bohemia and Alpine areas (Good 1984: 20-21; Sandgruber 1982: 96; Freudenberger 1977).

### **The Case for Orientalism in Central Europe Under the Habsburgs During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

The improved position of the Habsburg internal core areas within the international division of labor is visible in trade statistics from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. These statistics demonstrate that a large proportion of industrial products was exported from these areas, which also imported large quantities of raw materials and food (Kaps 2008: 109). This meant that internal differences between agricultural peripheries and industrial centers were becoming more acute. An early and

rough estimate of the aggregate income for 1785 shows that per capita wealth in Austria (28 florins) and Bohemia (24 florins) was well above that in Hungary (20 florins) and Galicia (11 florins) (Kaps 2009: 306). It is here, where the apparent friction between the cameralist theories concerning the division of labor, which argued for balanced development, and the practice which led to an ever-increasing chasm, came to be smoothed out through the operation of orientalist practices. The relationship between political economy and cultural stereotypes can be approached by analyzing descriptive statistical treatises that were published in the Habsburg Monarchy, mainly in the capital, Vienna, between the 1790s and the 1820s. These treatises had a significant impact on the public opinion. These works describe the habits and customs, productive potential, living standards, and material culture in the Habsburg lands and reflect the highly-detailed knowledge that university-trained statisticians had of the Monarchy's economy (Vári 2003: 39-41). The Hungarian provinces, in particular the easternmost borderlands and Galicia, were pigeonholed in a cultural narrative in which certain ethnic groups were defined by a set of fixed characteristics. In Transylvania, the Banat of Timișoara, Hungary and Galicia, the well-constructed houses and tidily maintained villages and towns of German settlers were compared with the lazily built shanty dwellings of the native populations (Hungarians, Serbs, Vlachs, Poles, Ruthenians and Slovaks). Subsequently, their "idleness" was contrasted to German "industriousness."

Apart from material culture and work ethos, the authors criticized the alcohol consumption and lacking thriftiness of the population: In general, statisticians assessed alcohol consumption by both the quantities consumed and the quality of the specific beverages. Beer was considered preferable to spirits, and Romanians and also Poles in Galicia were heavily criticized for their high spirit consumption, while Hungarians, Romanians and Croats were praised for their high-quality wine, which was regarded as a solid alternative to spirits. Similarly, the celebration of large weddings and christenings were assessed critically, pointing to the fact that the resources were rarely sufficient to cover the expenditure. However, hierarchies were not coherent or constant, so that the less diligent and orderly cattle-raising practices in Hungary, was in contrast with the efforts of both Germans and Slovaks. Concerning housing and construction techniques, Hungarians were once more at the bottom of the table, in opposition not only to top-rank German houses but also to Slovaks, who were placed in the middle as a reward for their attempts to imitate German-style house-building (Vári 2003: 43, 48-50; Kaps 2015: 236-237).

Material culture, work ethos, and lifestyle were not only assessed on the basis of cameralist political and economic principles or of more general enlightened philosophical doctrines; these descriptions were used to construct different ethnic groups and order them in a hierarchical rank. There is but one step between descriptions and explanations. Michael Lebrecht's *Über den National-Charakter der in Siebenbürgen befindlichen Nationen (On the national character of existing Nations in Transylvania)*, published in 1792 after the demise of Josephinist reformism,

praised Transylvanian Hungarians' "warm-heartedness" and "hospitality" before turning to the less commendable side of their character as "vain, hot-tempered, irascible [...] That is why they have too little economic spirit, little drive to industriousness, too little order in their houses and activities" (Vári 2003: 44).

Also visible in the statisticians' accounts, early ethno-social profiles were linked to the economic productivity of the population in the Eastern Habsburg possessions; cultural habits were the underlying cause of the social and economic potential of the population, and isolated observations were soon translated into generalizations. These perceptions were bundled into more general categories that reflected the ranking of these populations on a scale based on enlightened, cameralist taxonomies. Already in the 1750s, and thus before the onset of the statistical discourse, the Supreme Commercial Intendency (*Suprema Intendenza Commerciale*) in Trieste labeled the Croatian littoral population in the nearby harbor town of Zengg/Senj as "half-wild people" in order to justify the fact that the administrator of the district governor (*Hauptmannamtsverwalter*) received a higher billet compensation (*Quartiergeld*) there than his colleague in nearby Fiume/Rijeka (Faber 1995: 172). Half a century later, the statistician Andreas Demián compared the Southern Slavonic inhabitants of the military frontier in Croatia to "wild animals" (Vári 2003: 44). As previously noted, these views were part of a more general perspective on Eastern Europe and eventually led to the classification of these subaltern groups with the label "natural man" (*Naturmensch*) in statistical works published in the 1790s and early 1800s. Statisticians Demián and Martin Schwartner saw Vlachs, Croats and Serbs as "wild people" and "natural men" who had to be "civilized" before they could partake of social and economic progress.

Also in Galicia, statisticians and officials, up to the Emperor Joseph II, argued recurrently about their civilizing mission after the annexation of the province in 1772 (Wolff 2004; Maner 2007: 11, 35-38). Thus, these subaltern groups were explicitly ascribed a low rank in the enlightened taxonomy of progress, at the head of which was "civilization" and the "civilized" man. "Natural men", in turn, had to be "civilized" before they were fit for progress and an enlightened way of life (Vári 2003: 45-46). The use of the expression "wild" and "natural man" demonstrates that the inhabitants of the Habsburg Monarchy's eastern peripheries were being orientalized by German-speaking statisticians at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Some population groups in the Eastern Habsburg territories were eventually excluded from the human genre and compared to animals or wild people. They were, however, still perceived to be ready for receiving "culture" and thus being transformed into useful citizens of the state. These ethnic stereotypes were linked to a spatial perspective and the subsequent construction of mental maps. Thus, in the 1790s travellers described the lower Bačka in the Banat as "wild, empty and marshy" (Thomas 1999: 18); in 1813, statistician Christian Karl Andre stated without ambiguity:

Therefore, in Austria as well as in Russia, one can climb up a stepladder from a coarse non-culture to the finest civilization, from old, secular, orientalism, to the manifold new conveniences, customs, amenities, pleasures and comforts of life that characterize the West in terms of art, science and progress in liberty of thought, religion, civility and morals (Andre 1813: 330).

Thus, the social hierarchy of “civilization” versus “barbarism” that was linked to specific criteria of cultural behavior, social discipline and economic capacity, was translated into a spatial framework according to which the Habsburg Monarchy was ascribed a “semi-oriental” status, a place where “civilization” coexisted with “wildness.” Here, it becomes palpable how discourses in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Habsburg Central Europe were oscillating between external and internal forms of orientalism (Turner 2000: 14), in the sense that the other was to be found within the empire’s own borders and thus had to care for its transformation. These assessments were, in short, part of a broader tendency to rank the territories of the Habsburg Monarchy according to a mental map that codified peripheries as culturally subaltern spaces and, thus, created the discursive meta-structure for the unequal division of labor that cameralism practiced, in stark contrast with what cameral sciences claimed to want in theory. Three examples will show how this mental map was related to cameralist economic policies.

### **Orientalism and the Cameralist Division of Labor: Trade and Customs Policy**

According to cameralist postulates, trade played a key role in the political economy. Habsburg attempts to create a single market stretch as far back as the 1720s, with the implementation of measures such as the removal of internal customs duties, passage and bridge tolls, and the introduction of a unified weight and measurement system. These measures gained momentum during the Seven Years’ War. At that time, plans were drawn up for the abolition of all internal tolls, but this was not realized until 1775 and only affected internal borders within Austria (with exception of Tyrol), Bohemia and Hungary, but not the borders that separated the two major regional complexes. Thus, there still persisted a tariff line between the Bohemian and Austrian lands on the one hand and the Hungarian provinces on the other hand (Liebel-Weckowitz 1979: 153-154). This tariff regime favored exports of Bohemian and Austrian products (which were only burdened with a 5% levy) and taxed Hungarian imports, mainly agricultural produce, sensitively higher (with duties up to 20-30%) (Hassinger 1964: 85). The tax structure promoted the already existing division of labor between industrial and agricultural regions: Higher customs duties made the introduction of Hungarian crafts to the Austrian and Bohemian markets even more difficult, while constant demand for agricultural produce kept sales high.

While these regulations also responded to the demands of Hungarian elites, which wanted to have an autonomous fiscal and administrative regime to protect them from the centralizing policies endured by Bohemia and Austria, it also suited the aims of leading politicians and officials at the Viennese Court, who thought that Hungary should remain an agricultural producer for the industrialized Western regions. Thus, a report dated to March 1, 1762 affirmed,

The true commercial relationship between Hungary and the German Hereditary lands seems to respond to the principle *ceteribus paribus*; Hungarians, as favored subjects, should not become too rich in terms of money, but remain prosperous in terms of natural products, so that these can be the nutrition of Austria, with its desirably increasing population, industry and manufactories (Beer 1894:19).

This quote demonstrates that cameralist theory was applied only partially and met with a quasi-colonial discourse of mercantilist inspiration, according to which money was to be kept mainly within the Austrian and Bohemian lands. In practice, however, these differences were even more pronounced, as the agricultural orientation not only of Carniola and Tyrol, but also of relatively industrialized regions such as Bohemia (where agriculture was organized on the basis of large estates) and Lower Austria, demonstrates. While this makes it clear that the East-West-divide was to a certain extent a constructivist simplification, it cannot refute the fact that the Eastern peripheries were supposed to and did concentrate primarily on the production of food and raw materials.

Galicia, which was annexed in 1772 and incorporated into the Bohemian and Austrian customs regime in 1784, was to obtain similar status in the internal division of labor (Grossmann 1914). Even before the First Partition of Poland-Lithuania, the local Commercial Council in Austrian Silesia defined the neighboring territory as “a second America,” and hoped to “attract Cracow, L’viv and Kamieniec-Podolski’s trade to Austria” (Beer 1899: 92-93). Thus colonial imaginary served as pretext for the application of mercantilist policies in a territory over which political control should be established. After imperial troops had occupied the new province the merchant guild of Inner Austria addressed the Court Chamber to express their interest in “being among the first ones to draw benefits from this new successful acquisition” and expanding trade with the north-eastern province, as the provincial governor reported to the Court Chamber in Vienna (ÖStA, FHKA, NHK, Kommerz U Akten 1556, 6 ex x bri 1773, Folio 56).

These private plans reflected the state’s economic policy, according to which the role of Galicia was that of a market for Bohemian and Austrian industrial products and a supplier of raw materials. In fact, the Bohemian and Austrian producers successfully lobbied to have porcelain and glass imports from Prussia banned and to be granted a preferential import custom duty for

fustian in the first years after Galicia's annexation. After 1772, Galicia was initially placed under its own custom regime in order to preserve its traditional ties with Poland, Gdańsk and the Ottoman and Russian empires, while also fostering trade with the Habsburg provinces. The above mentioned special regulations and import bans introduced on the initiative of Bohemian and Austrian industrialists gave producers from the monarchy's internal core areas a politically induced competitive edge and spurred proto-industrial development in the Monarchy's western provinces by facilitating access to new markets at the expense of the inhabitants of Galicia who had to pay more for their manufactured products (as prices for industrial produce were higher in the Habsburg dominions than abroad, also because of higher transport costs). This advantage was fully capitalized on after Galicia's integration into the customs union in 1784, and especially after the shift to a protectionist external trade policy in the same year which was upgraded in 1787/88. The import bans on a range of commodities cut Galicia's traditional trade relations in favor of the Western Habsburg territories and Hungary (Kaps 2015: 238-241, 245-254; Beer 1899: 116-119).

Cattle and grain imports from Galicia also had to be organized in order to satisfy the needs of Bohemia and Austria. In both cases, central authorities in Vienna were not overly concerned about the effects that these exports had on Galicia's precarious economy, but rather on ensuring consumer supply in the Western provinces (Grossmann 1914: 222, 228, 280-283, 293-294). In 1773, following the poor cereal harvest in Bohemia in 1771 and 1772, Karl von Zinzendorf, the liberal President of the Court Auditory Chamber (*Hofrechnkammer*), attempted to calculate whether Galicia's grain could be made to guarantee the Monarchy's cereal self-sufficiency (Zinzendorf 1773). This underlines the fact that economic policies were solely aimed at favoring the interests of internal core areas, to the eventual detriment of the peripheries, despite the ostensible wishes of officials and politicians alike to spur the economy of a country "which had not come as far as its neighbors" (Traunpaur 1787: 2-3). "Elevating" and "civilizing" Galician culture were declared "necessary duties" of the Habsburg bureaucracy in the new province (Wolff 2004: 823). Galicia was repeatedly compared to extra-European colonial spaces such as El Dorado, India, or Siberia (Kaps 2015: 213). Colonial comparisons did not stop there, as natural scientist Balthasar Hacquet's explanation demonstrates: "One can imagine Galicia as a newly discovered island for the Austrian states; at the beginning, everybody was running into it and squeezing the administration in; the locals did not understand what was happening, and took things to be a change for the worse, not the best, and for this reason the government there is still somewhat unsettled" (Hacquet 1794: VII).

The comparison with colonial spaces and metaphors stresses the links between orientalizing mental maps and the unequal cameralist division of labor. Almost all of Galicia's exports to Bohemia and Austria in 1783 and 1784 consisted of raw materials and agricultural products (94.8 and 92.3%), while imports generally consisted of finished products (86.7% and

89.1% respectively) (Merkantiltabelle 1783; Merkantiltabelle 1784). It would be wrong to claim that this pattern was imposed by government action since the early 1770s: it followed Galicia's economic and social background. Yet, the prevalent orientalist discourse worked in support of the Austrian and Bohemian industrialists and merchants, who were granted favorable conditions in the Galician market between 1773 and 1784, replicating what Said (2003: 100) referred to as the "creation of interest." In other words, orientalist explanatory schemes gave producers from the core areas of the Habsburg Monarchy the discursive power to impose their own conditions.

After 1785, the removal of internal customs ostensibly followed cameralist notions on equal conditions for all within the western provinces of the Monarchy, which brought the privileged position of certain sectors and provinces to an end. In practice, the trade balance seems to have become more uneven than ever (Kaps 2015: 151-152), and the cameralist policies perpetuated unequal exchange by homogenizing legal conditions. Quite apart from the shape of formal institutions, imbalance prevailed, and orientalist discourses reveal the outline of these unequal policies. In the late 1780s, Johann Pezzl wrote that "apart from Indian Fakirs, there is no species of human being that resemble Orangutans as much as a Polish Jew" (Häusler 1979: 78-79). The statistician and librarian of the State Chancellor, Wenzel Anton Fürst Kaunitz, was here referring mainly to the Jewish petty traders who attended the Viennese fairs. This group included many traders from Galicia, where the vast majority of traders were of Jewish background and often worked as agents for Viennese Jewish merchants (Karniel 1981: 211). By relegating Jewish traders to a lower rank within the taxonomies of the Enlightenment and situating them even outside mankind, a leading publicist like Pezzl orientalized the intermediaries in the relationship between Galicia and the Western Habsburg regions and contributed to framing these trade relations in hegemonic terms.

The expression of limited trust in a certain group of traders was another way of ensuring that the relationship remained on terms that favored core areas against peripheral ones. It must be stressed that since the Enlightenment anti-Semitic arguments usually followed orientalist lines (Kalmar – Penslar 2005: xv-xvi, xxxviii). While anti-Semitism by no means limited to peripheral spaces, the differentiation between Western and Eastern Jews was sometimes coined in orientalist terms. The Jewish communities fostered this split among themselves, precisely as a consequence of orientalist anti-Jewish stereotypes fueling an "internal orientalism" (Kalmar – Penslar 2005: xix). However, this shows that the difference between "Western" and "Eastern" Jews can also be found in discourses from outside the Jewish community. The Habsburg Monarchy was not an exception: Although anti-Jewish arguments can be found regarding Jewish minorities in Western provinces and the capital Vienna as well (Bernard 1968-69: 101, 104), they were to some extent different in both style and content to those circulating throughout the Eastern territories. In the Western provinces, the discourse largely lacked in orientalizing images, and also considered Jews

more productive and useful to the state, which fostered their integration and assimilation according to cameralist principles, at least after the release of the Tolerance Patents between 1781 and 1789 (Karniel 1981: 203-204).

In Galicia, the Jewish population was much more numerous than in the Western provinces, kept to more traditional beliefs and clothing, and was employed in a range of professions within both the crafts and the commercial sector (Glassl 1975: 190-192; Maner 2007: 239-241). These projects followed physiocratic guidelines and were more unsure and reactionary with regard to the assimilation of the Jewish elements (Häusler 1979: 33, 36, 43-45; Maner 2007: 237, 240-241). Thus, orientalizing images of Jewish traders were part of both the general discourse on Galicia's Jewish population and the trade policies: By culturally relegating native traders to a low rank within the cameralist taxonomy, mistrust was expressed also in economic terms. This othering strategy was the justification for the definition of trade terms which responded to the interests of the Western regions: Trade should be controlled by wholesale merchants, many of whom should come from the Western regions, rather than by Jewish petty traders from Galicia. Although this project was not viable in practice, it nevertheless accentuates the core-periphery relationships. The norms of these relationships held that Galicia should not only deliver raw materials to the Austrian and Bohemian regions but also that this trade should be controlled by merchants from the core regions.

### **Proto-Industry**

Concerning industrial policies, unequal institutional conditions can also be detected, although in this case the contradiction between cameralist claims, that regional disparities must be eliminated, and practice is more ambiguous (Sandl 1999: 194-195). As previously noted, Hungary's exclusive toll regime was related to the government's declared aim to discourage proto-industrial enterprises there, although they were never actually forbidden (Beer 1895: 21-23). Empress Maria Theresa shared this vision, and launched a plan for the economic development of Hungary that was based on the cultivation of crops such as woad, flex, and hemp. In addition, cattle- and sheep-breeding was to be encouraged (Beer 1895: 23-23, 28-29). In 1768, the Commercial Council declared that craft production in Hungary was to be limited to the absolute bare minimum, otherwise the "natural trade so profitable for the state" would perish (Beer 1895: 27). In this case, the orientalizing aspect is mainly to consider that resource endowment is a stable and unchangeable feature; "natural," as leading bureaucrats in Vienna would have it in the late 1760s. They thus broke with one of the leading principles of cameralism: resource optimization. However, most statements barely attempt to hide this breach of cameralist theory and go one step further in declaring that, even if resources were available, Hungary should deliberately focus exclusively, or at least predominantly, on agriculture. The descriptions of statisticians, which present "lazy" Hungarians in a way that closely

resembled the “natural man” starting three decades later, strongly suggest that the orientalizing of the Hungarian population influenced the economic policies and resource allocation criteria imposed by the government. State officials deliberately followed orientalizing guidelines in order to reinforce the center-periphery structure that existed between Austria and Bohemia on the one hand and Hungary on the other.

In Galicia the issue was more complex. At first glance, government statements were little different from those issued regarding Hungary. In 1774, the Galician Court Chancellor Count Wrbna declared Galicia “to be naturally predestined to agriculture,” and pleaded that only such manufactories should be founded as were necessary to meet local demand (Grossmann 1914: 32). In consequence, Wrbna argued in March 1774, that “one of the fundamental advantages that Galicia’s acquisition can pose for the other Hereditary Lands is, indisputably, the emergence of new markets for domestic craft production” (ÖStA, FHKA NHK Kommerz U Akten 1556, 13 ex Martio 1774 Hung, Folio 133). One of the leading officials whose task was ostensibly to care for the interest of the new province within the Monarchy, thus pleaded to limit Galicia’s potential deliberately to one economic sector which was less profitable than industry and commerce. However, Wrbna contradicted himself only a few months later, when he rejected Galicia’s incorporation into the Austro-Bohemian customs union arguing that the new province should not become a sale market for Austrian and Bohemian products (Ibid., 27 ex Junio 1774, Folio 270).

In fact, the government never forbade the foundation of industrial enterprises in Galicia, and custom policies were never even declared to play a role akin to that which they played in Hungary. Some state officials even supported the development of Galicia’s industrial sector. In fact, the state went as far as giving public support to certain enterprises, mainly those involved in textile production, even after public subsidies and exclusive monopolies had been abolished in general. This exceptional support lasted until the 1790s and was followed by a sequence of failures (Bacon 1975: 54, 100, 112). However, this support took place within narrowly defined boundaries. Emperor Joseph II repeatedly refused to lend his support to Galician silk manufactories and declared in 1783 that “Galicia is not a country where silk manufactories can be a successful business” (Kaps 2015: 231). In this case, the orientalizing element once again resides in the consideration of Galicia’s natural endowments as static but also in debasing regional conditions in the face of a civilization discourse, and hence the implicit argument for maintaining its peripheral profile as a supplier of raw materials and agricultural products. In addition, the authorities claimed that some state loans and subsidies to entrepreneurs (Bacon 1975: 60) were rejected because they wished to avoid competition with the Bohemian and Austrian proto-industrial sector on the Galician market. Thus, in 1782 the Court Chamber denied a loan to the Swiss calico producers Isaak Henrie Amiet and Ludwig Abraham Vichaux because there were already “enough” cotton and indigo manufactories in the Hereditary Lands. However, the report stressed at the same time

that there were “no reasons to set barriers for what is still a very limited industry in such a remote revindicated country” (Bacon 1975: 163; ÖStA, FHKA, NHK, Kommerz U Akten 1558, 2 ex Julio 1782, Folio 534).

The contradiction between the officially declared policy goal and practice becomes clearly visible. Eventually, the bureaucratic apparatus explicitly limited Galicia’s productive structure, and thus expressed its subaltern position in the cameralist discourse. In March 1785, Joseph II rejected the funding application for the construction of a canvas printing manufacture in L’viv arguing that there was already a similar factory in Galicia’s capital. In his conclusion, however, he stressed that “this craft is spread everywhere in other Hereditary Lands, and producing enough dyed and printed canvas, at hackneyed prices, to cover the still remaining demand in Galicia” (ÖStA, FHKA NHK Kommerz U Akten 1559, 2 ex Martio 1785, Folio 998). Other enterprises, engaged in cotton printing and the manufacture of mirrors and porcelain, were also denied loans during the 1780s with analogous arguments. Only in those cases in which investors wanted to improve pre-existing productive structures, or in which the planned enterprises were complementary to the Bohemian and Austrian proto-industrial sector, did the state grant support (Kaps 2015: 231-232). But even there the administration showed its doubts about the real usefulness of this aid.

A grant of raw materials and 8,000 florins awarded for the installation of 16 weavers from Bohemia in Sambir in June 1787, aimed at improving the quality of weaving in Galicia; concerning this operation the Court Chamber stated that “the whole plan of the introduction of weaving in Galicia was not entirely economically, either perhaps entirely commercially arranged” (ÖStA, FHKA NHK Kommerz U Akten 1561, 7 ex Junio 1787, Folio 253). Nevertheless, the authorities maintained this plan which was presented as a “civilizing mission,” something quite characteristic in the general discourse on know-how and technology transfer. Thus, the state sponsored the settlement of Germans from both the Monarchy and other territories of the Holy Roman Empire in Galicia also in order to improve agriculture (Lepucki 1938; Maner 2007: 49-52). In 1812, the Protestant Superintendent in Galicia, Samuel Bredetzky wrote regarding German settlements in Galicia: “Austria focused [...] on civilizing this nation, which was profoundly oppressed due to civil unrest, and especially the despotism of aristocrats and their control of agriculture” (Bredetzky 1812: 51).

From the 1790s onwards the state stopped providing this kind of support, which did not mean that it pulled out of intervening in industrial policies altogether. State officials proclaimed repeatedly that Galicia’s dependence on external iron imports should come to an end in order to avoid depending on Prussia. While the state was eager to supply the blacksmiths in Biała, in Western Galicia, with iron from Cieszyn Silesia and Upper Hungary (ÖStA, FHKA NHK Kommerz U Akten 1562, 7 ex Martio 1792, Folio 888-890), the Court Chamber passed a decree

in March 1806, in which it ordered the Galician Governor to put pressure on the proprietors of iron works to introduce better management criteria in their factories (ÖStA, FHKA NHK Kommerz U Akten 1568, 5 ex Martio 1806, Folio 1593). In 1813, after success had failed to materialise, the Court Chamber ascribed the lack of progress in the iron sector to the “indolence” of producers (ÖStA, FHKA NHK Kommerz U Akten 1575, 87 ex Januario 1813, Fol. 1347-1387). The bureaucrats thus reduced the complex issue of insufficient or deficient iron production to the anthropological category of “indolence,” instead of looking for more systematic and structural causes.

Orientalizing categories can be similarly found in the description of the workforce. While complaints about the “idleness” of workers, which was by no means limited to the discourse on Galicia (Hochedlinger/Tantner 2005), are found regularly in governmental reports and files, there are passages where their orientalist character appears to be particularly transparent: On 20 January 1809, the district office (*Kreisamt*) in Jasło, in central Galicia, associated the scarcity of labor for the highly successful cotton factory in Kołaczyce to the “idleness that characterise both urban people and peasantry” (ÖStA, FHKA NHK Kommerz U Akten 1571, 2 ex Aprili 1809, Folio 1360). While the district office demanded measures to transform the “idleness” of the local population into “activity,” two weeks later the Galician Governor addressed a more radical report to the Court Chamber in Vienna. The Governor required that “due to the passivity which, as is known, is an innate feature of the local population, many idle and sluttish persons, as well as those who start begging with the pretext of their corporal afflictions, even if these do not hinder them from taking up work,” should to be put under police control by the authorities in the district of Jasło, but also in a few other districts in the central and southern sectors of the country, such as Tarnów, Rzeszów and Sanok (Ibid., Folio 1356). Large parts of the workforce, both rural and urban, in substantial parts of Galicia were thus portrayed as deviant from the required work ethos, using anthropological categories. The essentialism contained within this discourse is the key to its orientalist character, which makes it different to other accounts concerning the Western regions of the Habsburg Monarchy and Western countries, in which the eventual need for discipline is presented in a very different way. An account from the District Governor of Biała is revealing in this regard. This report, dated to 1804, stated: “The scarcity of spinners is due [...] to a tendency to passivity which is innate to the Polish Nation” (HHStA, KA, Nachlass Baldacci, Karton 3, IV). Therefore, the main problem for Galicia’s industrial sector was the failure of the population to follow the appropriate failing work ethos; this was presented in essentialist terms, and, in consequence, largely viewed the possibility of reform and change as extremely unlikely.

In summary, among the different ways in which orientalist narratives legitimated an unequal division of labor, those referring to institutional conditions and the characteristics of the workforce stand out. In consequence, investments were generally viewed with skepticism, while

the interests of the administrative center as socioeconomic core are in some cases particularly visible—for instance when the funding of new factories was rejected in order to avoid greater competition by new industrial establishments in the periphery. All these measures demonstrate that the cameralist economic policies regulated interregional competition and specialization and discriminated against some regions, a process in which orientalist codes played an important role. Even so, the authorities promoted Galician craft production whenever it did not compete with the industrial development of the core areas, but was either independent from, or complementary to, it. This, however, still means that economic policies were aimed at maintaining the specialization of the peripheries at the lower end of the commodity chains (production of dyestuffs, hemp, flax and food) while carefully supporting the progressive upgrading of commodity chains in the western provinces, in particular linen, wool and cotton production (Komlosy 2010). Habsburg Orientalism thus oscillated between exclusion and inclusion; the other was a necessary part of the national culture and had to be dealt with from within.

### **Serfdom Reform**

From the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Habsburgs reduced taxation and labor services (*robot*) in order to safeguard the social order, the long-term viability of agriculture, and thereby the stability of tax revenue; an initial *robot* decree for the Bohemian lands was approved in 1657 (Ingrao 2000: 94). Another decree, issued for Bohemia in 1680 following a violent peasant revolt, was renewed in 1713 and extended to Moravia. Thereafter, a range of decrees followed in these and the remaining regions, until 1782 when the new conditions were also enacted for Carniola. In many cases, these decrees were triggered by peasant upheavals (Dickson 1987/vol.1: 119-120, 124-126; Rosdolsky 1992: 2-4; Bruckmüller 2001: 203, 206; Ingrao 2000: 187).

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, reforms were taken much further. The main aim of these reforms was to redirect peasant surplus from landlords to the state as a way to increase the state's military and financial position in the international arena. Another key target was to increase agricultural productivity, for both fiscal and general economic reasons. While the latter aspect is an undeniable influence of cameralism, other aspects of agricultural reform, in particular tax reform, were also informed by the ideas of physiocracy (Rozdolski 1961: 16, 91, 107-108).

Galicia was made part of this reformist process in the 1770s: In 1775, feudal consumption and production privilege was reduced, and additional, so-called “auxiliary,” labor services were restricted (Rosdolsky 1992: 69-70). Serfdom reforms were particularly far-reaching in the 1780s, during the Josephinist reform period, when the *robot* decree of 1782 increased the personal freedom of serfs, who were now granted free marriage and the freedom to choose an occupation, while in 1781 labor services had been cut to three days per week for so-called “full peasants”

(*Vollbauern*). At the same time, stricter monitoring by state officials was introduced (Bruckmüller 2001: 205; Rosdolsky 1992: 112, 126-127, 138).

In the years that followed, reforms continued to redefine personal and property relations between peasants and estate owners: Additional duties in kind and labor services were abolished (1784, 1786), and the serfs' position concerning the disposal of the land they rented was improved (1785, 1787, 1789). In addition, labor services and taxes were compulsorily monetized in 1789, which brings to the fore the state's own interest in the triangle formed by peasants, landlords and the state itself. However, the agricultural tax reform enacted in 1789/90 in order to redirect some of the landlords' profits into the state's coffers, failed immediately due to the opposition of estate owners (Bruckmüller 2001: 206-207; Rozdolski 1961).

In contrast with Bohemia and Austria, in Galicia orientalist etiquettes were behind both the state's attempts to transform the labor regime based on forced labor into a system based on monetized labor, and the landlords' resistance to the reform. During the 1770s and 1780s, bureaucrats labeled Galician serfs "slaves," and claimed that they were exploited by "tyrannical" and "despotic" landlords and estate managers; the peasants were "stupid," "fatuous" and "barbarians," and had a tendency to "oafishness" and "drunkenness." This orientalist vocabulary derived not only from cameralist categories, which classified the productive potential of the population, but also followed cameralist ideas. The reduction of oppressive labor services and taxes (both in kind and money) was seen as a fundamental step toward the improvement of the peasant economy, the result of which was expected to be more labor input and decreasing alcohol consumption (Kratter 1786/vol.1: 89, 158, 165, 170-173; vol.2: 133, 185; Rosdolsky 1992: 18, 25, 32).

In most cases, therefore, orientalist vocabulary supported cameralist reform agendas; the character of peasants was deemed to be amenable to correction, if the right legal reforms were introduced. However, the same language could be easily turned around and used for a conservative, essentialist agenda. Landlords, for example, set out quite different arguments. In 1773, Prince Betański wrote a report that stated that "the Polish peasant is by nature lazy and a malicious drunk," and that obligatory labor services was the only way to make him work (Rozdolski 1962/vol.2: 45). This interpretation was occasionally shared by high-ranking Habsburg officials in Galicia. In a report dated to July 1773, Governor Anton Count Pergen claimed that Galician peasants tended "by nature to maliciousness, fraud and laziness" and led a "life that is more brutish than human" (Rozdolski 1962/vol.2: 56). While the Galician administration maintained an ambiguous stance towards the Josephinist agricultural reforms, a succession of bad harvests in 1785 and 1787 delivered the pretext to openly question the reforms locally as they were causally linked to the reduction of labor services and feudal dues (Rychlikowa 1988: 110; Rychlikowa 1967: 45). Yet, occasionally officials detected a more worrying—for the landlords and the state—reaction from

the peasants. In 1787, the District Governor (*Kreishauptmann*) of Zamość in eastern Galicia, wrote a letter to the provincial governor in L'viv informing that peasants were "recalcitrant" and unwilling to carry out the still-binding labor services. This official blamed this behavior on peasants' "inborn and deeply rooted idleness" (Rozdolski 1962/vol.2: 235). The discursive shift between cameralist reformism and conservative orientalizing ascended up the administrative ladder, reaching the provincial governor's office in L'viv. Councilor Ernest Traugott Kortum, a supporter of reform, stated that the peasants were "Galician helots" whose "civilizing" had totally failed: "Like the wild man in the Southern Sea stared at the European ship, the Galician peasant stared at the present that his benign monarch had made him. [...] Fainéance, drunkenness and subservience to the Jew were his substitutes for elevated works" (Kortum 1790: 109). Here, peasants are portrayed as not capable of perceiving social change, a discourse that was embodied in a colonial analogy, while the narrative links this to a partially ethnicized vision of the Galician rural economy.

The essentialist reading of the characteristics of peasants was reinforced in the following years and decades, as previously noted in my discussion about the discourse that surrounded the nature of the workforce. In this sense, Bredetzky, while looking at fields in bloom near Krzeszowice, noted: "Here, nature explodes and rewards the little efforts (because the Pole shies away from big efforts) thousandfold" (Bredetzky 1809/2: 79). After the failure of the Josephinist tax reform had brought agricultural reforms to a standstill, the conservative orientalist perspectives on the peasantry prevailed and provided important support for the maintenance of the strict Galician and Hungarian serfdom regimes. Thus, an orientalist point of view on the characteristics of peasants ultimately shaped the state's perspective on property relations and conditioned the survival of an agricultural regime characterized by low productivity, slow growth, and broad social inequalities.

In contrast to trade and industrial policy, when it came to agriculture the interests of the center and peripheries were more mixed, and the state did not act merely as a representative of core zones, increasing or maintaining their competitive advantages over the Eastern peripheries in their role as consumer markets. The state actively pursued a policy that aimed to upgrade some territories and eliminate their typically peripheral, serfdom-based labor regimes, replacing them with wage-based systems such as those which operated in core areas. This was undeniably linked to a desire to redirect profits from the estate owners' coffers to the state's and, to a limited extent also the peasants' pockets. In this case, the orientalizing of landlords was linked to fiscal reforms. In the agricultural peripheries, estate owners managed to impose their anthropological interpretation over the discourse of social and institutional reform. The main reasons for this were the failure of reform to yield the desired short-term results to the detriment of the Josephinist agricultural tax reform project, and the French Revolution, which dealt a fatal blow to the

Josephinist reform project in 1789/90. Thus, legal regulation of agricultural labor regimes in the Habsburg periphery remained untouched until 1848. During this period, however, certain changes occurred in core areas, because from 1798 landlords and peasants could strike private contracts that transformed services in labor and kind into dues payable in cash.

### **Conclusion**

Within world-systemic configurations, the construction of images and stereotypes is an important discursive tool for the legitimization of the world order. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, ecclesiastical doctrines played a dominant role in imposing regional hierarchies and in justifying the unequal distribution of resources. After the Peace of Westphalia, the focus gradually shifted toward secular models. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this role was adopted by enlightened concepts based on taxonomical orders divided into clear categories, which were located between the extreme meta-categories of “civilization” and “barbarism,” even before the French Revolution hatched the liberal concept of equality. While post-1789 notions of class, race and gender limited this imperative of equality in practice, already the pre-1789 developmental perspectives were heavily determined by orientalist narratives. Orientalist interpretations were justifying unequal access to civil rights, social participation and wealth, long before the emergence of racist ideologies. The responsibility for development was thereby dumped on subaltern societies alone, while economic programs formulated in core areas often served their own interests, rather than those of the regions which should have been receiving assistance.

Economic growth in the Habsburg Monarchy during the 18<sup>th</sup> century led to more acute regional imbalances and an increasingly solid center/periphery structure. Cameralist economic policies, including custom, trade, industrial and infrastructural measures, were instrumental in this development but created a chasm between theory and practice, which was closed by the application of orientalist narratives. These were based in the aforementioned regional hierarchies, which in turn rested on the enlightened taxonomy of human development that ranged between “barbarism” and “civilization.” Different images, including analogies between Eastern European peripheries and colonies stand out as markers in mental maps of the center/periphery divide. These maps were the basic geocultural device for the allocation of resources and the design of institutional arrangements, which invariably favored the development of core areas to the detriment of peripheral regions, as reflected in customs policy. Customs and industrial policy clearly demonstrate that the state acted in order to secure the Bohemian and Austrian regions a competitive edge over the Eastern peripheries in export and import markets, although the state also supported a certain amount of proto-industries in a part of the periphery as long as it did not question the core’s hegemony. This underlines that the Habsburg internal orientalism created space for civilizing missions that did transfer resources to peripheral regions, although they remained within

the core/periphery-structure and did not challenge the division of labor but rather reaffirmed the existing arrangement.

Agricultural policy was much more complex and strove toward increasing productivity, owing to the need to increase the state's revenue and military potential for geopolitical ends. Galicia is a good example in which agrarian reforms based on orientalist discourses were from the beginning partially at odds with the peripheralization of the province brought about by Habsburg rule after its annexation in 1772. As the agrarian reforms in the Josephinist period demonstrate, however, this process was directed against the interests of peripheral elites, who aspired to preserve their region's status in order to maintain their social model of development, which is indicative of the entangled relationship between centers and peripheries, between dominants and subalterns. Regarding agriculture it was the political center that should reap important benefits from the transformation of the periphery's economy which explains the severe resistance against the Josephinist tax reform and its ultimate failure. From a long-term perspective, it has been stressed that geopolitical competition could trigger changes in a region's position in the international division of labor. At the same time, it becomes clear that it was impossible to transform only one element of the whole economic profile of a region, for example serfdom and forced labor, without addressing the whole socio-economic and political structure. The Josephinist reforms showed that legal reform has a limited ability to spur socio-economic changes.

Modernization has to be understood as a much broader social transformation, and the cameralist division of labor was soon confronted with its own internal contradictions. In the end, however, as Michael Hochedlinger (2009) has argued, the main drive of the Josephinist reforms was the fiscal pressure associated with the imperial geopolitical aims, which essentially boils down the problem to the need to build a strong army. Hochedlinger's reading of Dickson (1987) seems somewhat imprecise, and this leads him to ignore a whole range of other factors that also had an impact on social and economic policies, not least the most ambitious goals of the state's economic and social policy such as industrial, trade and agricultural reform measures. At any rate, in order to maintain or increase their income by pushing their rents up, members of the aristocracy also joined this process of transformation. The modernizing strategies implemented in Bohemia and Austria contrast sharply from the conservative practices based on large estates that prevailed in Galicia and most of the Hungarian provinces, which underlines the different patterns followed in the internal peripheries and the core areas. Also, merchants and bourgeois proto-industrial entrepreneurs played a decisive role, as did the international financial networks on which the Habsburg Empire's ability to wage war depended so much. In the end, imperial geopolitics and business networks were neatly intertwined and cannot be separated from one another as explanatory factors of the social and economic reforms introduced by the enlightened Habsburg rulers. Still, the internal cameralist division of labor played as crucial a role in this process as

external links; Habsburg core areas, Bohemia and Austria, upgraded their economic structures. The claims for an egalitarian and balanced economic development, evoked by the cameral sciences, were unviable in practice, and had to be cancelled by bringing into play orientalist practices. These shifted the focus from egalitarianism to the necessary persistence of inequalities unless the population involved met the prerequisites that this modernization process demanded.

### **About the Author**

Klemens Kaps, Ph.D. studied history in Vienna and Barcelona and received a Ph.D. from Vienna University in 2011. He worked as a post-doc researcher at Universidad Pablo de Olavide in Seville, and is currently employed as post-doc scholar at Vienna University, Department of Social and Economic History. His research interests focus on spatial disparities in Habsburg Central Europe between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the social and economic history of the Habsburg Monarchy in that period as well as the use of cultural images and stereotypes for developmental discourses and merchant networks in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Currently he is conducting a research project on merchant networks between Habsburg Central Europe and Global Markets in Spain between the Spanish War of Succession and the Congress of Vienna. His book *Ungleiche Entwicklung in Zentraleuropa. Galizien zwischen überregionaler Verflechtung und imperialer Politik* (Vienna, 2015) deals with economic development of the Habsburg province of Galicia in the long nineteenth century regarding interregional connections and imperial politics.

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