THE DE-METAPHORIZATION OF THE TERM 'EASTERN EUROPE' IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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Abstract. The article analyses the term 'Eastern Europe' as it is used in specialist texts. While the political concept has been extensively covered in academic literature, the term itself has not been dealt with. Eastern Europe is a western concept, invented, maintained and debated by western academics, journalists and commentators. It is commonly believed to be a cold-war term solely. Although it was known and used in western discourses much earlier than the post-World War II order, its heyday is generally linked with the cold war. The metaphorical aspect of the key concept has not been researched by metaphor scholars despite an enormous amount of attention paid by them to various political concepts in recent decades. This article synthesizes the linguistic behaviour of the key term. Its metaphorical character is diagnosed in various time periods. Decrease in its metaphorization has been observed thanks to a corpus-based analysis of relevant data.

Keywords: (conceptual) metaphor, (de-)metaphorization, discourse, domain, Eastern Europe, politics, international relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

In general, researchers agree that metaphor is ubiquitous in the language used to address international affairs (cf. Thornborrow 1993; Beer and De Landtsheer 2004; Marks 2011). The language of international relations is either "based on metaphors" (Marks 2004: 8) or is "replete with metaphors" (Shimko 2004: 200). It is not only the language used to address international affairs that is considered to be metaphorical, but foreign policy itself, has been claimed to be "metaphorical through and through" (Chilton and Lakoff 1995: 39). The discourse of international politics is metaphorical mainly by being deliberately metaphor*ized* by those who construct this discourse (cf. Twardzisz 2013). Metaphors may not be directly accessible, but purposefully hidden and as such need to be uncovered by the metaphor researcher.

The geographic malleability of Eastern Europe adds to its political and cultural fuzziness. For some scholars, Eastern Europe is not only a concept, but "a contested concept" (cf. Armour 2012: 2). As a cultural concept, it is claimed to have been "invented by philosophers and novelists in the eighteenth century" (Marc 2009: 147). As a political

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concept, it is maintained to be "really a product of the Cold War and Communism" (ibid.). Numerous uses of this term have generated multiple associations, connotations and themes, intricately complex, detailed and interrelated. The complexity of the concept is so profound that, as Plokhy (2011: 764) states, "[t]he world at large is understandably confused about the meaning of the term 'Eastern Europe'".

Understandably, the cold war made Eastern Europe a prominent category in the field of political theory and international relations. In fact, the concept is commonly ascribed to this period solely and understood as a cold-war term and nothing else. Given this, one would expect the concept to gradually disappear from public discourse soon after the end of the cold war. This, however, has not happened yet. Quite the opposite, even after the political changes were implemented in the region, interest in Eastern Europe shown by scholars from different fields did not wane (cf. Hupchick 1994: 44). In some respects, it was on the increase, at least for some fifteen years after the political changes of 1989–90 (cf. Svašek 2006: 2).

Specialist discourses have shown Eastern Europe as different from the West, in particular, Western Europe. The presentation of Eastern Europe as different from Western Europe has been conducted from the western viewpoint. Eastern Europe has been different from the West "in the imagination of the West" (Hoffman 1993: xi). Usually, the West remains an unmentioned reference point, while Eastern Europe constitutes the target of all comparison. Eastern Europe's otherness is built on a series of qualities which distinguish this region and the concept behind it from the West.

2. THE METAPHORIZED LANGUAGE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Not only is the language of international affairs metaphor*ical*, but it is also metaphor*ized*. In their conceptualizations of foreign affairs, scholars act as painters who produce their impressions of what they perceive. Such images are researchers' interpretations of reality rather than its blueprints. Evoking subjective images, analogies and comparisons between two conceptual domains is commonplace in the literature. The notion of conceptual domains is taken from Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Kövecses (2002) and other proponents of conceptual metaphor. Metaphors, in particular conceptual metaphors, have been found very useful in reducing problems stemming from the intrinsic complexity and dynamicity of the international realm. Metaphors have been found well suited to serve a useful role in ordering abstract concepts characteristic of this type of specialist discourse. The ordering of abstract concepts usually means simplifying them. For example, metaphors can "provide ways of simplifying complexities and making abstractions accessible", according to Semino (2008: 90). Furthermore, metaphors help us "understand problematic situations in terms of situations we understand and are familiar with", as pointed out in Chilton and Ilyin (1993: 9). For Thompson (1996: 187), metaphors employed in political contexts simplify and clarify the "confusingly complex". Even more metaphorically speaking, metaphors "clothe the intangible, giving life to abstractions" (ibid., p. 188). Simply put, metaphors are "simplifying conceptual devices", according to Chilton (1996: 32).

Generally, any bounded area of land, for example, *Kansas*, forms the concept of a container, as argued in Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 30). The reason for Kansas to be thought

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of as a container is that one can say, for example, *in* Kansas. Thus, any name designating a geographic entity preceded by the preposition *in* will be understood as a metaphorical container. Eastern Europe is no exception in this case.

Historically, Eastern Europe was conceptualized as a container for a different reason though. This goes back to the idea of containment made prominent in American foreign policy with the onset of the cold war. The idea originated in George Kennan's cable from Moscow and the X-Article in which Kennan argued for the necessity of enclosing the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence within certain boundaries. Communism, pictured as a contagious disease, should be kept inside the container-Eastern Europe, rather than allowed to spill all over the western world. In the post-World War II period, the container metaphor was used indiscriminately as a convenient and comprehensive model handling the totality of very often highly complex events taking place in the international arena.

3. THE METAPHORIZATION OF EASTERN EUROPE

The name Eastern Europe is not a metaphor in itself, but it participates in metaphorical language which makes it hard to divorce the key term from ubiquitous metaphor all around it. Eastern European otherness and its cold-war container-like associations are fundamentally metaphorical. The concept's metaphoricity shows through numerous mappings involving two domains of knowledge, apparently unrelated to each other. Take, for instance, the mapping between the domain of politics and the domain of cooking, as produced by Madeleine Albright (1991: 71), the Czech-born 64th US Secretary of State:

> United States policy toward Eastern Europe has not often been a front-burner concern. Twice in this century, issues simmering in the area have boiled over and scorched those near and far, but Americans have not had to expend much time and energy on the region.

The cooking domain is also activated in the cross-mapping with the former Soviet Union and its ethnic problems, as in: "The former Soviet Union remains a boiling cauldron of ethnic tensions that threaten to spill over into Eastern Europe" (Larrabee 1993: 9). In a different mapping, Eastern Europe is represented as a "laboratory", where tests on all kinds of abstract isms are conducted. The region is viewed as "a laboratory of neo-imperialism" in the post-World War II period. In the early 1980s, parts of Eastern Europe, Poland in particular, were referred to as "a laboratory for political change" Wandycz (1992: 10). The "laboratory" metaphor has led to an erroneous view of the expected effects of the political changes taking place in the region in 1989–90. Eastern Europe is presented as "a laboratory in which a set of experiments are being undertaken under less than controlled conditions" (Jowitt 1992: 208). At the time, the experiments were expected to be unsuccessful in the long run though.

Eastern Europe's terminological rival – Central Europe – has been mapped onto the domain of zones or "belts". In the interwar period, it was assimilated to a "sanitary cordon", separating Russia from Germany. During the cold war period, Central Europe was conceptualized as a metaphorical "battlefield" between NATO and the USSR with its satellite countries (Šabič and Drulák 2012: 3). In the nineties, Eastern European countries

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were thought of as vessels on a voyage towards EU membership, as in: "For the new states the journey to EU membership involved a voyage through unchartered waters. It required skilled navigation with a variety of different captains at the helm" (Ó Beacháin et al. 2012: 8). Although the choice of metaphorical domains seems to be unlimited in theory, some regular patterns of domain groupings can be detected. The themes below designate regular domain groupings.

3.1. Eastern Europe as a backward entity

Historically, Eastern Europe has been seen by the West as backward. The idea of Eastern Europe as backward stems from the western perception of Western Europe as advanced. More broadly, Eastern European backwardness is reflected in the universal asymmetric perception of some regions as central and others as peripheral. For example, the "backyard" metaphor has reportedly been found in politicians' accounts of US relations with Central and South America (cf. Shimko 2004: 211–12).

Scholarly accounts of East European backwardness can become quite metaphorical. The notion of Eastern Europe occupying some periphery, as opposed to Western Europe taking the central position, evokes the metaphor of more and less privileged areas in Europe (Gökay 2001: 2). Many western historical sources resort to metaphors in their accounts of eastern backwardness (Kenney 2006: 141; Paloff 2014: 690). For instance, eastern backwardness has been presented in the form of "an old stagecoach", compared with "a new express train", symbolizing western advancement (Berend 1998: 3). Eastern Europe's backwardness is metaphorically pictured as "a living folk museum, where antique objects, customs and old-fashioned people can be observed" (Marc 2009: 75).

Eastern Europe has been described as predominantly rural and agrarian in probably all historical accounts. Thus, another symbolization of Eastern European nations depicts them as poor peasants standing outside a rich mansion where "a lavish dinner" is being served for Western European leaders (cf. Zarycki 2014: 8–9). Eastern European backwardness does not have to be viewed as a negative feature of the region. The idea of Eastern Europe as "a living folk museum" has been re-interpreted as "a demonstration of appreciation for past traditions" and an opposition to western consumerism (Marc 2009: 75). Still, the generally pejorative quality of backwardness ascribed to Eastern Europe has had a long tradition.

The metaphorical backwardness of Eastern Europe has been sanctioned by numerous historical and economic accounts in which the region is presented as poor, or poorer than the western part of Europe. Even in the twenty-first century, the notion of the new EU member states from Eastern Europe as poor and mostly rural is still valid.

3.2. Eastern Europe as a temporal entity

Though rarely explicitly stated, Eastern Europe is always tied to a particular period of time. Researchers refer to this concept as if it belonged to a given period or was somehow characteristic of it. Prior to this period or after it is over, the key concept may not matter or may vanish into thin air. The usual temporal designations are commonly marked with the prefixes *pre-* and *post-*. It is customary to invoke "postcommunist Eastern Europe"

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or "the precommunist past" of Eastern Europe (Brown 1994: 25). The cold war, with its fuzzy beginning and end, is a prototypical temporal reference point for Eastern Europe. Similarly, *pre-* and *post-* are used with the cold war, as in *pre-cold war Eastern Europe*, *post-cold war Eastern Europe* or simply *cold-war Eastern Europe*. Besides, restrictive readings of the term are achieved through numerous other temporal expressions, such as (the Eastern Europe of) *the Middle Ages*, *the eighteenth century*, *the second half of the nineteenth century*, *the 1990s* et cetera.

The year 1989 is decisive for the concept of Eastern Europe. Christened as *annus mirabilis* 'a year of miracles' or 'a miraculous year', 1989 is metonymic in more ways than one. The prefixes *pre-* and *post-* are also exploited with 1989 when anchoring Eastern Europe to a narrower period of time. The semantic wealth of the 1989 historical landmark in combination with the key concept provides unlimited access to multiple domains of knowledge about Eastern Europe. The year 1989 itself, with Eastern Europe in the background, is a metaphor when it is referred to as "a watershed" (Falk 2003: 1). This historical point metaphorically served as "an elementary signpost" and "a basic orientation point" for innumerable individuals lost "in the chaos of the running waters of time" (Kopeček 2008: vii).

3.3. Communism and related isms as fragile constructions

Eastern European communism is by far the most common lexical cluster in academic discourse involving the key term. The abstract noun *communism*, like many others in *-ism*, escapes rigorous characterization. In Eastern European contexts, it is often replaced with other isms, such as *socialism*, *totalitarianism* or *authoritarianism*. Abstracts like *communism* require a metaphorical source domain which provides a tangible object facilitating the processing of the former. Communism, or any of its contextual incarnations, combines with the concept of a structure or building. Discursively, such structures "collapse", "crumble", "fall" or otherwise experience "cracks", "demise", "decline", come to an "end", "implode", "decay" or suffer from other conditions. Take an example of a relevant metaphorical mapping involving Eastern European communism: "collapse of Communist power in Eastern Europe" (Stern 1998: 3). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), *collapse* (v), in its literal sense, designates:

> falling together, as the sides of a hollow body, or the body itself, by external pressure or withdrawal of the contents, as when an inflated bladder is pierced; falling into a confused mass or into a flattened form by loss of rigidity or support; breaking down, giving way, falling in, caving in; shrinking suddenly into a smaller volume, contract

Moreover, in figurative extensions, the verb connotes: 'breaking down, coming to nothing, failing; losing force suddenly'. By far, *collapse* is the most frequently used verb combining with synonyms of Eastern European communism. A few other verbs designating the physical disintegration of objects are also found in relevant contexts: "the Soviet Empire began to crumble" (Porter 2010: 1) or "Communism fell in Eastern Europe" (Brown 2001: 39). According to the OED, crumble (v) means 'breaking down into small

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crumbs; reducing to crumbs or small fragments'. The point is that communism associated with Eastern Europe has been metaphorically related to physical constructions whose existence came to an end around the year 1989.

This is not to say that more literal expressions are not used. The noun *end* is very common with Eastern European communism, as in "the end of communism (in Central Eastern Europe)" (Batt 2002: 8; Romano 2014: 64). In other cases, further metaphorical constructions seem to be preferred by different scholars or commentators. For example, Fukuyama (1992: 35) writes about the "failure of totalitarianism in Eastern Europe". Thatcher (2011: 768) refers to "cracks in the eastern European communist system". The deterioration or worsening of whatever kind is visible in "communism's decline" (Brown 2001: 85) or "ideological, political, and economic decay of the communist system" (Rupnik 2000, abstract). A more specific category of metaphor, personification, can be detected among the following uses: "overthrow of communism in eastern and central Europe" (Thatcher 2011: 790) or "the Cold War, and communism, lost out to democracy" (Kenney 2002: 2). The former makes direct reference to a person or a group of people "cast down from a position of influence, prosperity, etc." (OED). The latter alludes to someone who is "unsuccessful, failing" (OED). In each case, a more sophisticated and fragile construction – a human being – is conceived of and mapped onto the abstract domain of Eastern European communism. At its far end, the personification of Eastern European communism enters the final stage of its existence, as in: "demise of the Soviet bloc" (Janos 2001: 221). Beyond this point, one can refer to the metaphorical "ashes of communism" (Kürti 2002: 294), as the result of the total annihilation of the structure.

3.4. Eastern Europe as an object to be turned around

Scholarly discourse on Eastern Europe towards the end of the 1980s exploits the word *revolution*(*s*) to some extent. The political and economic changes taking place across the region in 1989 and the following years have been unanimously dubbed as revolutions or revolutionary. According to the OED, the meaning of the noun *revolution* is basically related to 'the action or an act of moving in a circular course or around some point; a completed cycle of motion of this kind, a circuit'. From there, more specific meanings have been derived, for example 'the apparent movement of the sun, a constellation, the firmament, etc., around the earth'. In technology, the reference is to 'movement of a wheel, fan, etc., around an axis or centre; rotation' or 'a single act of rotation round an axis or centre; a rotation'. Designations of a physical round movement have given rise to extended senses of 'alteration, change; upheaval; reversal of fortune' or 'a dramatic or wide-reaching change in conditions, the state of affairs' et cetera. More specifically, political contexts accommodate the narrow sense of 'overthrow of an established government or social order by those previously subject to it; forcible substitution of a new form of government'. The noun *revolutions* or the adjective *revolutionary* are frequent collocates of 1989 and Eastern Europe, as in: "democratic revolutions of 1989–91" (Batt 2002: 1) or "revolutions of the sort that occurred in Eastern Europe in 1989" (Fukuyama 1992: 280).

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3.5. Eastern Europe as a lost traveller returning home

The concept of a "return" has reverberated in western scholarly literature, especially in the last decade of the twentieth century. Commonly replaced by Central Europe, Eastern Europe was pushed aside by intellectuals from the region as a pejorative and unwanted label. The 1980s witnessed the rebirth of much forgotten Central Europe, mostly as a sign of disagreement with the stigmatizing term Eastern Europe. Attempts to replace Eastern Europe with Central Europe were instantly made. The "return to Europe" was accomplished by either Eastern Europe or Central Europe, depending on the viewpoint adopted in the debate. The return of the former meant foreignness or otherness of the eastern part of the continent seen from the western vantage point. The return of the latter suggested the coming back of a political actor absent from the European scene for some time. The return to Europe may have been performed by the blend of the two, namely, East Central Europe. The metaphor's controversial connotations have been commented on by scholars who interpreted the message rather literally. Bideleux and Jeffries (2007: 550) point out that the phrase is "misleading" as the states of Eastern Europe have "never really 'left' Europe". Snyder (2003: 290) adds to this that the slogan "was always an oxymoron", by stressing the fact that the Europe of 1989 was different from the Europe when communism was imposed in Eastern Europe. Intellectuals in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary objected to being pigeonholed as East Europeans. As Central Europeans in their opinion, they distanced themselves from East Europeans (cf. Porter 2010: 4). The expression "return to Europe" has stirred mixed feelings, mostly when taken literally. Metaphorically, the message makes sense when it assumes the entity Europe to be a moving object in need of being followed (cf. Batt 2002: 4). Also, the metaphorical message conveys the necessity to reconnect and reintegrate with "real" Europe, supposedly not plagued by communism and other isms (cf. Bideleux and Jeffries 2007: 550). The expression becomes acceptable once the two domains, that of Eastern Europe and the other of a lost traveller, are connected by mutual mappings.

3.6. Eastern Europe as a container full of other isms

The political, historical and cultural concept of Eastern Europe generates pejorative connotations. Above, one type of ism, related to communism, has been discussed. Academic and journalistic discourses provide further metaphorizations of the key concept which can be gathered under a few synthetic groupings.

In many accounts, pre-war and war-time Eastern Europe is characterized as anti-Semitic. At the same time, also in many accounts, Eastern Europe is described as home to Ashkenazi Jews fleeing unwelcoming Western Europe. Charges of East European anti-Semitism go as far back as the Middle Ages. The causes of modern anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe are traced to the second half of the nineteenth century, when Jews started filling gaps in certain sectors of the job market (cf. Berend 1998: 295). The alienness of East European Jews has been considered an East European issue. Their "otherness", due to their sporadic assimilation in Eastern Europe, is also believed to be the result of anti-Semitism. Post-war attributions of links between Jews and Stalinist Russia fuelled the threat of a "Jewish conspiracy", solidifying old biases. Two isms would have collapsed by equating anti-Semitism with anti-communism (cf. Brown 1994: 221).

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Nationalism, in its pejorative incarnation, is claimed to have surfaced in the 1990s. Extreme nationalism erupted in the Balkans with magnified force, causing bloody ethnic conflict. For many westerners, adopting an external vantage point, Balkan nationalism was simply an East European thing. From there, deliberate metaphorical expressions and conceptualizations follow almost automatically, such as equating Eastern Europe with "a complicated patchwork of nations" (Thatcher 2011: 790). The textual proximity of Eastern Europe and labels ending in *-ism* or *-ist* produces the schematic metaphorization of Eastern Europe as a bundle of these qualities. The congestion of such attributions as "extremist violence", "racist attacks" or "fascist legacies" surrounding Eastern Europe influences a one-sided view of this concept (cf. Kürti 2002: 293). Populism ascribed to Eastern Europe instantiates another pejorative category mapped onto the key concept.

Technically not an ism, bureaucracy constitutes a legendary incarnation of East Europeanness. Communism, or the communist system, is in most cases too abstract to comprehend, especially for those who have never experienced it. A convenient means of spelling out its intricacies is to portray it as a labyrinth of endless corridors symbolizing a soulless bureaucratic system. Behind the office doors papers are shuffled by "Kafkaesque party apparatchiks" (cf. Grzymała-Busse 2002: 4).

3.7. Eastern Europe as an entity requiring change

Towards the end of the twentieth century, it became the norm to refer to Eastern Europe as an entity which might be transferred into the sphere of Western Europe and/or the European Union. Interest in this transfer was mutual. It was coming both from the West and from the East. Eastern (and/or Central) Europe was in need of "integration", "incorporation" or "rapid transformation", as heard from many angles. What was desirable in the process for the West was to achieve some "stabilization of peace on the continent" and to build "its own production network" (Berend 2009: 2).

East European transition, through its frequent use in public discourse, became a fixed phrase which entered the political lexicons at the time. Eastern Europe, an undemocratic entity, was to be metaphorically transferred to the sphere of European democracy. Or else, Eastern Europe was to be transferred "from one international regime to another" (Janos 2001: 222), depending on the viewpoint adopted. Relative to particular countries, the transition process would have been qualified as either "slow" or "rapid". The metaphorization of Eastern Europe as a transferrable entity disclosed two fictive entities, that is two Eastern Europes. One was a more advanced Eastern Europe, while the other was a less developed one. The former would make "the most rapid transition to full democracy" (Fukuyama 1992: 112).

The metaphoricity of Eastern Europe is stronger when its metaphorization is carried out from a more distant vantage point. Once an internal East European viewpoint is adopted, Eastern Europe becomes more of a real entity. This is not to mean that a realistic view is impossible from outside, but an insider's view is more photographic due to the directness and proximity of what is being referred to as Eastern Europe. Once the western observer adopts an insider's vantage point, de-metaphorized and more or less realistic categories are evoked. It is not impossible for an outsider to invoke concrete referents, as in "the abduction, torture, and murder of a well-known Catholic priest" (Kenney 2002: 25). In the 1990s, it was not uncommon to see reports depicting people losing their jobs and "the

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closing of inefficient state factories", with very little metaphorization involved (Derleth 2000: 1). Earlier reports would surgically pinpoint realistic details, such as empty shelves, dilapidated infrastructure, food coupons or queues. Still earlier descriptions would invoke "the invading Soviet tanks" (Kenney 2002: 92).

4. TOWARDS THE DE-METAPHORIZATION OF EASTERN EUROPE

The results of the search of the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA), (Davies 2008–), confirm that Eastern Europe is still alive and kicking in the twenty-first century. Texts from two genres, "magazines" and "newspapers" (collapsed into one "journalistic" genre), covering the 1990–2012 period, still provide various instantiations of the key term. As for the frequency of use, Eastern Europe is by far more common than its rival – Central Europe.

Both names are recorded mostly in prepositional phrases (approx. 80% of all uses), resulting in locative meanings. Both names frequently combine with the prepositions *in*, *from* and *out of*, which vaguely suggest the metaphorical concept of a container (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Other prepositions recorded, such as *to*, *into*, *through*(*out*), *across* or *towards* require their objects to function as destinations. They can be subsumed under the metaphorical concept of a goal. Both concepts support strong geographic senses of Eastern Europe and Central Europe. The preposition *of* is also frequently used. Together with infrequently used Saxon genitive constructions, the concept of a possessor is also relatively common with both names. However, this metaphorical concept remains elusive. Eastern Europe and Central Europe are hardly ever perceived as fully-fledged owners.

Eastern Europe and Central Europe rarely act as metaphorical participants. The prepositions *for* and *with*, indicating beneficiaries and instruments, respectively, are relatively rare. The key names hardly ever act as passive-voice subjects. Transitivity of the verbs involved is very low. Most processes are instantiated by stative or linking verbs. Dynamic verbs have also been recorded, but they constitute a minority among all verbs used. The dynamicity of some verbs is intrinsically related with their metaphorical senses, such as *collapse*, *erupt*, *shift*, *sink*, *stumble*, *wake* (*up*) or *whirl* (*between*). Participants in such processes do not function as agents. Eastern Europe and Central Europe have been found in the position of an active-voice subject in 4–5% of all uses. As objects, the key names undergo processes, such as freeing, leaving, loosening, releasing or stabilizing. Also, they experience domination, occupation, subordination, subjugation and such like.

There are two general themes which characterize both terms: "post-1989 changes" and "under communism". A markedly higher number of occurrences of Eastern Europe has a bearing on a wider scope of contexts that this name covers in comparison with those clustered around Central Europe. Specifically, Eastern Europe is additionally characterized by the theme "fall of communism", which is absent from contexts typical for Central Europe. While sharing some features with Eastern Europe, Central Europe also displays unique associations, such as "location", "World War II" and "tourist destination" (for details, see Twardzisz 2018, 2020).

The metaphoricity of the key concept significantly decreases in the first two decades after the political changes of 1989. The disappearance of numerous associations characteristic of Eastern Europe in the previous decades is easily noticeable.

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4.1. Eastern Europe and Central Europe from 2013 to 2015

The search reported on above covers the years 1990–2012. Below, the results of the 2013–2015 search are presented. Scholars in the field of East European studies agree that Eastern Europe has undergone significant changes, even recently. According to Romano (2014: x): "the Central Eastern Europe of 2013 is considerably different from that of 1989 and 2004". It should come as no surprise that the conceptualization of the key category has changed too.

4.1.1. *Eastern Europe*

The COCA search item was "Eastern Europe" and it was sought across all five major genres: "spoken", "fiction", "magazines", "newspapers" and "academic". The search was conducted in March 2017. The total number of results obtained was 238. The highest result comes from "magazines" (76). The others are: "academic" (56), "newspapers" (50), "spoken" (45) and "fiction" (11). All the contexts retrieved were cleaned manually. Certain words were deleted and these were: articles, auxiliary and modal verbs, conjunctions, numerals (numbers), personal names, prepositions, pronouns (personal, relative, demonstrative) and quantifiers. Deletion was also applied to titles, abbreviations, acronyms and punctuation marks. Separately spelled complex words were put together to form one-word units. These were: phrasal verbs and complex names, such as Soviet Union, World War II, Cold War, Middle East, Central Europe and others.

All the remaining words were saved in a single Word file. The original Word file was converted to plain text format and uploaded to AntConc (Anthony). Next, a frequency list of words was compiled, consisting of 1,219 word types and 1,870 word tokens. The frequency of occurrence of lexical items ranged from 21 to 1. The items most commonly occurring with Eastern Europe (with two-digit numbers) are: Russia (21), Central Europe (14), Russian (13), Latin America (12), Middle East (11), not (10) and Soviet Union (10). Other (one-digit) common occurrences were primarily nouns and adjectives. Numbers of occurrences are given in brackets:

(8) children, communism, countries, former, military, Poland, Ukraine, war
(7) Africa, Europe, new, parts, people, Western, world
(6) China, especially, India, missile, more, NATO, part, security, states, years
(5) Asia, Cold War, country, German, Soviet

More commonly occurring verbs are:

adopt (7), bring (5), say (5), become (4), find (4), take (4), continue (3), have (3), lose (3), mean (3), move (3), put (3), say (3), seem (3), spy (3), use (3) and want (3)

Next, words collocating with Eastern Europe were established. A file containing all 238 contexts retrieved from COCA including the key term Eastern Europe was uploaded to AntConc. The concordance list for this item was established in the KWIC view. The goal of

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this search was to obtain a list of the most common collocates accompanying the term Eastern Europe either on its left- or on its right-hand side, up to five preceding or following items. By the most frequently occurring items are meant those words which were recorded three and above times in the proximity of Eastern Europe. The total number of collocate types was 793 and collocate tokens 2,399. All kinds of auxiliary words (pronouns, articles, conjunctions, determiners, adverbs etc.) were manually deleted. The following words were recorded both on the left- (before the slash) and on the right-hand side of Eastern Europe:

(1)	in	(136 / 27)	on	(9 / 4)
	of	(56 / 25)	Latin	(7 / 5)
	be	(22 / 39)	into	(5 / 6)
	from	(37 / 8)	Asia	(6 / 4)
	to	(24 / 21)	east	(3 / 6)
	central	(18 / 0)	middle	(3 / 5)
	with	(10 / 6)	part(s)	(5 / 3)
	Russia	(8 / 7)	western	(4 / 4)
	America	(7 / 7)	Russian	(3 / 4)
	for	(7 / 7)	up	(3 / 3)

The following list contains frequent collocates occurring only on the left side of Eastern Europe:

(2)	communism (7)	people (4)	domination (3)
	Africa (5)	southern (4)	ethnic (3)
	communist (5)	throughout (4)	find (3)
	countries (5)	troops (4)	liberation (3)
	missile (5)	war (4)	military (3)
	Ukraine (5)	world (4)	NATO (3)
	across (4)	against (3)	political (3)
	adopt (4)	collapse (3)	religion (3)
	children (4)	criminal (3)	states (3)
	immigrants (4)	defense (3)	

The following list contains frequent collocates occurring only on the right side of Eastern Europe:

(3)	have (13)	bring (3)	Putin (3)
	not (5)	gas (3)	say (3)
	at (3)	Poland (3)	Turkey (3)

The above data show that Eastern Europe is a stative entity, collocating with stative verbs. It is mainly a geographic term which commonly combines with prepositions indicating locations, destinations and so on. The term attracts proper names, such as Russia, America, Asia, Africa, Poland, Ukraine and Turkey. It collocates with abstracts, such as communism, armament, immigration, crime, ethnicity, religion, domination and such like. The topics repeatedly raised are: the conflict in Ukraine, military concerns (e.g., missile

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defence systems, US troops, NATO etc.), the past (e.g., World War II, Nazi occupation, the cold war) and a few minor ones. Attributing distinctive metaphoricity to Eastern Europe because it frequently appears in locative expressions seems to be far-fetched.

4.1.2. *Central Europe*

The search item was "Central Europe". The total number of results obtained was 51. The highest result comes from "academic" (20). The others are: "magazines" (15), "newspapers" (13) and "spoken" (3). The search item was not recorded in "fiction". A frequency list was obtained in AntConc, consisting of 401 word types and 477 word tokens. The frequency of occurrence of lexical items ranged from 8 to 1. Items with higher relatively frequencies are: Europe (8), US (6), Germany (4), not (4), southern (4), transition (4), Balkans (3), country (3), first (3), Hungary (3), new (3), people (3), time (3), travelling (3) and Ukraine (3).

Next, words collocating with Central Europe were established. A file containing all 51 contexts retrieved from COCA including the key term Central Europe was uploaded to AntConc. As above, up to five consecutive collocates occurring on both sides of Central Europe were retrieved. The total number of collocate types was 261 and collocate tokens 510. The results of this search are rather unrevealing. The numbers of occurrences of frequent collocates are relatively low. Also, several of the frequently occurring collocates are different kinds of auxiliary words, conveying very little semantic content. These function words (articles, pronouns, conjunctions, determiners, auxiliary verbs etc.) were removed from the list. The following list includes words which were recorded on the left- and the right-hand side of Central Europe:

(4)

Europe	(3 / 52)	Balkans	(1 / 2)
in	(16 / 6)	democracy	(2 / 1)
of	(15 / 1)	for	(2 / 1)
to	(8 / 6)	people	(2 / 1)
be	(2 / 10)	southern	(3 / 0)
from	(7 / 1)	culture	(2 / 0)
central	(2 / 3)	farming	(2 / 0)
with	(2 / 3)	Greece	(2 / 0)
on	(4 / 0)	years	(0 / 2)
transition	(2 / 2)		

Central Europe tends to combine with the copula verb *be* which makes it a stative and rather non-distinct entity. The prevalence of prepositions (*in*, *of*, *to*, *from* and *on*) indicates Central Europe's geographic and locational character. The proper names attracted are *Europe*, *Balkans* and *Greece*. From among words with lexical content, the following seem to gravitate towards the key name: *culture*, *democracy*, *farming*, *people* and *transition*. Most other words are once-only occurrences, which cannot contribute much to the overall semantic picture of Central Europe. Due to limited numbers of occurrences of the above words, it is hard to establish any prevailing type of vocabulary in the vicinity of Central Europe. The lexical material surrounding the key phrase does not determine any particularly dominating contexts.

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5. CONCLUSIONS

Eastern Europe has not disappeared from academic and media discourses in the twenty-first century. Its major rival, Central Europe, is still used across disciplines though to a lesser extent. The overall number of occurrences of the former has decreased, but its presence is still felt in English-language specialist texts. What has changed is the depletion of metaphors related to the concept of Eastern Europe. Compared to the second half of the twentieth century, the beginning of the twenty-first century witnesses a marked decrease in the metaphorization of the key concept. It remains mostly metaphor-free. At best, if metaphors are discerned, they must be deliberately installed in discourse. And this is rarely the case. It is possible to come across some remnants of the theme of "collapse of communism". However, quantitatively, this theme is no longer significant compared to its post-cold-war prominence.

It is impossible to compare the exact amounts of metaphor in discourses on Eastern Europe before and in the twenty-first century. The results of comparisons of such "global" discourses must be based on impressions rather than pure statistics. In this study, the distinction between "deliberate" versus "non-deliberate" use of any form of metaphor has been sidelined (cf. Steen 2013). Attention has been paid to any form of figurative language use, that is, any lexical departure from the basic literal sense of a given expression. Metaphor identification has been limited to the conscious detection of any amount of coercion between the basic meaning and extended meaning of a given expression. The amount of semantic coercion in expressions with Eastern Europe is very low among the data covering the years 2013–2015. For example, locative expressions like *in Eastern Europe*, prevalent in recent discourses, are not convincing cases of metaphorical expressions (cf. Lakoff and Johnson's 1980 conceptual metaphor of containment). In general, language users do not recognize such expressions as metaphorical instantiations. Similarly, possessive expressions, such as *of Eastern Europe* or *Eastern Europe's*, do not normally instantiate the metaphorical possessor.

Depending on the particular theoretical view of what constitutes metaphor, researchers will argue over the classification of particular instances as either metaphors or literal expressions. Bypassing such theoretical debates, an effort has been made to compare amounts of alleged metaphor in two time periods. Stark disproportion in the saturation of the respective discourses with metaphorical use has been shown.

The term Eastern Europe, as used in the twenty-first century, appears to be more straightforward (or literal) than its twentieth-century equivalent. The former participates in relations and processes via their basic, unadulterated meanings. The latter resorts to more distant and deviant senses of words accompanying it, compared to what is being observed at present. This does not mean that today the term Eastern Europe has lost its pejorative sense. However, its negative senses are expressed increasingly more directly, rather than indirectly.

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