

# European Regions and Boundaries

## European Conceptual History

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# European Regions and Boundaries

*A Conceptual History*



Edited by  
Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi



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# Introduction

*Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi*



The last three decades, marked by the collapse of the Cold War division of Europe and the accession of more than a dozen new member states to the European Union after 2004, have had a powerful impact on the study of regions and regionalism. The growing research interest in supranational and subnational regional frameworks was an important venue of innovation, even if these discussions were mainly taking place in political science (with a focus on the institutional structures of cooperation “above” and “below” the nation-states) and in cultural history, where the rekindled interest in so-called nonnational historical spaces of interaction naturally pointed to the issue of multiethnic/transnational regions as specific *lieux de mémoire*. In a broader sense, all of this fits into a spatial turn in the social sciences, and to a certain extent also in the humanities, manifest in the growing interest in territoriality, landscape, and cartography, the introduction of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in various disciplines, and the rise of urban studies and environmental history. Similarly, the last decades have brought an interest in developing new frameworks of historical research that could provide a common intellectual and methodological framework for scholars coming from different national and linguistic contexts. One of the most important developments along these lines was the collective effort to devise a nonnationally based conceptual history, a branch of historiography that has traditionally been rather nation-centered due to its concern with particular vernaculars and semiospheres.

An important incentive for studying regionalizing concepts historically originated with the assertive spatial turn in neighboring disciplinary fields.<sup>1</sup> While theorists of history, among others, have contributed to it by fleshing out the notion of mental mapping, it was geographers, anthropologists and economists who under-

cut the “container” and “natural-scientific” concept of space, emphasizing instead the social production of spatial frameworks.<sup>2</sup> Rather than assuming that space exists independently of humans and that historical processes unfold within it as in a closed vessel and are even predetermined by it, present-day theorists conceive of it as the product of human agency and perception, as both the medium and presupposition for sociability and historicity. Crucial to this understanding of space is not so much its material morphology as the premises of its social production, its ideological underpinnings, as well as the various forms of interpretation and representation that it embodies.<sup>3</sup>

Our aim in this volume, resulting from a long-term international research collaboration hosted by the *Center for Advanced Study Sofia* and generously funded by the *Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft*, is to bring in the methodological and thematic innovation of the spatial turn to the discussion on a trans-European conceptual history focusing on mesoregional terminologies and discourses. The volume is based on a focus-group investigation of an overarching topic: *how European transnational historical (meso)regions have been, and are being, conceptualized and delimited over time, across different disciplines and academic traditions, in different fields of activity and national/regional contexts*. It seeks to reconstruct the historical itineraries of the conceptualization of regional frameworks and their frontiers in relation to political, historical, and cultural usages or discursive practices.

Going beyond the usual taxonomic focus on the different regional units, the volume is organized in two parts: *European mesoregions* (part I) and *Disciplinary traditions of regionalization* (part II). The units of investigation are conceptual clusters rather than individual concepts: for example, Central Europe, East Central Europe, Danubian Europe; or the Balkans, Southeastern/Southeast Europe, Turkey-in-Europe; or Scandinavia, Norden. While the contributors focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century usages, earlier registers of a given concept are also taken into account.

Chapters are structured in view of several major directions of analysis:

- The cultural, academic and political contexts of the use of a given regional terminology
- The morphology of the conceptual clusters used for regionalizing the European space
- Boundaries and delimitations
- Discourses of othering and counter-concepts.

Attention has been paid not only to local usages and regionalist discourses, but also to cross-regional conceptualizations and the occurrences of cross-references in different conceptual clusters (e.g., the usage of the Balkans as

a counter-concept in Central European discourses, or of Western Europe in Eastern and Southern European discourses, or the Baltic in Scandinavian discourses and the other way around). Thus the volume goes beyond the local practices of regionalization, and seeks to reconstruct internal and external regionalizing practices, also paying attention to the different logic of conceptualization characteristic of various disciplinary traditions. Such an approach allows us to temporalize our spatial terminology, and, in turn, analyze the ways historical change is encapsulated by spatial categories.

Spatial categories have a historicity which is not apparent, as their users tend to naturalize them. In this sense, the conceptual historical perspective relativizes these notions and opens them up for a more reflective historical usage. Becoming aware of the historical contingency of spatial terminology also contributes to questioning the underlying assumptions of national historical cultures based on the purported naturalness of space. Regions thus do not emerge as objectified and disjointed units functioning as quasi-national entities with fixed boundaries and clear-cut lines between insiders and outsiders, but rather as flexible and historically changing frameworks for interpreting certain phenomena.

Normative political and cultural presumptions have spurred regionalization since antiquity: while the principal spatial axis of antiquity was the East–West one, in the late medieval and early modern periods the division of Europe into a “civilized” South and a “barbaric” North became prevalent. This was eventually remodeled to a tripartite scheme containing a moderate middle region between the northern and southern extremes, while the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the return of a strongly normative East–West divide. Religious divides (Catholic Latin, Protestant Germanic, and Orthodox Greco-Slavic), often underscored by racial ones, have been similarly powerful engines of cultural-spiritual regionalizations. The great transition in the spatialization of historical experience, however, coincided with the advent of the era of high modernity and found its original form in the post-Enlightenment logic of organizing knowledge along civilizational dividing lines. Temporal terms—such as development, progress, conservatism, stagnation, or delay—acquired spatial embeddedness, and spatial terms—such as the East, the West, the North, the South, as well as center, periphery, borderlands, or just “the lands beyond”—became historical terms. It was this peculiar merging of cultural-historical and spatial imaginations that inspired a new symbolic map of Europe, whose taxonomic (and hierarchically graded) units cut across the administrative boundaries of empires and nation-states, as well as the cultural boundaries of religion.

These considerations lead to questions concerning the premises and understanding of regions with regard to three historical periods. The first is

the era dominated by multinational empires and composite states. The second era is marked by the principle of sovereign statehood and nationality. Importantly, supranational regions evolved parallel to the consolidation of the nation-state as the European norm. An improved conceptual apparatus is needed to make sense of the implications of this historical convergence and of the complex and varied patterns of spatiality production beyond territorially demarcated and institutionally integrated political entities. The third is the more recent situation of undermined nation-state power, (re)emergence of old or new territorialities (hence insider-outsider definitions) and spatially related identities.

Specific branches of spatializing Europe related to regionalization (with macro-, meso- and microversions) bring in various conceptualizations. One is that of territorial versus nonterritorial (e.g., “spiritual-cultural,” metaphoric) regions and borders; a second refers to alternative concepts of national space (e.g., federalist or pan-ideologies); a third is the conceptualization of delimitations (discourses about where a given region “ends,” the metaphors of in-betweenness); and a fourth involves the discourses of othering through spatialization (Orientalism, Occidentalism, Balkanism, etc.). Needless to say, these aspects have a different logic and are subject to different research traditions. Therefore, our intention is to focus on mechanisms of conceptualizing regions while placing them in the broader framework mentioned above. In this context we have to take into account the close relationship between regional, imperial, and national conceptualizations, since many nineteenth- and twentieth-century nation-building projects were framed as imperial or federalist, like Russia or Germany, and hence comprised several regions.

Regional categories are far from being stable, and various intellectual and political projects have devised different, partially overlapping, regional frameworks. The geographical coverage of concepts like Central Europe/*Mitteleuropa*, Eastern Europe/*Osteuropa*, Southeastern Europe/*Südosteuropa*, Southern Europe, or Western Europe/the West changed dramatically over time, and these notions often designated parallel scholarly ventures stemming from various political, academic, and disciplinary subcultures. Its new currency notwithstanding, the Eurasian idea, **Mark Bassin** tells us in his study, remains highly fragmented and unstable, which makes it impossible to talk about the particular contents of the idea and moves the discussion toward distinct contemporary incarnations of Eurasia. Thus, despite their strong affinities in the economic sphere, Putin’s and Nazarbaev’s “Eurasianisms” convey divergent (geo)political and ideological connotations. In the longer run, the same is true of the notions of Western Europe and the West, developed as much in the peripheries as in the center, a fact that **Stefan Berger**’s chapter throws into sharp relief.

The plurality of meanings of these regional notions is due not only to the cultural and political multiplicity of users but also to the variety of loci where regionalization is actually produced. The main sources of conceptualization which, for analytical purposes, can be isolated are academic circles, policy makers and expert communities, international organizations, and the media. Thus, after the 2004–07 accession phase, the Western Balkans became salient in international relations as a security-related and, to some extent, financial-administrative concept in the vocabulary of the EU, but one with no presence in the social sciences and very limited use in local public discourses. In contrast, as **Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas** points out, Iberia has implied very little in the way of a common political agenda, as it remained mainly an externally generated and noninstitutional notion. Southern Europe, **Guido Franzinetti** argues, has also remained a fragile, underconceptualized construction, whose sole relatively consequential incarnation was in post-World War II social sciences. It presents an exceptional case, among those discussed in this collection, of a largely failed conceptualization, despite the availability of favorable prerequisites at certain historical junctures. The metaphoric function of the Mediterranean, the Balkans, or Western Europe, on the other hand, have made these regions experience “an excess of discursiveness” and deterritorialization.

Most mesoregional geographical terms emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century and were the products of the rise of “scientific geography” and the search for “natural” geographic boundaries. They soon migrated to, and in turn were informed by, other disciplinary fields: ethnography, linguistics, literature, history. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, all these scholarly concepts had been imbued with strong political meanings, especially in their external usage, usually assimilating previous geopolitical connotations. A case in point is the Baltic (see **Pärtel Piirimäe**’s text), which crystallized into a political notion gradually, shifting its reference from the premodern and German-dominated Baltic provinces to the three national entities (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and eventually becoming a geopolitical entity in Cold War parlance on both sides of the Iron Curtain (as the victims of “illegitimate Soviet expansionism” and as *Pribaltika*, a specific cultural and economic region of the USSR, respectively). The politicization of regional terminology within the regions themselves also had its own specific logic, partly responding to the geopolitical challenges of imperialism, but mostly providing a frame for various nationalist or federalist strategies, as is conspicuously the case with the Balkans, the Baltics, and Norden/Scandinavia.

Scholarly regionalizations thus became, as a rule, politicized, and many so-called scientific classifications served, tacitly or bluntly, political agendas. For much of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, the partitions of Eu-

rope by political geography and geopolitics, as **Virginie Mamadouh** and **Martin Müller** demonstrate, were (almost by default) political acts where discrete state interests played the central role. Thus *Mitteleuropa* was not just the German translation of Central Europe—it was coextensive with the German sphere of interest, as pre–World War I Slavic Europe was with the Russian sphere of influence. These two instances point to another source of politicization: the recurrent fusion of regionalist and nationalist designs, which might be played out in the fields of politics, economy, or culture. Indeed, there is no clear-cut difference, but a complex relationship between the conceptualizations of the national and the regional. Nationalist arguments may be adduced to buttress—and give meaning to—a regionalist framework, and the identification of a supranational region may serve to bolster a nationalist project. A good example is Russian “Eurasianism,” which was integrated into the framework of post-Soviet Russian nationalism even though originally it offered an alternative spatial framework to it. An even more striking instance of politicization is that of the demographic Hajnal line, separating family patterns, which became an ideological tool in Estonia in the context of the country’s struggle for emancipation from Soviet dominance.

Due to its comparative logic and tendency to organize data in terms of regional subsets, national economics in the late nineteenth century also contributed to the remapping of Europe in terms of regions. Furthermore, supra-national ideologies were emerging in entangled ways: despite their divergent logic and dynamism, pan-Germanism, pan-Slavism and pan-Scandinavianism may serve as another set of eloquent examples, throwing into full relief these concepts’ inherently relational, mutually-conditioned meanings.

This drive for politicization does not mean, however, that public and scholarly regionalist discourses and concepts necessarily overlap. Politicians and the media, on the one hand, and academics, on the other, often operate with the same regionalist terminology, but their semantics are rarely identical. The agents of the imperialist geopolitical visions of the Mediterranean in the interwar period collided conspicuously with the idea of a common Mediterranean homeland and humanist essence that contemporary French intellectuals and academic institutions espoused. In our own day, the (politically-driven) regionalism of the EU draws on a completely different set of so-called structural similarities from that employed by historians, ethnographers, social and even political scientists. But academic concepts may also be contingent on popular culture and the market. The integration of the Mediterranean in the world tourist market, **Vaso Seirinidou** tells us, has transformed academic Mediterraneanism into a mass consumption commodity. Political, popular, and scholarly regionalizations, in brief, interact and amalgamate in many ways and on different levels, but this interaction is not tantamount to complete

conformity (or opportunism/mimicry on the part of academia) nor should it blind us to the inherent politics of the scholarly concepts themselves.

Conceptualizations emerging inside and outside of the regions in question interact in similarly intricate ways, while the outcome rarely signifies a clean victory for either. Local regionalizations to some extent mirror, but do not replicate the external ones. Eastern Europe presents an extreme case in this respect, for, as **Frithjof Benjamin Schenk** argues, it has always been almost exclusively a term denoting an “other” and “foreign” geographical, political, and cultural space. As a historiographic concept originating in interwar debates within the region, however, it has enjoyed a long and prolific life. Conversely, for much of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, Western Europe had not been a popular term of self-description, but served as ubiquitous terms of reference in Central and Eastern Europe. Whereas the external understandings of the North drew largely from the mythology of the exotic, the construction from within of a Nordic region evolved around the (shifting) semantics of two key concepts of Norden and Scandinavia (see the contribution by **Bo Stråth** and **Marja Jalava**). As intraregional and extra-regional (geo)political agendas diverged considerably, so did the justification and vocabulary of regionality. The fluctuation of natural and cultural markers is a case in point: certain regional projects operated mainly by drawing natural boundaries (mountain chains, rivers), while others put the emphasis on language, religion, or shared political-institutional experience.

There are thus parallel external or internal processes of conceptualization that are not necessarily connected or commensurate. An extremely complex case is that of the émigré communities and centers, which often acted either as bridges between external and internal regionalizations or as autonomous regionalizing agents. A case in point is the Baltic exile community during the Cold War, which sought to present a common regional agenda; the individual nations were hardly visible on the symbolic map of Western societies, but sticking to the common label of Baltic states made it possible to keep the memory of Soviet aggression alive.

As for the epistemic background of these regionalizing discourses, different disciplines participated with different force at different points of time in producing regionalities. Up to the mid-nineteenth century, geography was crucial for the emergence of mesoregional subdivisions in Europe, and in the early twentieth century (especially German) geopolitics became a matrix of regionalization. Linguistics became increasingly important from the second half of the nineteenth century, reaching a central position in conceptualizing such regional frameworks as the Balkan *Sprachbund* at the turn of the century, which at the turn of the twenty-first century morphed into a new conception of a *European Sprachbund* (see **Uwe Hinrichs**’ chapter). Historiography has

contributed and, as **Stefan Troebst** shows, continues to contribute substantially to the (re)conceptualization of European regions, including of Europe itself. Demography, on the other hand, which experienced a boom in the mid-twentieth century contemporaneous with that of social history, has by now abdicated its earlier aspirations to conjure up regionalizing models (see **Attila Melegh**'s contribution). Similarly, while art history and comparative literature have been concerned with "spacing" Europe in order to localize certain cultural products in view of the milieu shaping them, these disciplines have rarely operated with a coherent mesoregional model of Europe. They did, however, eventually work with a Western/non-Western divide, while retaining some specific regional references for certain groups of countries in the semiperiphery of the West (most commonly Scandinavia, Central Europe, and the Balkans) and often taking Russian culture as a "significant other" of the West (see the studies by **Eric Storm** and **Alex Drace-Francis**). By contrast, the post-1989 restructuring of European economic space has produced, as **Georgy Ganev**'s chapter indicates, an abundance of metaphorically framed regions in an attempt to capture the dynamics of a "multispeed Europe."

Based on our investigations, it is possible to identify a number of common features of the conceptual history of regional terms. Importantly, these terms tend to form part of regionalizing discourses, which means that they usually do not occur individually, but constitute a complex cluster of concepts. This is clear if one looks at, for instance, the extremely complex set of notions around the concepts of the Balkans/Southeastern Europe/and *Südosteuropa*; Western Europe/the West/Europe or *Mitteleuropa*/*Zwischeneuropa*/East Central Europe/the Masarykian "New Europe," or the "Other Europe" of the 1970s and 1980s. Tracing the shift of connotations and adjacent concepts over time, as well as the different local usages and cumulative traditions of usage, makes it possible to historicize these regional keywords and point to the wide variety of often conflicting meanings that they assumed.

On the whole, we found three main clusters of constitutive elements in these regionalizing discourses: physical and anthropogeographic conditions framing regions as "natural formations"; structures, institutions, and mentalities resulting from history/legacies/culture, which describe regions as cultural-historical spaces; and (geo)political designs and alignments, which frame regions as political concepts. Of course, this is above all an analytical distinction, and often these clusters merge. Eurasia could stand for the combined Euro-Asiatic landmass, for a zone marked by *longue durée* patterns of social and commercial interaction, and for the post-Soviet geopolitical or economic space.

Counter-concepts proved equally crucial in structuring regionalist discourses. This also confirms our intuition about the relational character of



concepts: one regional concept is defined vis-à-vis another, not necessarily a counter-concept but often an adjacent one (e.g., Central/Southeastern Europe; Eastern/Central Europe; Eurasia/both Europe and Asia; Baltic/Scandinavia; Levant/Mediterranean). This typically implies cross-regional conceptualizations, on the one hand, and, on the other, certain overlapping or intermediate/contested zones. Such conceptual interrelationships are crucial in the case of the formation of regional concepts, such as the West, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, which are actually framed more from the outside than from the inside. Here attention is due to the mutual reinforcement or, conversely, the “mirroring”/counterpoising of such internal and external spatial constructions. It is also remarkable that sometimes the same notion can be part of the cluster and a counter-concept: Southeastern Europe in certain periods could function as complementary and in others as a counter-concept to the Balkans. The same applies for Central Europe, East Central Europe, and *Mittleuropa*, which could be used both as overlapping and contrasting notions (see **Diana Mishkova’s** and **Balázs Trencsényi’s** studies, respectively).

A central mechanism of regional conceptualizations, as in the case of other spatial categories, is based on inclusion and exclusion. This does not mean that concepts could by default be inclusive or exclusive, but that they have both sides and yield to different discursive/political moves delimiting the political community. All this presents an opportunity to rethink the framework of the practice of conceptual history. Looking at spatial concepts, we can understand better how different layers of discourse are created by different communities of knowledge production, how in different orders of discourse we find different conceptual temporal layers, how transnational conceptualization—transcending discrete linguistic and political communities—operates, and, finally, we can obtain a more theoretically informed picture of the way regionalist terminologies are being politicized and ideologized. In this respect, conceptual history and the constructivist paradigm in political geography (and critical geopolitics) present a common epistemological ground, where they fruitfully interact.

Looking at the temporal horizons of the conceptualization of regions, one can identify a number of momentous conceptual transformations (*Sattelzeiten*). Thus, in the early nineteenth century, we find a protoconceptual stage: notions without consistency or concepts without the corresponding notion. This stage is followed by the coexistence of older, often external regional notions and a new scientific thrust for “natural” regions (and boundaries). The late nineteenth century is marked by the stabilization of disciplinary usages and the expansion of geography as a formative scientific paradigm for explaining social phenomena. Regionalist terminology now permeated a wide array of disciplines, and the upsurge of comparatism was working in the same

direction. Continuing this expansion, the context of post–World War I geopolitical reorganization, and the interwar period in general, witnessed a veritable boom of regional concepts, while after World War II, in the binary framework of the Cold War, one observes a considerable reduction. The 1960s to 1980s saw once again the recovery of multiple conceptual frameworks of regionality, while the post-1989 years have been marked by a spatial turn accompanied by an interrogation of the premises of spatializing history and conceptualizing space as well as devising historical regions. A case in point is the debate about the Balkans after 1989, when it became clear that the core of this concept is not so much a certain localizable spatial entity, but rather a mental construct, a chain of metaphors and asymmetric counter-concepts used for defining the self and the other in highly politicized discursive situations.

To sum up, regional tropes and stereotypes have been and will continue to remain important elements of cultural and political discourse. Propelled by the economic crisis after 2008, the former division of North and South resurfaced in the pejorative but broadly used notion of “PIGS” (referring to Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain), while the recent refugee crisis of autumn 2015 was often framed as a clash between Western European postnationalism and Eastern European postcommunist ethnonationalism. The usefulness of conceptual history for questioning the seeming naturalness and self-evidence of these regional constructs is evident. It points to the inherent ambiguities of most geographical notions that usually define their object with regard to a constitutive other, constructing their community by defining it through—as it were—its borderline. All this became extremely important in the context of the destabilization of the nation-state-based framework of legitimization during the last decades of the twentieth century. Furthermore, such a historical reflection alerts us to the threatening quasi-nationalization of regions, where regions become substitutes for nations. This is visible in the way Europeaness is often constructed in terms of symbolic and actual administrative exclusion, but also in some of the “Euro-sceptic” regional narratives that construct Scandinavia or the Balkans as homogeneous entities characterized by certain common patterns of mentality, economic culture, and so on. Instead, the use of conceptual history in analyzing processes and projects of regionalization involves intraregional and cross-regional comparisons, and it is exactly this approach that can make explicit the implicit comparisons inherent to most regional discourses. The prevalence of asymmetrical counter-concepts in all frameworks of regionalization, rooted in these comparative mental operations, seems to be a central factor of historical dynamics.

We also found that mapping regional concepts and discourses provides a particularly rich field for studying both the interplay of different disciplinary

perspectives of knowledge production and the relationship of professional and public discourse. Similar to other keywords pertaining to political discourse, regions are essentially contested and relational terms. Behind the ostensibly rather stable regional conceptualizations, there are significant divergences from a disciplinary point of view: geographic divisions, historical regions, cultural areas, economic regions, and geopolitical cores and peripheries all generate different borderlines and also different symbolic connections between national entities.

Although the recent pan-European and global opening of the academic discussion might well be antagonistic to the self-contained nature of mesoregional notions, it does not seem to eliminate them completely: rather than talking about individual national contexts, most research tends to turn to regional units of analysis as a basis of these comparisons. Our volume seeks to prove that mesoregional concepts of Europe have been deeply embedded in the political, cultural, and academic discourses during the last two centuries and thus are likely to remain with us in the future as well. Historicizing them offers a necessary critical distance but also teaches us how basic notions of modernity are intimately linked to spatial/territorial categories. And the other way round: these spatial categories are themselves indicative of the co-existence and competition of different layers and visions of modernity.

**Diana Mishkova** is the director of the Center for Advanced Study Sofia. She has published on comparative Balkan history, history of nationalism, history of modern political ideas, intellectual history, historiography, and methodology of comparative historical research. Recently she coedited *Regimes of Historicity in Southeastern and Northern Europe, 1890–1945: Discourses of Identity and Temporality* (2014) and *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*, Vol. 2: *Political Ideologies and Institutions* (2014) and Vol. 4: *Concepts, Approaches, and (Self-) Representations* (2017).

**Balázs Trencsényi** is professor at the history department of Central European University, Budapest. His main field of interest is the history of modern political thought in East Central Europe. Among his recent publications are the coedited volume *Regimes of Historicity in Southeastern and Northern Europe, 1890–1945: Discourses of Identity and Temporality* (2014), and the coauthored monograph *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, vol. I: *Negotiating Modernity in the “Long Nineteenth Century”* (2016).

## Notes

The current text draws on our longer article, “Conceptualizing Spaces within Europe: The Case of Meso-Regions,” published in the programmatic volume of the European conceptual history network, *Conceptual History in the European Space* (Freeden, Steinmetz, Fernández Sebastián 2017).

1. For an overview of the implications of the spatial turn in recent historiography, see Kingston (2010).
2. Among the standard readings, see in particular Lefebvre (1974); Gregory and Urry (1985); and Soja (1989).
3. As illustrative of the current state of the art across a wide range of disciplines we can mention van Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer (2005); Schenk (2007); and Döring and Thielmann (2008).

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**Part I**

# **European Mesoregions**





## Chapter 1

# Western Europe

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For much of the modern period, Western-centrism was a characteristic feature of intellectual traditions of thought. It emanated from the West, and in particular Western Europe and later on the United States, and spread with the advances of colonialism and imperialism, finding various forms of both adaptation and rejection in the non-Western world. In the West, including Western Europe, there was a long and distinguished tradition of criticizing “the West.” Such forms of anti-Western Occidentalism were often again appropriated and developed outside of the Western world at different times. This brief chapter on the changing conceptual meanings of Western Europe/the West starts from the assumption that it is nearly impossible to disentangle the concepts “Western Europe” and “the West,” which is why both are discussed here alongside each other.

The very geographical scope of Western Europe and the West has changed considerably over time. Thus, as we shall see, Germany could be seen both as an integral part of the West/Western Europe and as a vital counter-concept. Finland and Austria are similarly contested cases; however, east of a line that can be drawn from Finland in the north through Germany and Austria to Italy, self-identifications with Western Europe/the West are rare before the onset of the Cold War. But things look entirely different if we replace Western Europe with Europe. In East-Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia, Westernizers claimed a belonging to Europe that was, in terms of its conceptual idea, Western. In that sense, “the West” could at times incorporate the whole of Europe. And it went beyond Europe, first and foremost because in the course of the twentieth century the United States became the most important and agenda-setting “Western” power on the globe. And in many other parts of the world, “Westernizers” adapted the intellectual traditions

associated with Western Europe. Hence the borders of the concept Western Europe/the West are extremely fuzzy. There are no shortages of contested and intermediate zones, and meanings of Western Europe/the West varied with different national traditions and diverse political and economic agendas.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part investigates diverse conceptualizations of Western Europe/the West in time and space. The second part examines counter-concepts, looks at diverse clusterings of the concept, and analyzes the bordering of the concept over time. Overall, through a meandering and intertwined discussion of self-ascriptions and “foreign” definitions of Western Europe/the West, we are hoping to find at least some meaningful approximations toward the extremely fluid and hard-to-define geographical concept at the heart of this chapter.<sup>1</sup>

## Defining Western Europe

When is Western Europe? The hour of the idea of Western Europe comes in the Cold War during the second half of the twentieth century. When, after World War II, an “iron curtain” divided the continent into West and East, talk about Western Europe became ubiquitous. Yet there had been conceptualizations of Western Europe and the West well before 1945 on which the Cold War terminology could build. And after the end of the Cold War it is noticeable that “Europe” has been growing together again, politically and conceptually—albeit with difficulties and exceptions. When it is being asked “who are the Westerners?” (Ifversen 2008), it is important to be aware of the plurality of answers over time and space to this question which contains a strong notion of contestation over concepts and definitions.

“What is the West” asked Philippe Nemo in 2004 and came up with a morphogenesis of the West that started with the Greek city states and their concept of liberty and urbanity and continued with Roman law and the notions of private property, individuality, and humanism that can all be traced to ancient Rome. Subsequently, he looks at the legacy of Christianity, which he sees in concepts of charity and the invention of linear time through notions of eschatology and history. Finally, Nemo arrives at the revolutionary tradition which he associated with the Netherlands, England, the United States, and France—here he identifies the birthplace of liberal democracy, pluralism, and modernity (Nemo 2004). This very traditional conceptualization of the West is one that hides many contestations and difficulties in finding agreement about the constitutive elements of the West.

Such genealogies of the West, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, are building on entire libraries that have been written on Western values and ideals during the time of the Cold War. However, given the ubiquity of the



term over the last half century, throughout much of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the West or Western Europe have not been popular terms of self-description. In fact, they were rarely used.<sup>2</sup> The nations of Western Europe, many of which looked back on continuous histories as nation-states to the Middle Ages, or at least found it relatively easy to construct such continuity, remained, by and large, wedded to the idea of national particularity and peculiarity (Berger and Lorenz 2008). In their eyes, there was little need to construct a common West European legacy or identity. Things looked different in East Central and Eastern Europe, where the idea of Europe was continuously and prominently used in arguments that sought to establish the alleged backwardness or, alternatively, autochthonous nature of East Central and Eastern Europe vis-à-vis an imagined Western Europe.

If, in the course of the nineteenth century, national discourses in Europe pushed conceptualizations of Europe to the sidelines, they returned, at least in Western Europe, with the rise of the European Union in the second half of the twentieth century. One prominent historian of Europe, Hartmut Kaelble (2013), has found four important changes in the representations of Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: first, he argues that Europe toward the end of the twentieth century had lost its earlier position as the “global benchmark for modernity”; second, he found that the contents of representations of Europe changed over time and became narrower. Whereas Europe was seen as superior in almost all policy areas in the nineteenth century, by the end of the twentieth, representations of Europe focused on democracy, human rights, social security, and economic growth. Third, Kaelble argues that the world regions which have been important to Europe also shrank over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While they incorporated the entire globe in the nineteenth century, more recently they were restricted to the immediate neighborhood and the relationship with the United States. Finally, according to Kaelble, Europe used to define itself in sharp distinction to the colonized world and posited a “white man’s burden” as a crucial anchor point of its relationship with that world, whereas more recently, Europe focuses on its domestic success story after 1945 in order to gain legitimation in other regions of the world.

The conceptual confusion between Europe and Western Europe, which can also be found in Kaelble’s chapter, is exacerbated by the use of another term that is conceptually related to Western Europe, namely “the Occident” (in German: *Abendland*). It was a more popular term of self-description, because it was related to a set of cultural and civilizational values ranging back to antiquity (Joas and Wiegandt 2005). Yet studies on how the Occident was perceived outside of the West have also proliferated and there are detailed studies on the perception of the West in China, Japan, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Iran, and

other parts of the world. However, there is no complete congruence between Western Europe and the Occident. For a start, the Occident remained a concept with strongly Catholic overtones. At its heart were France, Spain, and Italy; countries that have been central to notions of Western Europe, such as Britain and the Netherlands, were at best marginal to the idea of the Occident (Carrier 1995; Schmid 2009).

The popularity of concepts such as the Occident and the West highlights the simple fact that Western European nation-states rarely produced images of themselves under the rubric of “Western Europe” (Heller 2006). In fact, from the time of the ancient Greeks, “the West” was often vaguely associated with a land of promise, peace, and happiness. The ancient Romans established the association of the West with empire—an idea that was adopted by many western nations in the modern period. The famous mural in the US House of Representatives titled “Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way,” a line taken from a poem by George Berkeley, emphasizes the so-called manifest destiny of the United States for westward expansion and global dominance (Baritz 1961). Yet, as the example underlines, one of the key problems of conflating “the West” and “Western Europe” lies in the simple fact that throughout much of the modern period, “the West” included the United States and can therefore not be restricted to Western Europe.

If Elysium in the ancient and the modern period often had a westward bent, the Christian Middle Ages turned this notion on its head. The Garden of Eden lay in the East and from the East all notions of progress and civilization started. Geoffrey of Monmouth, for example, viewed England as the latest incarnation of a series of proud empires, starting from Troy in the East to Rome, which was already further west, to England—the westernmost incarnation of an empire at the time of Geoffrey (Baswell 2009, 232 ff.). From late antiquity right through to the Middle Ages, the concept of the West was intricately bound up with notions of the East (Fischer 1957). The political division of the Roman Empire into a western and eastern part cemented that East–West dichotomy, and the Frankish kings self-consciously adopted the concept of the West to legitimate their own rule in line with the western part of the Roman Empire (*translatio imperii*). The Christian Europe of the Middle Ages also established a clear distinction between Orthodoxy and Catholicism that was spatialized into East and West (Benz 1963; Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou 2013). The religious schism produced both self-descriptions and descriptions of “the other,” which operated with notions of space. The Orthodox East, both Byzantium and Russia, was portrayed by Western and Eastern observers alike as more spiritual but also as less dynamic. The Catholic West, by contrast, was described as more decadent but also as less stuck in formal ritual.

Beginning in the sixteenth century, east-west distinctions became less prominent whereas north-south divisions became more important, as Riccardo Bavaj (2011) has argued. North-south distinctions were prominent in the second important religious schism of Christianity—that of the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A Protestant Northern Europe, which could penetrate deep into Western and Central Europe, was posited against a Catholic Southern Europe, with the centers of the Counter-Reformation being located in Madrid and Vienna. The West, let alone Western Europe, played hardly any role in spatializing the Reformation (Outhwaite 2008, ch. 2).

Nevertheless, some east-west distinctions continued into the early modern world and were revitalized by colonialism. Christopher Columbus sailed the Atlantic Ocean in the hope of finding a fabled East. That he was to discover another West was one of the ironies of the identification of civilization with the East throughout much of the European Middle Ages. Yet such perceptions slowly began to change in early modern Europe and they began to change in the West. Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* (1614), for example, rejected Geoffrey's idea of the English having Trojan/Roman origins. Instead, he constructed an autochthonous imperial mission of England as a western island nation ideally suited to the domination of the seas. Raleigh's history is a good example of the early functionalization of the geographical idea of the west with national, in his case English, ambitions. Baritz (1961, 635) has in fact spoken of a gradual "Anglicization of the idea of the West." But the West was also held up elsewhere as a superior model for others to follow. Thus, for example, Giovanni Botero, as early as 1599, asked the question whether the West should be seen as superior to the East and he came up with an emphatic "yes" as an answer (Botero 1599).

The rise of the concept of the West in the modern period developed alongside and in good measure as a consequence of the age of colonial expansion in the sixteenth century, the Enlightenments in the eighteenth century, and the age of science, technology, and capitalism from the eighteenth century onwards. In the West, Enlightenment thinkers did not so much refer to "Western Europe" as the crucible of progress and civilization. Instead, they were more likely just to use the term "Europe," from which the more eastern parts of the continent were excluded (Wolff 1994). "The East" in fact became the crucial "other" of Western Europe, which conceptualized itself and was conceptualized by others by and large simply as "Europe" (Neumann 1999). The values of the Enlightenments—above all reason, the rule of law, individuality, and private property—were also spatialized under the rubric of Europe and in fact restricted to Western Europe. William Robertson's *History of America* (1777) was in fact a history of civilization that marked the borders of what

could be regarded as civilized—it included private property, commerce, legal and state institutions, cities, power, and written culture. Voltaire's (1961, first published in 1751) history of Louis XIV, for example, portrays the age of the "sun king" as the latest incarnation of a series of civilizational stages of the history of mankind. Similarly, representatives of the Scottish Enlightenment were keen to underline the civilizational mission of Scotland that had found its place in a wider Britain (Oz-Salzberger 1995). The very concept of civilization was crucial to the thinking of the Scottish Enlightenment, where it was deeply interconnected with "the rationalization of intracapitalist relations . . . ; the disenfranchisement of the English workers from their 'traditional' rights and liberties . . . ; and the destruction of communal relations in the Scottish Highlands" (Caffentzis 1995, 14). And in the Netherlands Dutch representatives of the Enlightenment were proud to present their "golden age" as the epicenter of progress and civilization (Berger with Conrad 2015, ch. 2).

If, following John Pocock, it has now become customary to speak of multiple Enlightenments, it is striking to what extent Enlightenment historians talked about Western Europe in relation to an imagined East, including Eastern Europe, or an imagined extra-European sphere. The "Orient" was often portrayed as a history of failure against which the histories of Western European states appeared all the more triumphant (Masur 1962, 593). Historians influenced by the Enlightenment in the German lands began to construct Germany deliberately as a land of the West—in line with the great Enlightenment traditions of France and Scotland (Siebenpfeiffer 1831–32). And German philosophers and historians (e.g., Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Leopold von Ranke), just like their French counterparts (e.g., François Guizot), throughout the nineteenth century constructed panoramas of world and European civilizations in which progress always marched westward—from Oriental and Southern European origins triumphing in the West. With Ranke the guardian spirit of Europe is identified with the "genius of the Occident," as he writes in his famous *History of Roman and Germanic Peoples* (1885, first published in 1824). Such a clear western bias can still be found much later in German thought, for example in Max Weber who identified rationalism and its evolution with the West (Müller 1989). In Eastern Europe, Enlightenment traditions were much weaker, albeit by no means absent. It was here that the strongest notions of a Western European "West" were constructed, both as model to emulate and as a contrast to Eastern Europe (Daskalov 2004).

European Romantics established an important tradition of a Western critique of notions of the West, which was picked up later in non-European criticisms of the West (Buruma and Margalit 2005; Conrad 2006). In East-Central

and Eastern Europe, Romanticism strengthened those intellectual trends that argued in favor of autochthonous traditions—either rejecting the West as a model to follow, or, more frequently, arguing that their own archaic traditions would allow them to catch up and improve on the West precisely because they were already genealogically linked to Western traditions (Trencsényi and Kopeček 2007).

## Contesting the West

In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century, socialist conceptualizations of Western Europe were characterized by an ambiguity between their commitment to positive Enlightenment-type perceptions of progress being anchored in the West and a critique of the West as archetypal capitalist societies. This ambiguity produced tensions that went to the heart of the twentieth-century split between social democracy and communism. The former, in a long drawn-out process lasting into the second half of the twentieth century, came to perceive the West in terms of a successful integration of the working classes into society (Hochgeschwender 2004, 17). In a merger of socialist and liberal ideas, the social democratic route combined ideas of individual freedom with ideas of social equality. The communist route rejected such class integration as class betrayal and found in the West the main enemy of true working-class emancipation. Yet, while twentieth-century communism rejected Western capitalism, its entire intellectual world was rooted in western ideas of Enlightenment rationalism (Berger 2015).

It also mattered in Europe from which spatial angle the West was constructed. Thus, for example, the Baltic states perceived themselves as “true East” in comparison to both their big neighbor to the West, Germany, and their big neighbor to the East, the Soviet Union, which were both, despite their different geographical locations, constructed as “western” in Baltic discourses about “the West” (see chapter 3 in this volume).

In the context of World War I, Germany conceptualized itself in stark contrast to the West—that is, its main enemies in the West, Britain and France. Shallow Western civilization was thus contrasted with true and deep German culture—for example, in the wartime writings of Thomas Mann but also of many other German middle-class intellectuals, many of whom supported the German war effort ferociously (Hoeres 2004). And in the racialized *völkisch* discourse in interwar Germany, positive connotations of the West only came in connection with an alleged “Germanic West” that resulted in *Westforschung* (research on the West) and sought to push the German borders as far west as possible (Müller 2009). Such German self-exclusion from the West contrasted sharply with a widespread perception in Eastern Europe, but also

in the non-European world—for example, Japan—that Germany belonged firmly to the West and was indeed, for many, a model of Western development, especially in terms of a modern economic, social, and cultural nation-state. This perception of Germany as a model “Western” nation-state can be observed from around 1890 onwards.

In the interwar period, notions of the West were most frequently located in the context of the warring political ideologies: liberalism, fascism, and communism. Overall, the West was strongly associated with liberal-democratic traditions. Such political definitions of the West formed an important bridge to conceptualizations of Atlanticism in the Cold War period between 1946 and 1990 (Aubourg, Bossuat, Giles-Smith 2008). The liberal-democratic and capitalist West had its main enemies in fascist movements and conservative anti-Western forces, such as the Action Française, and in the communist East. As a trope of self-description, “the West” now became more widespread. From the interwar period to the 1970s it was tied to a fascination with the United States as the epicenter of Western modernity to which Western Europe increasingly appeared as a mere appendix. The pace of westernization was no longer set in Western Europe but in the United States. The Cold War was also the foremost period in which conceptualizations of the West translated directly into power politics. The new and largely informal American empire used notions of the West and of “Westernization” to underpin its hegemony (Nehring 2004). It could build on earlier links of the West to empire-building, such as the Dutch and the British empires of the modern period. In the 1830s, for example, the British prime minister, Lord Palmerston, referred to the quadruple alliance of Britain, France, Spain, Portugal as an alliance aimed at protecting the liberal thrones of western Europe against the illiberal thrones of central and eastern Europe. Palmerston, in other words, was already defending a liberal West (Brown 2010).

## Eulogizing the West

After 1945 many publications began to eulogize the West. Ernst Cassirer’s *The Myth of the State* (1946), written in wartime, is a balanced and ultimately pessimistic tribute to the idea of the West. The war and the Holocaust had heightened the sense of crisis of what was now often perceived as rather self-indulgent celebration of Western humanism and other Western ideas and movements. The more the immediate wartime experience waned, the more triumphalist Western Cold War narratives of the West became, as previous criticisms were quickly forgotten. A good example is Louis Rougier’s *The Genius of the West* (1971), which amounts to an unrestrained celebration of allegedly Western values, their dynamism, and their intelligence. Through

notions of the West, the capitalist side in the Cold War celebrated its own achievements and postulated its own ambition to achieve global hegemony in the world (Federici 1995). Indeed, in this it was continuing an older tradition of universalizing the West and making Westernization the benchmark for successful modernization of all areas of the world. In the course of the nineteenth century its factual dominance became a normative belief system which ruled out in principle the continued existence of non-Western worlds or at least described them in terms of being irrational and backward (Ifversen 2008, 240). With the advances of neoliberalism from the late 1970s onwards, we can observe a narrowing of the meanings of “the West.” Whereas previously the idea of the West was pluralist to the point of being self-contradictory at times, the neoliberal appropriation of the West has reduced the concept, by and large, to a series of economic practices that are associated with so-called free markets. As Bonnett (2004, ch. 6) has argued, such economic narrowing of the concept has weakened its political, and in particular its democratic, appeal and content.

During the Cold War, a positive self-identification of the west with peace, prosperity, liberal democratic values and, above all, security and protection against totalitarianism, which threatened in the form of communism in the so-called East, proliferated from the late 1940s onwards (Hochgeschwender 2004). Freedom as a central ingredient of the Cold War West was widely perceived as necessary for successful modernization of societies, which was promoted through the popular modernization theories of the 1950s. A Western future promised more growth, more prosperity, more individualization, and more freedom. Western Europe as core of the European Union was an integral part of that West, and there is no shortage of books celebrating the project, achievements, and values underpinning the EU’s Western European project during the Cold War. Étienne Julliard, for example, wrote in 1968 of the European Rhine region as the economic, political, and cultural spinal cord of Western Europe (Julliard 1968). According to Julliard, a typical “Rhine civilization” was characterized by rationalism, order, cleanliness, religious tolerance, cultural fusion, liberalism, and freedom. In other words, it was characterized by many of the values that also stood for the West more generally. Julliard even counted it among one of the blessings of the Rhine region of Germany that it was not so German as other regions of the country that many Frenchmen in the 1960s still felt very ambivalent about.

The Rhine also emerges as central to conceptualizations of Western Europe during the Cold War in other publications. Thus, for example, in his first volume of *Descriptive Geography*, José Manoel Casas Torres differentiated between a North and Northwestern Europe, a Mediterranean Europe and a Central Europe. The former was portrayed as the richest and most dynamic

area of Europe where fertile agriculture, mining, and the great rivers, in particular the Rhine, were described as the basis of its economic, commercial, financial, industrial, and urban success. Here a refined and unified civilization emerged, which was long hampered by national rivalries but which, under the European Union, could look toward a bright future (Casas Torres 1979).

On the political left, a positive discourse on the concept of the West can also be observed after 1945. The British socialist Victor Gollancz (1946), for example, associated both National Socialism and Communism with anti-Western forces and called on the West to defend its “threatened values.” “Europe’s 1968” (Gildea, Mark, and Warring 2013) was, on the one hand, an impressive confirmation of the power of Westernization among the left, as the revolutionaries have been portrayed as the “kids of Marx and Coca-Cola” (Schildt and Siegfried 2006). On the other hand, 1968 also signaled the beginning of the end of a self-confident self-perception of the West, as it saw a revival of a significant anti-Western discourse. The crisis of the confident and aggressive self-promotion of the West was exacerbated by the massive economic crisis post-1973, and the loss of a strong enemy in the era of *détente*. In the 1980s, positive notions of the West began to be further criticized by the emerging critique of the West within postcolonialism (Hall 1992; Young 1990) and, from a different vantage point, within the ecological movement and its dismantling of the western growth ideology. The Western political culture of democracy was also increasingly challenged from the 1970s as a global model that others simply had to follow (Nolte 2013). There was still the assumption of a universal West, only now it was increasingly a negative vision of a destructive and unsustainable system which needed to be overcome. Strong traditions of self-criticism of the West came together with challenges from the non-Western world. The star of the West thus began to wane and fewer people believed in what Cemil Aydin has called “the universal West” (Aydin 2007). The world, which had, for a long time, its center in the West, now looked increasingly decentered or multicentered.

If, during the Cold War, the West became more than ever before a term of self-description, concepts of the West were also crucial for the big adversary of the West in the Cold War, the Soviet Union. Initially, the Bolsheviks had seen in the West the epicenter of progress and the telos of world history. Russia, by contrast, was backward, and many Bolsheviks, including Lenin, doubted whether a proletarian revolution could succeed in a backward country such as Russia without more developed Western countries following suit. Hence early Bolshevism remained wedded to the idea of a progressive and universal West. Yet, as Stalin declared the policy of “socialism in one country” and as it became clear that the Soviet Union would, for the foreseeable future, remain the only communist state, the concept of the West began to



shift. It now increasingly became a negative countermodel to the positive path that the Soviet Union had embarked on. It was associated with “degenerate” capitalism and a backward socioeconomic stage in the development of world history that had been overcome by the Soviet Union (Bonnett 2004, ch. 2).

The rapid end of the Cold War around 1990 caught many in the West by surprise. For a brief moment the West could bask in the glory of having been triumphant in the Cold War. Some even declared “the end of history” in an attempt to cement the superiority of the liberal-democratic and capitalist West for all time to come (Fukuyama 1992). Such triumphalism, however, was short-lived. Soon, post-Cold War uncertainties and ambiguities about the West were to return. On the one hand, the eastward expansion of the European Union extended the West eastwards—much of Central and East Central Europe was now reconceptualized as West—with the post-Soviet space (except for the Baltic states and Ukraine) remaining as the only true East. The enlarged European Union began transgressing divisions between east and west as well as north and south under the conceptual hegemony of the West. However, tensions in such a westernizing European project are all too clear. For a start, the EU is struggling to develop a common conceptual framework that could unite the community of nations. The idea of celebrating unity in diversity may not be enough to promote strong common ties. The opening of a new “House of European History” in Brussels in 2017 is expected with great anticipation as it will be a litmus test for the EU’s ability to present a common European history (Siepmann 2013). And it will show how Western such a construction of historical identity will be.

## **Counter-Concepts and Contestations**

Throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the main counter-concept to the idea of the West or Western Europe was the East or Eastern Europe, which was widely associated with backwardness and barbarity. Tsarist Russia amounted to a cabinet of horrors of nineteenth-century European liberalism. But even in the late eighteenth century, many West European observers perceived Russia as a “natural enemy” of the West (Barraclough 1966, 292). Then, however, Russia was still widely perceived as the North rather than the East. This only began to change from the 1830s onwards, when Russia, slowly but surely, became the East. The Vienna Congress of 1815 and the Crimean War of 1853–56 were vital in bringing about this change. In the Crimean War, the Western enemies of Russia all made the distinction between their own “westernness” and the “easternness” of Russia, which equaled “Asian despotism” (Bassin 1991). The Western discourse about Russia’s “easternness” interacted with a strong Russian discourse about the place

of Russia in Europe (Danilewski 1965). In particular, during the late Tsarist empire, Westernization was widely seen as a crucial precondition for the modernization of Russia and diverse purportedly Western models were chosen in different policy fields; for example, in agricultural policy Russia looked toward Denmark, and in social policy areas it oriented itself more toward Germany (Beuerle 2013). Whether such modernization would eventually allow Russia to overtake the West was widely debated. None other than Karl Marx saw in Russia the “characteristics of the future,” while the West was “the past” (Marx 1897). And there had been voices in the twentieth-century West who saw Western Europe declining in importance *vis-à-vis* the rising United States and Russia (Barraclough 1966, 303).

Christian Methfessel (2013) has recently examined representations of Europe in the British and German media’s reporting on colonial wars. After 1900, he argues, the forceful defense of European missions, including military missions, was in marked decline, as perceptions of the benefits and legitimacy of military campaigns outside of Europe changed dramatically. Inside Britain but also in continental Europe such changing perceptions were part and parcel of a European discourse of crisis and self-marginalization that was to become much stronger in the twentieth century, when, after all, the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union to superpower status became reality.

Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee are both, in their different ways, representatives of such a European-wide discourse of civilizational crisis (Spengler 1918; Toynbee 1948; Gasimov, Ducque, and Antonius 2013). The West, they posited, was characterized by a “Faustian culture” (Spengler) or by its “creative power” (Toynbee), and it was rooted in Western Christendom, although Toynbee also saw classical Greek culture as the origin of Western civilization. Out of a suggested crisis of Western civilization, at least with Spengler, emerged a rejection of the concept of Europe and a ringing endorsement of the concept of the West (and the East). As he wrote in *The Decline of the West* (1918): “The word ‘Europe’ ought to be struck out of history. There is historically no ‘European’ type . . . ‘East’ and ‘West’ are notions that contain real history, whereas ‘Europe’ is an empty sound” (Spengler 1918, 16). With Spengler and Toynbee, the decisive event that cemented the historical division between “West” and “East” was the Russian Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Western civilization, to those thinkers, was the main intellectual defense-line against both Bolshevism and various colonial independence movements demanding the right to self-determination. However, before 1914 these voices were still quite marginal, not the least because of the reception of the devastating civil war in the United States and the catastrophic defeat of Russia by Japan. European states were still the dominant colonial and imperial

powers, and much of Europe was far more worried by the rise of Germany than by any non-European powers.

From the 1880s, as Chris GoGwilt (1995) has argued, the idea of the West developed strongly in the English language. The new British imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century was a major contributor to this burgeoning discourse on the West, as was the Russian intellectual debate regarding Russia's alleged backwardness vis-à-vis the West. Following GoGwilt, it would appear as though older notions of "Europe" (significantly without the prefix "Western") were replaced by the new idea of "the West." Bonnett argues that a "white crisis" in Britain from the 1890s onwards produced a discourse on the West that was the result of a widespread feeling of being threatened by "racial decline." In turn the concept of the West was used to bolster notions of superiority (Bonnett 2004, ch. 1).

If "the East" and "Eastern Europe" was the main adversary of conceptualizations of the West, there certainly were others at different times and places. So, for example, Southern Europe was sometimes presented as similarly backward as the East. It was the home of declining or defeated empires, such as the Spanish and the Venetian ones. But it had the saving grace that notions of ancient civilizations, especially Greece and Italy, originated in Southern Europe. Hence, from the vantage point of the West, it had to be included in histories of European civilization. Much of the rest of the non-European world was divided up into colonial spaces, where "Westernism" underpinned the notion of a civilizing mission of Europe (Hurst 2003) that was contrasted with ideas of "Oriental despotism" and "Asia." Yet, looking at "the West" from non-European space, we find, on the one hand, a powerful intellectual trend endorsing Westernization as the only developmental path open to the colonial or "underdeveloped" world. Amongst prominent Westernizers we can count Fukuzawa Yukichi in Japan, Ziya Gökalp in Turkey, and Rabindranath Tagore in India (Bonnett 2005, ch. 3 and 4). On the other hand, we can also perceive, often within the same persons, a similar kind of autochthonism that we already found in Eastern Europe maintaining the strength and superiority of indigenous over Western traditions, which were frequently portrayed as soulless, inhuman, and decadent. After all, Gökalp was a prominent pan-Turkist, whilst Tagore developed a strong "spiritualist" critique of Western modernity. Hence we encounter in non-European spaces (and sometimes from within marginal European spaces) a variety of challenges to Western-centrism—from Franz Fanon to postcolonialism and Islamism.

As early as 1955 one the leading representatives of the Négritude movement, Aimé Césaire, wrote, "The fact is that the so-called European civilization—Western civilization—... is incapable of solving the two major problems to which its existence has given rise: the problem of the proletariat

and the colonial problem .... ‘Europe’ is morally, spiritually indefensible” (Césaire 1955). And one should also not underestimate the degree to which non-European regions of the world perceived themselves and others outside a European prism. Thus for example, Islam was widely discussed in nineteenth-century Hindu India, and China remained a solid reference point for Japanese discussions in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century (Conrad 2006). From the last decade of the twentieth century onward, the rise of the concept of multiple modernities and the growing popularity of global history increasingly highlighted the belief that the West was not the benchmark for global development (in terms of a liberal democratic politics, a unilinear Western modernity, and a superior civilization) that it had been constructed as being from around the late fifteenth century onward, when it was closely associated with colonialism (Browning and Lehti 2010; Bessis 2003). And Islamism has emerged as a powerful challenge to the global dominance of the West, presenting the West as a negative utopia and fostering various kinds of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world (Bonnett 2005, ch. 7).

The introduction of a subject entitled “The Scientific Study of Europe” in many non-European countries, such as Japan and India, indicates strong interest in the reception of a “European way” throughout much of the modern period. Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000, 27) has coined the term “hyperreal Europe” to indicate that Europe became the image of modernity and progress in many parts of the colonial and postcolonial world. In fact, the different layers of meaning associated with the West cannot be understood without analyzing the genealogies of “Occidentalism” that were produced outside of Europe, often by non-Western elites. The admiration for the West among those elites was rarely unambiguous. Thus, for example, the reception of Enlightenment ideas among non-Western intellectuals in postcolonial contexts was often positive, but it was also mixed with the idea that those ideals had been inadequately practiced by the West in diverse historical contexts. And for every intellectual holding the West responsible for not practicing what it preached, there was another confirming the spiritual superiority of the colonized over the colonizing West (Young 1990).

## **Conclusion**

Admiration and criticism were always intertwined in the reception of the West among those excluded from definitions of the West. Non-European pan-national movements, for example, such as Pan-Arabism, which developed from the late nineteenth century onwards, were questioning the dominance of the West over other parts of the world (Conrad 2006, 168). While the West

was a topic of heated discussion in the non-West, the West itself, from around 1830 to around 1980 was not interested in the non-West, as it had lost all interest in the non-European and non-Western world and became almost entirely Euro- and Western-centric (Osterhammel 2009). Things only began to change, when, from the 1970s onwards, a sustained challenge to the notion of eternal progress and growth appeared from within Western societies. The path of the West now increasingly appeared as an unsustainable path into global Armageddon. Its universalism became questionable, even more so when it was challenged from postcolonial non-Western positions from the 1980s onwards. The binaries between West and non-West are increasingly challenged by a literature that seeks to demonstrate that many of the concepts, ideals, and ideas usually associated with the West can in fact be found in non-Western societies as well. As Jack Goody (2006, 1) has argued, it has only been the global dominance of the West over the past three centuries that has successfully hidden this from our history books: “The past is conceptualized and presented according to what happened on the provincial scale of Europe, often Western Europe, and then imposed upon the rest of the world. That continent makes many claims to having invented a range of value-laden institutions such as “democracy,” mercantile “capitalism,” freedom, individualism. However, these institutions are found over a much more widespread range of human societies.”

Nevertheless, the notion of the West was important in attempts to change the political order toward what was seen as more democracy and freedom, not just outside of Europe. If we look at the Greek struggle for independence from the Ottoman empire, we can observe the oft-used self-reference to ancient Greece as the cradle of western civilization and the birthplace of individualism and democracy—ideas that were juxtaposed to the “Oriental despotism” of the Ottomans (Niehoff-Panagiotidis 2011). Distinctions between Western and Eastern European powers in terms of their characteristics and values can be traced back to the period of the Reformation and the confrontation of Europe with the Ottoman Empire. It had become ubiquitous during the first half of the nineteenth century (Girardin 1835) and was picked up again later by research on nationalism, which for a long time was dominated by the view that West European nationalism was political and civic while East European nationalism was ethnic (Baycroft and Hewitson 2006). Similarly, if we look at the Polish uprisings against Tsarist Russia in the nineteenth century, they were always occasions when Polish nationalists confirmed their adherence to an imagined West in contradistinction to an “Oriental” and Eastern Russia (Stobiecki 2011). And inversely, the stark juxtaposition of the “ideas of 1789” with the “ideas of 1914” in German cultural discourse after the outbreak of World War I indicated to what extent intellectually the German Reich con-

structed itself against “the West” (Kjellén 1915; Mann 2001; See 1975; Verhey 2006). In the interwar period, the West was widely conceptualized as a bulwark against fascist and communist dictatorships. In Britain, France, and the Netherlands, one’s own “westernness” was tied to the ideas of parliamentary democracy. In World War II, that “western alliance” of West European and North American states was confirmed and concluded in the name of the defense of Western values against National Socialist barbarity (Berger with Conrad 2015).

In the bipolar world of the Cold War, another rebordering of Europe took place. Along the lines of EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) development, the West now also comprised parts of Central, Southern, and Northern Europe, yet it was still clearly set against a now communist Eastern Europe, which had also been rebordered toward the center (Klein 1990). Germany, for example, which had demarcated itself so strongly from the West in the first half of the twentieth century, in a long and painful process that took several decades reoriented itself toward the West (Schildt 1999; Schildt 2006; Jackson 2006).

Whether they were positively or negatively invoked, notions of the West had to be bordered in order to make them less vulnerable to contention. This bordering was all the more necessary as there was no accepted definition of the West, and in the US tradition of “Western civilization,” for example, we can find a constant conflation between “Western Europe” and “the West” (Patterson 1997). The West was rarely identical with Western Europe. In fact, in diverse contexts it encroached heavily into Northern, Central, and Southern Europe. Geographical, linguistic, political, social, and cultural borders of the West have been defined very differently at different times and places, as research on “mental maps” has powerfully underlined in the 2000s (Schenk 2002). Some, like Jan Ifversen (2008), have argued that the post–Cold War period has witnessed a conceptual battle between “the West” and “Europe,” which is rooted in increasing differences between Europe and the United States. Those liberals who have been defending concepts of the West in the name of freedom and democracy, but also of social equality (Roberts 1985; Garton Ash 2005), see a bright future for the global appeal of the West, which sometimes borders on triumphalism (Gress 1998), while others, who by and large share the same values, have been far more pessimistic about the global appeal of the West (Huntington 1996; Lewis 2002). What these debates at the beginning of the twenty-first century show is that the Cold War legacies of the West are still firmly with us and have gained a currency that seems difficult to displace, despite the fact that it cannot be said that concepts of the West had a wide purchase before the end of World War II. However, at the same time, concepts of the West have varied considerably over time and space—they

have been extremely adaptable and malleable to different circumstances and diverse political strategies. It is thus a concept that invariably tends to appear in clustered form—with clusters of related concepts that share properties with and throw a light on the concept of the West. Its geography and meaning has changed considerably, and the West has proven to be a very expandable concept.

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## Notes

1. Bavaj (2011) is an outstanding review of the treatment of the conceptualizations of “the West.” This chapter is deeply indebted to Bavaj’s work and its author would like to express his gratitude to him. There is, of course also the magisterial four-volume history of the West by Winkler (2009–2015); in English see also Winkler (2015).
2. This is confirmed by a survey of the texts assembled by Drace-Francis (2013).

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## Chapter 2

# Scandinavia / Norden

*Marja Jalava and Bo Stråth*



### The Conceptual Cluster

The conceptualization of the North (in the Scandinavian languages *Norden*, in Finnish *Pohjola*) as a distinct region has since antiquity been vague and far from geographically fixed. In Roman times all the countries to the north of the Alps were considered “barbaric,” in other words, “northern,” whereas the South stood for the Roman Empire and civilization. In a more restricted sense, the North referred to the peoples of the septentrional regions, or *Thule*, beyond the boundaries of the western and eastern empires. As such, it included the present-day Nordic countries as well as northern Poland, northern Germany, the northwestern parts of Russia, the islands of Orkney and Shetland, and the present-day Baltic countries.<sup>1</sup> Russia was seen as a North European country well into the nineteenth century. This view changed with the breakthrough of the language of liberalism in the 1830s, which relegated Russia to a reactionary regime belonging to a backward Eastern Europe or Asia. West European support for Polish autonomy was the catalyst in this shift of meaning, and the debate on the Crimean War (1853–56) accelerated this change.

The entry *Norden* in *Brockhaus*, the German encyclopedia published in 1820, emphasized the vagueness of the concept: “extremely undetermined,” which means “sometimes more, sometimes less” (cited in Kliemann 2005b, 223). The article expressed the hope that as soon as the term had been finally settled scientifically, it would be possible to lay out a more precise definition. The German historian Hendriette Kliemann (2005b) has demonstrated that this was an impossible enterprise. Many attributes were linked to *Norden* in the scholarly attempts in the decades around 1800 to define what was still an elusive term: “High *Norden*,” “Scandinavian *Norden*,” “Germanic *Norden*,”

“Extreme *Norden*” (*ultima Thule*), “Polar *Norden*,” “The North of Europe,” “*Nordeuropa*,” “Nordic powers,” “Nordic countries,” “Nordic states,” “Nordic realms,” “Nordic balance,” “Nordic state system.” In Kliemann’s taxonomy, the flexible use of the term *Norden* implied that geographic inclusion and exclusion shifted over time, and so did the substantial content of the term.

The failure to define *Norden* is a good illustration of Friedrich Nietzsche’s ([1887] 1980, 820) argument that what has a history is not definable (*Definierbar ist nur das was keine Geschichte hat*), a statement that the German conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck often referred to. This should not be seen as a problem; on the contrary, it makes *Norden* attractive for historical analysis and political use. There is both a general agreement and a positive value invested in the concept, and, at the same time, disagreement about its meaning. Without an agreement about the concepts as such, there is no shared heuristic framework, language community, or communication, and without a disagreement, no politics.

The cultural and political construction of community operates with both autostereotypes and xenostereotypes—that is, with self-understandings and understandings of the Other, the latter also referred to as heterostereotype. Regional identifications are constructed from within and from without in a mutual dynamic.

Since antiquity, the external view has outlined the imagery of the North in more or less mythical terms. Thousands of speakers and writers have, in references to the North in poetic as well as academic contexts, described the exotic. The North, in this enormous body of work, is as vague and elusive as the no less numerous outlines of its opposite, the South. The borderlines lose contours in all discussions where geographic spaces from Shetland to Russia are included or excluded in a variable geometry. The North has been connected to and demarcated from the East with concepts like *Mitteleuropa*, *Ostmitteleuropa*, and *Osteuropa* in another kind of variable geometry. Attempts to outline more precise borders than those found in the mythology of the exotic have been made by many practitioners in fields such as cultural history and geopolitics, for instance.

Such external understandings of a more or less mythical North, or of more specific but not less ideological, cultural, or geopolitical demarcations, have no doubt deeply influenced the self-understandings, where there has been a much stronger interest in giving a more precise meaning to the term. The construction from within of a Nordic region has operated with much more precise concepts and definitions of borders. Our focus is on the construction of a Nordic region through an investigation of the semantics around the two key concepts of *Norden* and Scandinavia, and the complex and shifting commonalities and distinctions between them.

Ever since Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* (c. AD 77–79), the term Scandinavia has been used both as interchangeable with Northern Europe and in a more restricted sense, referring, first, to the small province of Skåne (*Scania*) in present-day Sweden; second, to the large peninsula that makes up present-day Norway and Sweden; or, third, to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, which are united by a common linguistic heritage. In the Nordic countries, from the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards, the language used to denote the North has vacillated between the narrower Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) and the wider *Norden*, with the adjective *nordisk* (Nordic) incorporating linguistically different Finland into the Scandinavian sphere, and also, from the 1918 home rule and the 1944 founding of the republic, Iceland, which was earlier a part of Denmark (Anderson 1981, 102–3; Østergård 1997, 31–32; Hilson 2008, 11–12). In terms of political cooperation, *Norden* replaced Scandinavia after 1945 as the relevant entity with an institutional setting. Since 1945, one of the main challenges to *Norden* as a region of institutionalized political cooperation has been how to define itself in relation to Europe.

The move from *Scandinavia* to *Norden* after 1945 should be seen in a longer historical perspective that includes the nineteenth century. From the days of pan-Scandinavianism (the movement striving for Scandinavian unification in a new nation) in the 1830s onwards, there was a tension between the terms *Scandinavia* and *Norden*. *Scandinavia* meant unification without Finland, which, having been an integral part of Sweden since the Middle Ages, became a Russian Grand Duchy in 1809, whereas *Norden* meant unification with Finland. This tension acquired geopolitical implications in the 1890s during the naval arms race in the Baltic Sea region between the Russian and German empires, which coincided with the politics of Russification in Finland. The inclusion of Finland in a scheme of Nordic unification became potentially dangerous and split the Nordic nations. The resistance against *Norden* and the argument for *Scandinavia* was particularly strong in Denmark. Sweden was split. In Norway, skepticism not only toward Nordism but also toward Scandinavianism was to be expected. Scandinavianism was seen as a potential instrument for Sweden's expansive ambitions in the hands of the Bernadotte dynasty, with the aim to add the Danish crown to its Swedish and Norwegian ones, with perhaps the aim of the eventual inclusion of Finland too. The military implications of the languages of unification threatened many not only in Norway, however, but also in Sweden. We will return to Scandinavianism later on in this chapter. The Norwegian break from the union with Sweden in 1905 downgraded the discourses of Scandinavian or Nordic unification. World War I led to growing external pressure on the Scandinavian countries, who had declared themselves neutral, and they responded to this growing

pressure by increasing political cooperation among themselves with little if any talk about unification (Stråth 2005a; cf. Hemstad 2008).

### Norden as a European Periphery

As mentioned above, in classical literature the image of the North was dominated by its position as a remote periphery described either as an unspoiled paradise in its natural state or a barbarian counterpoint to Roman civilization (Käppel 2001, 18–19; Stadius 2004, 233–35). During the Renaissance, a more positive conception of *Norden* was promoted in Continental Europe by the Swedish-born Catholic ecclesiastic Olaus Magnus (1490–1557), who was exiled to Rome after the Reformation and published the first detailed map of “the Northern Lands”<sup>2</sup> in Latin in 1539. This map was followed by his famous *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (History of the Northern Peoples) in 1555.

The earliest conceptualizations of Scandinavia/*Norden* in the Nordic countries were constructed in the form of Gothicism during the Kalmar Union, which united the Nordic countries from 1397 to 1523. To justify the supremacy of the Scandinavians among the European powers, it was claimed that the Goths originated from Scandinavia. This complacent self-image, combined with the constant warfare of the Swedish Realm, had considerable influence over the Continental European image of *Norden*. For instance, as late as the mid-eighteenth century, the Swiss historian Paul Henri Mallet stated that the most distinctive feature of the Nordic peoples was their militancy (cited in Stadius 2004, 229).

The climatic conception of the North as the dwelling place of extremely courageous, clear-minded, and freedom-loving people created by a harsh climate was popular well until the nineteenth century, promoted, among others, by Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire. In their climate theories, the Scandinavian North (*Pays nordiques*) was incorporated into a larger European north-south polarity, in which the Protestant North stood for progress and rationality, and the Catholic South for conservatism, bigotry, and religious fanaticism (Tiitta 1994, 15–18, 42–45; Stadius 2004, 235–37).

The “invention” of Eastern Europe around 1800 added a third component, the East, to the dualistic North-South scheme (see, e.g., Kliemann 2005a, 24). Accordingly, as Germaine de Staël claimed in 1810 in her work on German literature, Europe could be divided into three principal “nations” that were equated with “races”: “the Latin race,” “the Germanic race,” and “the Slavonic race” (cited in Drace-Francis 201, 96; see also chapter 16 in this volume). This new regionalization roughly overlapped with the dominance of the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches, which equated race/nation

with religion. This religious-national (spiritual-cultural) conceptualization of Europe was especially popular during the first part of the nineteenth century, before the final breakthrough of modern nationalism.

The Romantics designed a Nordic alternative to the neoclassical search for the European Enlightenment's roots in ancient Greece and Rome. Particularly in Denmark, which was still, in the late eighteenth century, a wide-reaching North Atlantic realm (a state conglomerate in the terminology of today), incorporating Norway, Iceland, Greenland, and the Faeroes, there developed a fervent "Ossianic" interest in the Icelandic sagas and a mythical Old Norse identity. The terms "Viking" and "the Viking Age" appeared in Danish at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and were soon widely used as synonyms for the adjectives Scandinavian and Nordic. Once again, the European north-south polarity was employed, as the heroic Viking virtues were set against the guile and the decadence of "the Latin South" (Østergård 1997, 34–38; for the invention of the common Nordic Viking past, see also Roesdahl 1994). A more moderate and pragmatic form of Romantic Scandinavianism was promoted and propagated, in particular, by the influential Danish clergyman and folk educator N. F. S. Grundtvig. In a merging of romanticist, Nordic classicist, and Enlightenment ideals typical of that time, he placed special emphasis on a shared, ancient Nordic cultural heritage and Protestant spirituality, suggesting the creation of a Nordic union, stretching from Iceland and the British Isles to Finland, with Swedish Gothenburg (*Göteborg*) in the geometric center as its capital (Østergård 1997, 35–38).

### Political Pan-Scandinavianism

The balance of power in Northern Europe was shaken by the Napoleonic wars: Sweden lost Pomerania to the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin in 1802 and Finland to Russia in 1809, whereas Denmark lost Norway to Sweden in 1814. The traditional bipolar order between the conglomerate states of Denmark and Sweden was broken, and Russia and Prussia rose as new superpowers in the Baltic. As a result, a more restricted conceptualization of *Norden* emerged, separating the northern region from both Slavic Eastern Europe and Germanic Central Europe. Russia, in particular, was gradually orientalized as a completely non-European, Asiatic-barbarian empire, which was considered the major antithesis of Western civilization (Engman and Sandström 2004, 16–18; see also Wolff 1994 and Turoma 2011).

In Russia, the conceptual replacement of the ancient North-South division of Europe by the new East-West demarcation was reflected in the heated discussion of "the Russian idea" or "the idea of Russia." This debate, initiated by the Russian philosopher Pyotr Chaadayev in his *Philosophical Letters*



(1826–31), was chiefly focused on Russia's national identity and geopolitical position in the East–West divide, culminating in the question of whether Russia was a part of Europe and the West, or a separate entity between the West (Europe) and the East (Asia) (see also chapter 10 in this volume). In this discussion, the North played a minor role. Russia was clearly separated from *Norden* understood as a synonym for Scandinavia, and, in this sense, Russia was not considered a Nordic country. However, “the North” and the adjective “northern” were often used as symbols for the unique national character of Russia as such, separating it from all other European countries (Turoma 2011, 163–67). In general, Russian scholars did not include Finland in Scandinavia. Especially among the Slavophile movement, Finland was seen until the interwar period as a part of the ancient territory of Russia that had been violently dispossessed and “Swedishized” by the Swedish Realm during the Middle Ages (Jussila 1983).

In the Nordic countries, the new power balance after the Napoleonic wars resulted in a development in which pan-Scandinavianism soon gained an openly political content, first emerging in student and literary circles in the early 1830s. Despite the fact that Denmark and Sweden had been rivals ever since the Middle Ages, ethnolinguistic nationalist theories now generated the idea that Scandinavia constituted one nation (*folk*) united by a common language, values, and destiny. The concurrent Italian and German national unification movements were taken as examples for Scandinavia, where the medieval Kalmar Union also contributed to the feasibility of a new Nordic political union, “a Gothicism United States” (*Götiska förenade staterna*). This intellectual Scandinavianism was vaguer about Finland, but at least in Sweden there were dreams of its reunification with the Nordic family. There was through this latent “Finland dream” in Sweden an expansive potential for Nordism in Scandinavianist rhetoric—that is, the inclusion of Finland in the imagined political community. Few realized—or wanted to realize—that 1809 for Finland meant the establishment of a sovereign Finnish nation as a Grand Duchy in a personal union with the Russian Empire, like Norway in its personal union with Sweden from 1814, and that Finns did not see a new unification with Sweden as being in their interest (see, e.g., Østergård 1997, 38–39; Sandström 2004, 143–45; Gustafsson 2007, 194–95).

One important dimension of German and Italian unification was the use of military power in collaboration or confrontation with the great powers of continental Europe at that time: France and the Habsburg Empire. The United Kingdoms of Sweden–Norway (a crown union) and Denmark were, instead, small states with weak militaries looking for ways to absorb and consolidate what was left after the heavy loss of Finland for Sweden and of Norway for Denmark. Therefore, Scandinavianism began as an intellectual movement

looking for ways to come to terms with and consolidate this new status as small states on Europe's periphery. Answers were found in an escapist construction of a bygone period of greatness, from which mobilizing visions for the future could be derived. The new role as small states was made more acceptable through memorializing past greatness. This new role also promoted efforts to put an end to the long history of wars and hereditary enmity between Sweden and Denmark. The cultural dimension of Scandinavianism emphasized shared experiences and nearness in terms of geography, history, religion, and language. A frequent icon of Scandinavianism was a tree with a common root but different branches.

Instead of plans for military unification, Scandinavianism from the 1830s onwards provided an interpretative framework for domestic consolidation through the invocation of a glorious past (Stråth 2005b). In Sweden and Denmark, after the Napoleonic wars, romantic historical dreams were formulated in the aesthetic mode of neo-Gothicism. Gothic symbols from the Viking Age, with the free peasant, the *odalbonde*, as an ideal were emphasized. The Nordic peoples shared a vigorous antiquity. Neo-Gothicism could draw on Swedish Gothicism, developed in Sweden in the seventeenth century to legitimize Sweden's military power historically, as well as eighteenth-century Danish patriotism with its interest in Danish antiquity (for Gothicism in Sweden, see Hillebrecht 1997 and 2000; for Danish antiquity, see Feldbæk 1991). In seventeenth-century Sweden, the Nordic past had been Swedish, and in eighteenth-century Denmark, it had been Danish. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this past became Nordic or Scandinavian. The national ideas involved in Romanticism reinforced the feelings of a Nordic/Scandinavian kinship.

Political pan-Scandinavianism suffered a severe blow, however, during the Crimean War (1853–56). Oscar I, the Bernadotte king of Sweden, saw the war as an opportunity to reconquer Finland with the help of Britain and France against Russia. He thereby played on the "Finland dream" latent in the Swedish debate since 1809. Royal activism frightened public opinion, particularly in Norway, and strong opposition also emerged in Sweden. These royal plans were totally unrealistic and out of touch with the reality of European power politics at the time. Moreover, leading members of educated Finnish society, such as J. V. Snellman and Z. Topelius, publicly opposed any reunion with Sweden. They assumed that Finland could develop its own national character better as a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire than as an integral part of Sweden (see, e.g., Tiitta 1994, 82–85; Jalava 200, 211–14, 233–48).

In Denmark, the pan-Scandinavian movement perished as a political force in 1864, when Sweden–Norway refused to give Denmark the military aid that she expected after being attacked by Prussia and Austria. The king of

Sweden–Norway certainly wanted to intervene, hoping also for the Danish crown, but the two governments withstood him. Thus, the war resulted in a military catastrophe for Denmark, obliging it to relinquish Schleswig–Holstein to Prussia (Sandström 2004, 144–45). Ultimately, the Crimean War and the Danish–Prussian War worked centrifugally on the Scandinavian/Nordic unification project, since opinion during the two wars showed that no Dane or Norwegian was prepared to die for Sweden in order to reconquer Finland, and no Swede or Norwegian was prepared to die for Denmark in the defense of Schleswig and Holstein. Scandinavianism, with its ever more pronounced dynastic arguments, continued after the Danish defeat in 1864, but after German unification in 1871 it collapsed as a credible project of power politics. Neither Russia nor Germany was interested in competition with a Scandinavian union in the Baltic Sea region. The rise of the German Reich killed the plans for Scandinavian political unification and exposed the union between Sweden and Norway to growing tensions. Scandinavianism as a dynastic political program in the old sense became irrelevant. The king and the Swedish conservative establishment began a cultural and political orientation toward Germany, reinforced in the 1880s through trade political protectionism initiated in Europe by Bismarck. The Norwegian political elite, less aristocratic than in Sweden, preferred an orientation toward Britain based on free trade (Stråth 2005a).

Scandinavianism/Nordism continued as a cultural project with a much lower political profile. This new form of cultural Scandinavianism or Nordism was based on cooperation between civil society associations, interest organizations representing capital and labor, and professional corporations. This civil society movement for pragmatic cooperation also involved state institutions and functionaries, but not high politics. As a whole, one can see here a pattern that has repeated itself in later initiatives to create Nordic political unity. When an external threat makes itself felt, its first effect is to create high-politics cooperation with the neighboring countries, but as the threat grows, it begins to have the opposite effect. In the end, the governments in the Nordic countries gave priority to their own particular interests and Scandinavianism/Nordism again became a cultural project based on pragmatic civil society cooperation (Stråth 1980).

The growing Russian grip over Finland from the 1890s onward, in response to the German power in the Baltic area under the new Emperor Wilhelm II, further undermined the idea of Scandinavian or Nordic unity. The shadow of the big powers in the Baltic became darker. However, paradoxically, these increasing threats from the east and the south also engendered a brief wave of political neo-Scandinavianism/neo-Nordism in ideas of military Scandinavian cooperation. Nevertheless, when the military tensions between

Germany and Russia grew in the 1900s, such plans were abandoned and the inter-Nordic relationships receded to the kind of pragmatic cultural Scandinavian cooperation which emerged in the 1880s and 1890s in response to the collapse of dynastic political Scandinavianism after German unification in 1871.

This pragmatic Scandinavianism was thus a kind of countermovement to the centrifugal forces of nationalism and protectionism triggered by the economic crisis of the 1870s and by the increasingly polarizing rhetoric in Sweden and Norway. The ambitions of Scandinavian industry and business, as well as of the labor movements, to develop inter-Scandinavian networks and regular meetings were central to this movement of pragmatic Scandinavianism. The Swedish Social Democratic leader Hjalmar Branting argued for a future union of the Scandinavian peoples as opposed to the crown union of Sweden and Norway. Serious proposals for a Scandinavian customs union were made, albeit with little prospect for success, given the economic crisis. In the spring of 1899, the Nordic Association (*Nordisk Forening*) was established in Copenhagen, with Poul La Cour as its first president. He repeatedly emphasized the nonpolitical character of the association. According to him, the Scandinavian peoples should develop a system of mutual support and help for moral reinforcement and passive resistance against external violence. Indeed, numerous adherents of the neo-Scandinavianist movement considered cultural cooperation as a step toward military cooperation. Scandinavian cooperation was seen by some politicians with close connections to Germany as primarily directed against Russia, while for others it meant rejection of any thought of dealing with the Great Powers (Lindberg 1958, 140–54). The name of the association implied a vague intention of including Finland as an independent country, unlike in the earlier “Finland dream,” based on Swedish imageries of reunification with Sweden. The association had a liberal Danish profile, rather than the conservative or reactionary Swedish profile that had gained in influence in the union conflict with Norway. *Nordisk Forening* demonstrates that the distinction between pragmatic civil-society cooperation and high-political cooperation with institutional and military implications was not necessarily very sharp. Occasionally, depending on the foreign political and military situation, there were considerable overlaps between the two approaches to Scandinavianism/Nordism.

Neo-Scandinavianism at the turn of the century experienced a short heyday, but it could not prevent the final triumph in 1905 of the forces working for the dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway. With the liquidation of the Union, the preconditions of Scandinavian cooperation changed dramatically. One example was the first Congress of Nordic Historians in Lund, Sweden, which occurred in 1905 with mainly Swedish and Danish

participants. The Norwegian historians stayed at home. A few Swedish-speaking historians from Finland participated, but the majority of Finnish-speakers stayed at home in 1905 too. This can be interpreted as a general anti-Swedish protest, because its targets were both the Swedish-speaking academic minority in Finland and the “Swedes of Sweden” (*rikssvenskar*), who were loyal to them in the ongoing power struggle in Finland. With the outbreak of World War I, the trend changed again but now in a unifying direction (Stråth 2005b).

As industrialization, economic development, and pragmatic inter-Nordic cooperation really took off in the Nordic countries at the turn of the century (1900), a new conception of *Norden*/Scandinavia emerged in Europe. Instead of old militarist images or the idea of *Norden* as the poor periphery of Europe, the Nordic peoples and societies started to be represented as friendly, peaceful, democratic, cooperative, and hardworking, able to overcome their peripheral small-state status with technological and sociopolitical progressiveness (Stadius 2004, 229). In interwar agrarian populist visions of East Central Europe and the Balkans, Scandinavia in general was depicted as a “third way” that offered an alternative to both Western liberal *laissez-faire* capitalism and socialist collectivism. Scandinavian cooperativism was used to oppose the political pressure of Germany and Soviet-Russia (Dimou 2014; Trencsényi 2014). In Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the case of Finland was of special interest because of its similar geopolitical position on the north-western borderland of the Russian Empire and its lack of previous history as an independent state (see, e.g., Ščerbinskis 2011, 132–35).

## Regional Alternatives to Norden/Scandinavia

Before World War II, the most enthusiastic exponents of pragmatic Nordism were the Danes and the Swedes. In Norway, Nordic cooperation was overshadowed by the crisis over the union with Sweden, which had resulted in the dissolution of the union in 1905. In Finland, in addition to the Russification program that started in the 1890s, the language dispute between the Finnish-speaking majority and the Swedish-speaking minority harmed Nordic cooperation until the mid-1930s. Finnish-speaking nationalists tended to emphasize their Finno-Ugrian identity, and, after the independence of Finland in 1917, many of them prioritized collaboration with the Estonians and the Hungarians, striving for a pan-Finnic Greater Finland (see, e.g., Saarikoski 1993, 111–20). On the governmental level, the Nordic orientation made its final breakthrough in Finland only in 1935, when the weakness of the League of Nations had become all too obvious and the threat of Soviet occupation was increasing (Kaukiainen 1984, 215–19).

For those interwar scholars who wanted to connect Nordism with pan-Finnicism, Fennoscandia turned out to be an apt concept. The term had been introduced in 1898 by the Finnish geographer Wilhelm Ramsay, who had organized a scientific expedition to the Kola Peninsula a decade earlier. According to this conceptualization, Norway, Sweden, and Greater Finland (including the Kola Peninsula and what was called in Finland Eastern Karelia) formed a clear-cut geographical, zoological, and botanical entity with so-called natural borders between the West and the East. While this idea allowed the Finns to anchor Finland in its traditional Nordic context and Western cultural heritage, it also justified Finnish expansion in the borderland between Finland and Soviet Russia (see, e.g., Voionmaa 1919, 34–37, 271–75; Tiitta 1994, 160–61, 347–49).

Another interwar alternative to *Norden*/Scandinavia was Baltoscandia. This term was introduced by the Swedish geographer Sten De Geer in 1928 as an expanded version of Fennoscandia. In addition to Finland and Scandinavia, it also included Estonia and Latvia. The concept was further elaborated by the Estonian geographer Edgar Kant, who promoted the idea of Baltoscandia as a “natural” geographical and cultural unit, based on race, the Lutheran religion, and a common cultural heritage. The Lithuanians were not happy about their exclusion, and the Lithuanian geographer Kazys Pakštas soon included Lithuania in Baltoscandia by expanding his arguments even further into the political and cultural sphere. His objective was to create one political unit around the Baltic Sea, a large Baltoscandian Confederation. The obvious driving force behind these regional conceptualizations was the threat posed by the Soviet Union and Germany and a subsequent attempt to overcome small-state status by uniting with neighbors in a similar position. However, World War II and the Cold War put an end to these visions, at least temporarily (Lehti 1998, 22–26; see also chapter 3 in this volume).

The debate among geographers about the borders implied by concepts such as Scandinavia, *Norden*, Baltoscandia, and Fennoscandia had already emerged in other academic disciplines in the nineteenth century. Archaeology, comparative linguistics, and physical anthropology emerged, defining what fell inside and what fell outside such concepts on the basis of prehistoric findings and graves, language families, physical appearance, such as skulls, and genes. What was presented as scientific and objective knowledge had a strong political undertone. The scientific source material offered rich possibilities for combining and constructing borders between insiders and outsiders in different ways: Scandinavia as German or non-German, Finland as Nordic or non-Nordic, the Baltic peoples as Nordic, Finnish, or German, and so on. The academic debate underpinned the various projects of identity construction. Arguments from the academic debate could also be used in various

ways for or against the various political unification schemes (for comparative linguistics in this respect, see Nilsson 2012).

After World War I, there was also some interest in Finland in “the Europe Between” (*Väli-Eurooppa*, *Zwischeneuropa*), the macroregion comprising the new small states that had emerged after the collapse of the Habsburg, Hohenzollern, Romanov, and Ottoman Empires. In English, there is no exact equivalent to this concept because Central Europe and Middle Europe include Germany, whereas “the Europe Between” excluded it (Vares 1997, 110–11.) This region was described by the Finnish historian Väinö Voionmaa (1919, 63) as “the precarious zone” (*vaarallinen vyöhyke*) of Europe, reaching from the Balkan peninsula along the Danube and the Vistula all the way to the Baltic countries and Northern Finland. The same “peculiar zone of small nations” was identified, for instance, by the first president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš G. Masaryk, who in 1916 baptized it “the Central Zone.” Similar to his Finnish contemporaries, he felt that this region was harassed both from the East (Russia, Turkey) and the West (Germany, Austria, France), and its small nations had been time and again overrun by their more superior neighbors. Thus, closer political and economic cooperation was a reasonable option (cited in Drace-Francis 2013, 163–67).

From the Finnish point of view, however, Czechoslovakia and the southern countries of “the Central Zone” were not geopolitically important, because Finnish interwar foreign policy considered the Soviet Union Finland’s only real threat. Therefore, Finland, particularly in the early 1920s, sought cooperation with the states on the coast of the Baltic Sea, that is, with Poland, Estonia, and Latvia, whereas Lithuania’s territorial disputes with Poland kept it out of this “border state alliance.” Even in this very restricted sense, however, “the Europe Between” soon withered away. The main reason was Poland’s tendency to interpret *Zwischeneuropa* as a counter-concept to Central Europe because of Poland’s antagonistic relation with Germany, whereas Finland cherished good relations with the latter. In practice, Finland had distanced itself from the border state alliance already in 1925. Cooperation with Sweden, the Baltic countries, and the League of Nations became the cornerstones in security policy (Kallenautilio 1985, 86–91.)

Although Finland had obvious similarities with the new countries in Central and South Eastern Europe, the Finns were adamant that they were the bastion of the West—they were not Eastern and definitely did not want to resemble the Slavs (Vares 1997, 138; Vares 2003, 248–50, 254–62). The Balkans were actually used as a negative counter-concept in Finnish identity-building, sometimes further connected with the othering of the Turks and Islam (see, e.g., Schoultz 1884; Neovius 1897; Rosberg 1905). In the Nordic countries in general, particularly after World War I broke out, the Balkans came to stand

for the turmoil of disorganized small countries fighting each other, and political neutrality was cherished in order to avoid “a new Balkans in *Norden*” (see Dahl 2001, 30).

The late nineteenth century also saw the emergence of a more sinister kind of Nordism, based on racial classifications and typologies that were produced by academic disciplines such as physical anthropology, race biology, and comparative anatomy, combined with archeological and philological findings. These quasiscientific racist theories were further mixed with Old Norse mythology and pan-Germanic ideals. This mishmash led to the idea of a common Aryan/Germanic/Nordic blood, “the Nordic race,” and its racial superiority (Musiał 1998, 6–7; Østergård 1997, 32). In the Nordic countries, racist pan-Germanism was mostly supported by small factions among the conservative upper classes, and it was often connected to the movement for racial hygiene and eugenics (see, e.g., Dahl 2001, 23–30). In addition, the Left cultivated eugenics for the creation of a strong and healthy people. In broad strata of the populations, the academic construction of racism promoted racial thought with stratification and demarcation between races.

In Nazi Germany, “the pan-Nordic idea” (*allnordische Gedanke*) was espoused by some powerful Nazi figures, such as Heinrich Himmler and Alfred Rosenberg (Werther 2010, 70–71). Although the number of convinced Nazis in the Nordic countries was small, the number of Germanophiles and Nazi sympathizers was larger, and after 1933 it became difficult to distinguish these groups from each other (see, e.g., Hansson 2003, 191–94). Thus, it is safe to say that all Nordic countries had significant communities—mostly academic and military—that supported a German-Scandinavian-Nordic rapprochement on the basis of their racial brotherhood, although this did not become the established conceptualization of *Norden* (Musiał 1998, 6–7).

## The Nordic Model of the Welfare State

While ethnic-racial Nordic conceptions were discredited after World War II, the idea of the Nordic or Scandinavian welfare state soon became the dominating conceptualization of *Norden* both in its xenostereotypes (foreign images of *Norden*) and in its autostereotypes (Nordic images of themselves). The origins of this conception can be traced to the mid-1930s, when the relatively swift recovery of the Scandinavian economies after the Great Depression, achieved without the abandonment of parliamentary democracy and the market economy, gained foreign attention. In international media, travel reports, and scholarly publications, Sweden in particular was elevated to the status of a model for others to follow, resulting in the image of Scandinavia as the avant-garde of modernity (Musiał 1998, 1–9).



One of the earliest publications to promote the welfare state was the American journalist Marquis Childs's *Sweden, the Middle Way*, published in 1936 in an attempt to convince the American public of the New Deal type of state interventionism. In Europe, among the pioneers promoting the progressiveness of *Norden* were British journalists as well as German and Austrian political exiles, such as Willy Brandt, Herbert Wehner, and Bruno Kreisky, who had lived in Scandinavia during the war. However, it should be noted that the very concept of "the Nordic model" only became widely known in the 1980s, whereas "the Swedish model" had established itself as a concept already by the 1960s. It should also be noted that, when they advocated a form of Nordic welfare, Brandt, Wehner, and Kreisky were met with considerable skepticism well into the 1960s. The racial abuse of the term "Nordic" in Nazi Germany was a heavy legacy, which locked out *Norden* as a point of reference at universities, for instance, until the student radicalization of the 1960s, when interest grew in a Nordic alternative based on welfare as opposed to race (Stråth 1993, 56–58; Musiał 1998, 24–30; Hilson 2008, 19–20; O'Hara 2008, 91–98).

During the Cold War, the Nordic countries were able to enjoy a lower level of tension than many other parts of Europe, which boosted the image of *Norden* not only as the most egalitarian and progressive region in the world, but also as an exceptionally peaceful, antimilitaristic, and largely disarmed region. The image of cooperation was reinforced by the establishment of the Nordic Council in 1952 as an interparliamentary body, with the task of advising and making recommendations to the Nordic governments; the Nordic passport union in 1952; the joint labor market in 1954; the harmonization of laws, such as the Nordic Convention on Social Security in 1955; and the establishment of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1971 to provide a forum for intergovernmental cooperation. Moreover, during the 1950s, concern for the plight of the developing nations entered Swedish popular consciousness as an additional aspect of the Swedish model of society, generating the idea in the 1960s that the country had become "the world's conscience." This attitude was adopted by other Nordic countries, resulting in a self-image of benevolent helpers and outsiders in relation to colonialism, which fed a certain sense of moral superiority (see, e.g., Wæver 1992, 77–79, 84–87; Browning 2007, 33–35; Palmberg 2009, 35). In short, in the Nordic countries, *Norden* functioned as a demarcation from the rest of Europe and sometimes also from "Europe" as such: a democratic, Protestant, progressive, and egalitarian North against a Catholic, conservative, and capitalist Europe as well as a totalitarian Eastern bloc (Sørensen and Stråth 1997, 22).

At that time, *Norden* acquired the status of an archetypical example of a *Geschichtsregion* (historical region). To cite the sociologist Amitai Etzioni (1965, 220–21), "There is no region in Europe and few exist in the world

where culture, tradition, language, ethnic origin, political structure, and religion—all ‘background’ and identitive elements—are as similar as they are in the Nordic region.” The particularity of the Nordic countries was further consolidated by the expanding field of welfare-state research in the social sciences. Among the most influential publications was the Danish sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990). Inspired by the economic historian Karl Polanyi, Esping-Andersen used the degree of “de-commodification” as the decisive measure of the degree to which social rights in a given society permit people to achieve a decent standard of living outside the sphere of pure market forces. On these grounds, he defined three distinctive types of welfare regime: the liberal (Anglo-Saxon), the conservative-corporatist (continental European), and the social democratic (Scandinavian). Although this typology immediately became the subject of intense debate (see, e.g., Kvist and Torfing 1996), “the Nordic model” as such was considered a standard concept in international welfare-state scholarship.

The imagery of the Nordic model was an instrument in the Cold War that placed *Norden* on the Western side, although two of the Nordic countries were neutral in military-political terms. State-generated welfare—the basis of the Nordic model—connoted democracy as a counterpoint to the people’s democracies in the East. However, as the British journalist Roland Huntford’s polemical *The New Totalitarians* had already illustrated in 1971, the Nordic welfare model could also be pictured as an overpowering monolith that acted as a brake on economic productivity, efficiency, and flexibility, subordinating citizens to intrusive state control—a view that started to gain more popularity in the Nordic countries after the 1970s oil crisis, the increasing bureaucratization of Nordic state machinery, and the rise of conservative governments with neoliberal programs in the 1980s in most countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). From the late-1970s onwards, morally dubious features of welfare-state ideology became subject to public discussion, such as the eugenicist laws that were in force in all mainland Nordic countries from the mid-1930s to the mid-1970s and the forced integration of the Sámi and Romani minorities (Hilson 2008, 102–14).

## The Post-1989 Norden

After the collapse of the Eastern bloc in 1989–91, which coincided with an international economic recession, the conceptualization of *Norden* once again entered a new phase. First, the postwar Nordic balance had been largely based on the competition between capitalism and communism, which anchored the Nordic countries between the superpowers, although, as stated above, on the democratic Western side. In military-political terms, the in-between situation

was split: Denmark and Norway belonged to NATO, whereas Finland and Sweden were neutral. After 1989, relations to Europe and to the superpowers could be described as confusing and insecure. Second, “the third way” in international politics had been linked to a “middle way” in social policy, which ended in a crisis due to the Nordic welfare states’ inability to pay for their extensive welfare programs. In the politics of decolonization, with competition between the superpowers in the developing countries, a Nordic shared approach replaced the previous military-political split in the Nordic region. The developing nations became an arena for Nordic Third Way politics with development aid.

At the turn of the new millennium, one could also notice a significant attempt to reconceptualize *Norden*. Promoted by scholars of international relations and political sciences, a broader concept of the North was reinvented—described as the shift “from Nordism to Baltism” or “the return of Northernness.” As these slogans indicate, the Nordic countries oriented themselves in the 1990s toward the Baltic and Arctic regions, which signified potentially a conceptual enlargement of *Norden* (Wæver 1992, 101; Joenniemi and Lehti 2003, 136–37). In Russia, the Northern dimension, particularly the Arctic, also gained a new strategic importance given the territorial losses in the South after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Turoma 2011, 163–64). On the organizational level, a notable element of this new orientation was the restructuring of the Nordic Council to advance cooperation with the Baltic and the Arctic (see, e.g., Browning 2007, 41). The latest arrival in the new Nordic “blended family” is Scotland. There the nationalist movement has cherished a Northern identity, not only to separate Scotland from England and to oppose the London power bloc (the South), but also to prove its viability as a Northern small-state (see, e.g., MacLeod 1998, 850–51).

However, these enlargements have hardly led to a shared Baltic or Northern regional identification or conceptualization. Instead, there has been a broadening of the concept of *Norden* as an identity-promoting space. In the case of Russia, the Ukrainian-Crimean crisis that started in the spring of 2014 has rapidly weakened relations with the Nordic countries. In the most recent economic crises in the European Union, antagonism between Northern and Southern Europe has been particularly strong in Finland, which is the only Nordic Eurozone country. In the two other Nordic European Union member states, Sweden and Denmark, which have not introduced the euro as their currency but maintained the crown, the euro debate has been observed from a distance and with a certain satisfaction from being outside the Eurozone.

Finally, in some visions of future region-building, the old idea of a Nordic Federation (*Förbundsstaten Norden*) has been reinvented to increase Nordic influence in the world in general and in the European Union in particular

(see, e.g., Wetterberg 2010). This suggestion has been labeled by most Nordic politicians and scholars as highly unrealistic, however, and the primary arguments in the debate have emphasized Nordic cooperation as a model within the European Union and as an instrument for greater Nordic power in Europe (Strang 2012; Grüne 2014; see also Wæver 1992, 94). Nevertheless, the present situation highlights the fact that national and regional identifications are complex processes, and even if it might seem that the meaning of *Norden* has expanded recently, the narrower vision as an alternative and a superior model for the rest of Europe is still lurking in the background.

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## Notes

1. The noun *septentrion* refers to the seven stars of the Big Dipper asterism (Septentrion), which dominates the skies of the North and which contains a pointer to the North Star (Polaris); see Kirby 1995, 2, and Kliemann 2005a, 23.
2. In Olaus Magnus's *Carta marina* (1539), the Northern Lands (*septentrionalium terrarum*) included present-day Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden as well as the north-western part of Russia and the present-day Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania).

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## Chapter 3

# The Baltic

*Pärtel Piirimäe*



### The Emergence of “the Baltic” as a Region

The toponym “Baltia” first appears in Greco-Roman geographical writings. Pliny the Elder writes in his *Natural History* that “Xenophon of Lampsacus tells us that at a distance of three days’ sail from the shores of Scythia, there is an island of immense size called Balcia, which by Pytheas is called Basilia” (Plinius Secundus [77–79 A.D.] 1906, IV.95, 23–79). The alternative names mentioned by the geographers of antiquity are “Abalus” (used by Pytheas according to Pliny) and “Basileia” (by Diodorus in *Historical Library*) (Plinius Secundus [77–79 A.D.] 1906, XXXVII.11; Diodorus Siculus [60–30 B.C.] 1939, V.23). Common to all these references is that the authors mention great quantities of amber that are washed up on the shores of this “island,” and therefore it is most likely that Balcia/Baltia was the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. The etymological origins of the word are not clear, as the root *balt* can in Baltic and Slavic languages refer to “white” (Latvian *balts*, Lithuanian *baltas*) or “lake, marshland” (Russian *boloto*), but it has also been associated with Germanic *belt* that originates from Latin *balteus* (Jansen 2005, 35).

The eleventh-century chronicler Adam of Bremen was apparently the first to call the sea *Mare Balticum*, and this usage was well established by the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries (Berkholz 1882; Jansen 2005, I, 35). The variations of *Balticum* became adopted as the name of this sea in English, Romance languages, Slavic languages, and also Baltic languages (Latvian and Lithuanian). A number of European nations, however, use a name that refers to the relative geographical location of the sea. For Germans (*Ostsee*, but historically also *Baltisches Meer*), Dutch (*Oostzee*), Swedes (*Östersjön*), Danes (*Østersøen*), Norwegians (*Østersjøen*), and Icelanders (*Eystrasalt*), it is naturally “the Eastern Sea,” but curiously also the Finns, who live on its eastern coast, have

translated the Swedish term (*Itämeri*). The Estonian *Läänemeri* (the West Sea), on the other hand, refers to its correct relative geographical location.<sup>1</sup>

On the eastern shores of the sea, a relatively coherent political entity has existed since the fourteenth century, when the king of Denmark sold his possessions in Northern Estonia to the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order. The Order was the leading player in the confederation of small states that formed the Livonian confederation known as *Livland*.<sup>2</sup> The word “Baltic,” however, was not applied to any land area before the nineteenth century. The common identity of Livland was largely lost when the confederation collapsed in the Livonian wars (1558–83) and its territories were split up between Sweden, Poland, and Denmark. These partitions formed the seeds for the provincial division between Estland and Livland that was essentially preserved until the establishment of Estonian and Latvian ethnic provinces after the February Revolution of 1917. In 1561, the Swedes acquired the Teutonic Order’s possessions in current Northern Estonia, which formed the bulk of the province of Estland. The dynastic union state of Poland-Lithuania acquired the territories in current Southern Estonia and Northern Latvia, which formed the province of Livland. Some sort of larger territorial unity was reestablished during the first half of the seventeenth century, when Sweden managed to conquer most of Livland from Poland-Lithuania (1629 Truce of Altmark) and the island of Saaremaa from Denmark (1645 Treaty of Brömsebro). Under the Swedish supremacy, these provinces retained their separate institutions, character, and identity, but from the perspective of Stockholm they formed a distinct entity, and the policy initiatives of the central government were usually simultaneously applied in all three provinces. Ingermanland, the fourth Swedish province at the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, with its Orthodox population and the lack of German nobility, presented largely different challenges.

The parts of Livland remaining in Polish-Lithuanian hands (in the present-day Latgale region in eastern Latvia) formed a separate province (*Livonia transdunensis* or the Duchy of *Inflanty*). In addition, the Duchy of *Kurland* was created south of the Daugava River, functioning as a semi-independent vassal state of Poland-Lithuania. The historical trajectory of Lithuania was different from the territories taken by the ethnic Estonians, Livs, and Latvians. In 1386, the rulers of the Lithuanian Jagiellonian dynasty also inherited the throne of Poland, forming a personal union between the two states. With the 1569 Union of Lublin, the personal union was transformed into a common state known as *Rzeczpospolita* (Commonwealth). The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an equal partner in the union, but it lost a large part of its territory, as the Ukrainian lands were transferred to Poland according to the treaty of Lublin. Nevertheless, Lithuania still comprised a vast land area of approxi-

mately three hundred thousand square kilometers in present-day Lithuania and Belarus (see Kasekamp 2010, 43–44).

The “Baltic region,” in its original form, emerged on the basis of three provinces on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea: Estland, Livland, and Kurland. They shared a common historical heritage in medieval Livonia, they all had a ruling class of German origin and a peasant class of native peoples, and they shared the Lutheran faith. The impetus for the emergence of a common regional identity was their incorporation into the Russian conglomerate empire during the eighteenth century. The Swedish overseas provinces Estland and Livland were incorporated on the basis of the 1710 capitulations, which guaranteed the preservation of the Lutheran religion, autonomous institutions and legal system, and the leading position of German elites. In 1795, with the third partition of Poland, the former Duchy of Kurland became the third so-called German province in the Russian empire. Polish Livonia (*Inflanty*) had already been ceded to Russia during the first partition in 1772. It preserved its Catholicism, but not its provincial autonomy, as it was fully incorporated into the Vitebsk governorate of Russia. Similarly, Lithuanian territories that were gobbled up by the Russian empire in the subsequent partitions of Poland in 1793 and 1795 did not acquire an autonomous status in the manner of the “German” provinces.

The idea that the three provinces of Estland, Livland, and Kurland formed a common region began to emerge in the late eighteenth century. The local political elites, it has to be noted, had developed a rather strong particularistic provincialism, which for a long time inhibited the formation of a common identity (see P. Piirimäe 2012). Hence the idea of a common region was first introduced by outside observers who, unlike the locals, tended to notice the commonalities between the three provinces rather than the differences. During the reign of Catherine II (1762–96), who attempted an administrative standardization of the provinces, the Russian central government began using the concepts *Ostzeiski krai* and *Pribaltiiski krai* (the region at the Baltic) in their official documents. In 1801, the provincial governments were submitted to the administration of a single governor-general. The similarities were also noticed by foreign travelers, such as the Englishwoman Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake, whose travel account, *Letters from the shores of the Baltic* (1841), was translated into German as *Baltische Briefe* (1846) (Berkholz 1882, 520; Eastlake 1842). About the same time, there was increasing interest in the study of the autochthonous peoples along the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. Linguistically there were two different groups in the region, and there was no agreement at first as to which group should bear the name “Baltic.” *Mayers Conversations-Lexicon* from 1844 speaks of “Baltische Finnen,” consisting of “eigentliche Finnen oder Suomen” (actual Finns), Kuren, Liven, Esten, and

Lappen. However, in 1845, linguist F. Nesselmann recommended the use of “Baltic languages” (*baltische Sprachen*) for the Old-Prussian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages, and this usage became established in the second half of the nineteenth century (Jansen 2005, 38). The perceived linguistic unity between Latvians and Lithuanians did not, however, affect the emerging regional “Baltic” identity, because this was borne by German elites rather than autochthonous populations.

Among the German inhabitants in the region, a common Baltic identity was most strongly felt and promoted by the intellectuals (*Literatenstand*) who founded German-language newspapers addressing the readership of all three provinces. The first such publications still referred to the provinces as distinct spatial entities: in 1823 *Ostsee-Provinzen-Blatt*, and from 1828 to 1838 *Kur-, Liv- und Esthländisches Provinzialblatt*, were published. In 1836, however, the newspaper *Das Inland* was founded, uniting the provinces under a single word. A significant institution for joint activities of Baltic intellectuals was the “Society for the Study of History and Antiquities of the Russian Baltic Provinces” (*Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*), founded in 1834 in Riga. While “Ostseeprovinzen” was still the preferred concept, “baltisch” was often used with the same meaning, for example by liberal scholar and writer Georg von Schultz-Bertram in 1852 in the title of his *Baltische Skizzen* (in Jansen 2005, 41). However, the concept “baltisch” was simultaneously used in a broader sense in Germany to signify all territories adjacent to the Baltic Sea—in North-Germany there were a number of “Baltic” societies and periodicals dedicated to local studies (examples in Hackmann 2015, 30).

### 1860s–1870s: The Formation of Three “Nations” in the Baltic Provinces

In Estonian and Latvian national historiographies, the period from the 1860s to the 1870s has been hailed as their national “awakening,” but it should be noted that it was also the period of the emergence of the third “nation” in the region: the Balts (*Balten*). It was largely the strengthening of Russian nationalism and the pressure to liquidate the special status of the Baltic provinces that impelled the provincial elites to view themselves as a common group. Thus the concept “Balts” acquired strong ideological connotations at the time. German unification under Bismarck increased the national pride of Baltic Germans, yet they never identified themselves with the new German empire, stressing their loyalty to the Romanov dynasty and their historical rights to govern the Baltic provinces. Nevertheless, the German character of the region was anathema to the Slavophiles, who urged the central government

to implement the policies of Russification in administration and education, and to advance the conversion of peasants to Orthodoxy in the provinces. In the words of the leading Slavophile Yuri Samarin, the Baltic provinces were “not an advance post of Germany . . . but a western maritime borderland of Russia” (Hiden 2004, 3). The objection to a mental geography projected by German concepts “deutsche” or “deutsch-russische Ostseeprovinzen” is also apparent in the works of Russian authors who emphasize that “pribaltiiskii krai” lacks definitive natural boundaries and is therefore a “natural continuation” of Russian territory up to the Baltic Sea (Hackmann 2015, note 56; Brüggemann 2012, 127).

The Balts in the original sense referred primarily to the nobility who were working toward the political union of the three governorates, including a common Diet of four noble corporations (*Ritterschaften*).<sup>3</sup> Baltic-German liberal thinkers, however, called for a Baltic unity that would break down the class boundaries, proposing reforms that would legally equalize the nobility, burghers, and literati. In 1859, they launched the journal *Baltische Monatschrift* (1859–1931)—the first time that “Baltic” was used in a title, a fact that expressed its wide-ranging political program.<sup>4</sup> Yet even this liberal project excluded the local populations—Latvians and Estonians, who made up the peasant class and were considered by the Germans as people without nationality. The three groups went along three different paths, forming their own distinct national identities, with a strong antagonism emerging between the Balts (later also called Baltic-Germans: *Deutschbalten* or *Baltendeutsche*) on the one side and Estonians and Latvians on the other. There was an attempt in 1879 by an Estonian journalist Harry Jannsen to launch the concept “Baltia” that would unite all three ethnic groups in the provinces (Estonians, Latvians, and Germans), proclaiming that “we are all ‘Balts.’” But he was sharply rebuffed both by Germans—who could not imagine sharing political power with peasants—and by more radical Estonian nationalist “awakeners,” who refused any cooperation with the historical “oppressors,” as the Germans were widely viewed up to World War II.<sup>5</sup>

It is therefore only natural that the concept “Baltia/Baltija,” which the Estonian and Latvian writers had used in the 1870s in a neutral meaning as a geographical term for the whole region, subsequently went out of fashion as it was increasingly associated with the German institutions and culture in the region. The Estonians and Latvians replaced it with the geographical concepts “Estonia” (*Eestimaa*) and “Latvia” (*Latvija*), which were based on ethnic rather than administrative boundaries.<sup>6</sup> It should be pointed out here that the formulation of the idea of a cohesive ethnic nation with its natural territory was more straightforward in the case of the Estonians, whose area of settlement coincided rather precisely with the province of Estland and the

northern districts of the province of Livland. The Latvian speakers, on the other hand, faced the challenge of incorporating Latgalians, who had experienced a different historical trajectory. Their nobility was Polish, not German; their religion was Catholic, not Lutheran; and the emancipation of the serfs took place there in 1861, as in the rest of Russia, not in the years 1816–19, as in the Baltic provinces. The Latgalians developed their own identity and even used the concept “Baltic” for negative self-definition—at the time of their own national “awakening” in 1904–06, the Latvian-speakers in Latgale started referring to the Latvians in Livland (*Vidzeme*) and Kurland-Semigallia (*Kurzeme-Semgale*) as the Balts (Plakans 2011a, 276; 2011b). In the case of Estonia, the explicit aim of nationalist politicians in the early twentieth century was the unification of Estonian ethnic areas into a single autonomous province within the Russian empire. This was achieved after the 1917 February revolution, thus creating a clear-cut territorial basis for a future nation-state. By contrast, not all politicians in Latgale were sure whether to join a potential Latvian state or to create one of their own (Plakans 2011b).

### 1917–1920: Nation-States or Federations?

The new political order that emerged from the ruins of the Russian and Habsburg empires at the end of World War I rendered a number of prewar regionalist conceptions obsolete. The earlier subnational region *Baltikum*, consisting of three German-dominated provinces of the Russian empire, lost its inner cohesion when the independent nation-states Estonia and Latvia were founded in their stead. The concept “Baltic” did not disappear as a result, but its meaning changed to reflect the new reality on the ground. The process by which the subnational concept was transformed into a supranational one was far from straightforward. Although the concept “Baltic states” as comprising the three republics Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania became relatively clearly established by the late 1930s, this specific view of the region only emerged in competition with other conceptualizations, and it remained open to various interpretations and reinterpretations during the entire inter-war period.

It would be anachronistic to view the emergence of new nation-states on the eastern shore of the Baltic coast as an inevitable outcome of the drive for independence of political elites in these countries. Quite the contrary, until the end of 1917, the national leaders in both Estonia and Latvia envisioned the future of their countries as autonomous parts of various possible federations, rather than as independent states. The Baltic rim (*Randstaaten*) was seen geopolitically as a frontline between the great powers Russia and Germany, where one or the other would dominate depending on their relative

strength. An independent existence seemed questionable here in the long term. For both Estonians and Latvians, domination by Germany was considered the worst possible option, as this would have strengthened even more the position of local German elites, diminishing the prospects for cultural and political development of the indigenous populations. Therefore, hopes were at first pinned on the achievement of political autonomy within a federal and democratic Russian empire (Tõnisson 1917).

Immediately after the fall of the Russian monarchy in February 1917, this seemed like an achievable goal. But the situation changed substantially in the autumn, when it became clear that the collapsing Russian state was unable to protect the Baltic provinces against the German offensive. This was the period of unprecedented regionalist dreams, as Baltic politicians started to look for a third way between Germany and Russia. Even now independent statehood was not the preferred option, and various federalist projects were proposed instead, the aim of which was to secure national self-determination within a larger political framework. A favorite construct was a Baltic-Scandinavian federation that would connect the Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Finnish, and Scandinavian nations (a case in point is Jaan Tõnisson's speech on 25 August 1917; see Kuldkepp 2013, 330; Lehti 1999, 82–85). This proposal, advanced mainly by Estonian leaders, but also supported by a number of Latvians, had its roots in the idealistic images of Scandinavia, the corresponding myth of the “good old Swedish times,” and the notion of a natural closeness of Baltic, Finnic, and Scandinavian nations (for Estonia, see Kuldkepp 2013; for Latvia, see Ščerbinskis 2003 and 2012). More limited variants on the theme were a Scandinavian monarchy that would include Estonia, or an Estonian-Swedish union state. During the war, several Estonian “paradiplomats,” as Mart Kuldkepp has called them, attempted to incite “Swedish patriots” to take up their historical mission and intervene on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea in support of such broad regionalist projects (Kuldkepp 2014, 23). Here it was possible to tap into the geopolitical visions of Swedish conservative politicians and scientists, most notably Rudolf Kjellén, who advocated the adoption of an ambitious “Baltic program” that would project Swedish economic and cultural power across the Baltic Sea (Kuldkepp 2015; Marklund 2015).

Another popular alternative, proposed repeatedly by the Estonians in the period from 1917 to 1919, was a Finnish-Estonian union state (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 357–63; Lehti 1999, 108–17; Suits 1917; Zetterberg 2004, 52–54). This reflected the deep-rooted solidarity of the Estonian national movement with their linguistic relatives in Finland that dated back to the mid-nineteenth century, frequently expressed with the metaphor “Finnish bridge.” The Finns were seen as more advanced in their national cultural and

economic development. The Grand Duchy of Finland, which had a parliamentary political system and enjoyed strong autonomy within the Russian Empire, had served as a model for both Estonian and Latvian national aspirations (Alenius 1998; Karjahärm and Sirk 1997, 278–80). A common state was based on the idea of linguistic kinship, and therefore a federation with Finland was never discussed by the Latvians. Instead, at the end of 1917, they considered the proposal by the Lithuanians to form a union of two Baltic-speaking nations, the Latvians and the Lithuanians (Lehti 1999, 92). None of these projects led to any serious negotiations with a view to their realization, because of a lack of interest on the part of the prospective partners. A federal union with the Estonians was rejected by the majority of Finnish leaders, who considered any commitment to their southern neighbors an increased security risk (Zetterberg 2004, 53). There were a few who entertained the idea of a “greater Finland,” which would have included Estonia and Karelia, but such a Finnish-dominated structure did not correspond to the Estonian idea of a federation of equal states (Lehti 1999, 114–17). With regard to the Latvian-Lithuanian union, there was little enthusiasm in the relatively industrialized Lutheran Latvia to join with the agrarian and Catholic Lithuania (Lehti 1999, 92). The broader union of Baltic and Scandinavian nations was also a stillborn idea, because the Scandinavian states had no interest in being drawn into the struggle between Russia and Germany over the control of the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea.

Thus, the creation of fully independent Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania only became the goal of local politicians in 1918, when all new proposed regionalist models had failed and the old models were seen as a threat to vital national interests. All three had to fight off Bolshevik attempts to restore Russia to its prerevolutionary boundaries, and at the same time they had to avoid the reestablishment of the supremacy of former dominant nations in their territories: Germans in the case of Estonia and Latvia, and Poles in the case of Lithuania. The Germanization of the Russian Baltic provinces became a real threat when they were occupied by the advancing German army in February 1918. Institutions such as *Baltische Vertrauensrat*, *Baltenverband* and *Deutsch-Baltische Gesellschaft* had been set up in Germany during the war with an aim to lobby for the annexation of *Baltikum*. One of the most active proponents of this idea was the historian Theodor Schiemann, who in 1915 wrote in a pamphlet that the three “German Baltic provinces of Russia” constituted a single cultural region (*Kulturgebiet*) because “it does not matter that it is populated by Estonians in the north and by Latvians in the south since they both share the same German culture” (in Meyer 1956, 222). German geographers, for their part, took pains to prove the existence of natural boundaries that separated Russia from its Baltic provinces, contrary to what the Russian



geographers had maintained. Albrecht Penck claimed that the Narva River, Lake Peipus, and the Velikaya River formed a sharp natural boundary, which he called *warägische Grenzsaum*. This divided Russia, with its continental climate, from the Baltics, which had more of a “mid-European” character (*mitteleuropäisches Gepräge*) (Penck 1917, 14–15; see Schultze 2006, 49).

The German government ignored the Estonian declaration of independence from 24 February 1918 and similar calls by the Latvians. Paying lip service to the Brest-Litovsk treaty, which stipulated that the future of the provinces should be determined “in agreement with their populations,” they consulted a General Provincial Assembly dominated by Baltic German landlords. The assembly duly pleaded with the Kaiser to create a unified “Baltic state” under German protection and in personal union with the Prussian crown (Hiden 2004, 26). This project collapsed with the retreat of the German army after the German revolution in November 1918. Nevertheless, as late as June 1919, the Baltic German philosopher Hermann Keyserling proposed the idea of a supranational “cosmopolitan” Baltic state, citing the example of Belgium as a suitable model (Keyserling 1919; see also Undusk 2003). The sentiment that the only viable state in the region could be created out of all former Baltic provinces under Baltic German leadership was not, however, shared by all Germans. Liberal journalist Paul Schiemann, the nephew of the nationalist historian Theodor Schiemann, became by autumn 1918 absolutely committed to an independent Estonia and Latvia (Hiden 2004, 29, 36; Schiemann 1979), and in the subsequent war against Bolshevik Russia, Baltic Germans formed their own regiment that fought alongside the Estonian national army.<sup>7</sup> For liberal Baltic Germans, the national goal was to achieve cultural autonomy within new independent states (Housden 2014).

The Lithuanians, with their different historical heritage, were less sensitive about a possible German-dominated union, and they sought to advance their national cause under German occupation. The Lithuanian national council *Taryba* even elected a Catholic German duke as King Mindaugas II in the summer of 1918. After the collapse of the German military, the election was canceled and the Lithuanians also took the path to full independence. The other option, advanced by the Poles but also by some Lithuanians, was to pursue the reestablishment of the historical Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in a federal form, which in some visions would also have united the Belarusian lands. In March 1921, the Foreign Ministry of Poland proposed, as a solution to the Vilna question, the establishment of a federal Lithuania, united with Poland through a common president (Senn 1966, 63). All such proposals were eventually rejected, as they were out of touch with the prevailing national sentiments of the time. Although the multilayered Lithuanian-Polish cultural and political identity was still strong among some Lithuanian leaders,

all solutions that did not recognize the Lithuanian character of the new state were found unacceptable.

### The Interwar Period: The Emergence of “the Baltic States”

After the imperialist aspirations of Russia and Germany were defeated and the proposed alternative regionalist projects did not bear fruit, five independent nation-states—Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland—were created on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. A certain unity between these states was perceived both by outside observers and by local political elites. The consciousness of the weakness of small states in international politics was continuously very high, which is why attempts were made to realize some earlier regionalist dreams in the form of an alliance system between independent states. When it became clear that the Scandinavian states were not interested in a broader Baltic Sea alliance, a series of conferences was held with the goal of creating an alliance that would comprise the five states on the eastern shore. For its supporters, such an alliance system represented a regional framework that would set them apart from a German-dominated *Mitteleuropa*, and at the same time offer a credible defense against Soviet expansion. The ostensible aim for the Baltic union, as argued by the Estonian and Latvian envoys to Britain and France, was to guarantee the “freedom of the Baltic sea,” which would be in the interest of all European countries, fitting into the idea of a “cordon sanitaire” against the Bolshevik threat (Pusta 1933; Hovi 1975).

Thus there was a window of opportunity for the reconceptualization of the “Baltic” as consisting of more than three states, but a larger Baltic union collapsed due to the unsolved Vilnius question between Lithuania and Poland, as well as the unwillingness of Finland to commit to an alliance in the south (see Butkus 2007). Even the creation of a trilateral alliance between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania proved difficult. In Estonian and Latvian public rhetoric in the 1920s and 1930s, the support for a Baltic cooperation in this narrower format was very strong, and the two countries agreed to a defensive alliance and a customs union in 1923. The Lithuanians, on the other hand, were less enthusiastic about the trilateral cooperation (Jurkynas 2007, 53). The increasing tensions in Europe after the National Socialists came to power in Germany made Lithuania reconsider the partnership proposals. In 1934 a “Baltic Entente” was eventually secured between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, with the main goal of joint action in foreign policy (see Medijainen 1991, 38–43). The alliance failed in practice, as its member states could not withstand the military pressure from Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939–40 (Jurkynas 2007, 54).

The usage of the word “Baltic states” in the interwar period reflects the vacillation between a larger and smaller union. The concept “Baltic states” was used in a broader and in a narrower meaning, as was pointed out in the Latvian encyclopedia published in 1927–28 (“Baltijas zemes,” 1927). In its broadest sense, “Baltic states” coincided with the “Baltic Sea states” that sometimes included even the Scandinavian countries but was more frequently restricted to the five states on the eastern shores of the sea (e.g., Jackson 1940). In the narrower meaning, it included just Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Swedes, for example, preferred to use the word “Baltic” in this narrow meaning from the early 1920s onwards, which reflected their aversion to being called a Baltic state (“Balticum/Baltikum” 1923; “Östersjöprovinserna” 1922). But neither was this narrow meaning firmly established: sometimes Finland was also named as the fourth Baltic state.<sup>8</sup> In Estonian, a clear difference was made between “Baltic Sea countries” (*Läänemeremaat*) and “Baltic countries” (*Baltimaad*), in order to distinguish between the broader and the narrower meaning. An even narrower meaning was proposed by Mihály Haltenberger, the professor of geography at the University of Tartu, who put forward what he called scientific proof that *Baltikum* included only Estonia and Latvia (and the region was closer to *Nordeuropa*), while Lithuania was a part of *Mitteleuropa* (Haltenberger 1925).

There were skeptical voices in the region that held the Baltic entente as insufficient or even dangerous, and sought to include the countries in a broader transregional framework. One such alternative regionalist conceptualization was “Baltoscandia,” which was an attempt to place a broader understanding of “Norden” on presumably scientific foundations. The concept, launched by Swedish geographer Sten de Geer in 1928, was enthusiastically adopted by both Finnish and Estonian scholars (De Geer 1928, see also chapter 2 in this volume). The Estonian geographer Edgar Kant added a number of historical and cultural factors to De Geer’s account, agreeing with him that Baltoscandia as a natural geographic unit consisted of the Scandinavian countries Finland, Estonia, and Latvia. Lithuania, in their view, belonged to continental Europe (Kant 1934; 1935; see also Lehti 1998). The Lithuanian geographer Kazys Pakštas objected to this interpretation in the 1930s, and revived the idea during World War II in *The Baltoscandian Confederation* (1942), envisioning the Baltic Sea as the Mediterranean of the north, a zone of peaceful collaboration of small nations (Pakštas 2005; see Lehti 1998). In order to fit Lithuania into this region, he suggested a number of alternative characteristics to complement and replace some of the criteria offered by De Geer and Kant.

A more explicit critique of the concept of “Baltic states” came from the pen of the young Estonian scholar Ilmar Tõnisson at the end of the 1930s

(Tõnisson 1937). He argued that the concept “Baltic states” was a chimera, invented by the Baltic Germans and revived by the Latvians for their own purposes. It was not based on anything substantial because there was no cultural affinity, economic integration, or “common destiny” between the three nations. Tõnisson maintained that for geopolitical reasons, Estonia should become “Nordic,” and that it was possible to convince the Scandinavian countries that the benefit was mutual. The Estonians’ desire for acknowledgement as a Nordic nation was supported, in his view, by their linguistic kinship with the Finns, and the affinity between their history, culture, and national character and those of the Scandinavian nations.

Another strand of thought that sought a place for Estonia outside the Baltic bloc was Finno-Ugric regionalism.<sup>9</sup> Its most notable representative in Estonia was ethnographer and folklorist Oskar Loorits, who drew upon the intellectual traditions of scientific racism and *Völkerpsychologie*, both popular at the time (see, e.g., Jahoda 2007; Richards 1997). Loorits contrasted what he saw as the aggressively expanding Western or Indo-European monotheist nations with the harmonious, pacific, and polytheistic traditions of the East, where in his view the Estonians also naturally belonged (Loorits 1932 and 1939; see Selart 2013). Loorits was explicitly anti-Latvian, but even more vehemently anti-German and anti-Russian—the latter, in his view, were also “the children of the Western world,” having come in touch with the East only recently (Loorits 1951, 35). The view that membership in the ancient and glorious “Finnish race” should be a source of pride was not Loorits’s invention, as it had been a popular theme among Estonian intellectuals since the early twentieth century (Selart 2013).

His anti-European sentiment was not, however, particularly widely shared, even though some writers were inspired by Oswald Spengler’s criticism of Western civilization (Karjahärm 2003, 82–86). The mainstream political elites in the Baltic republics continued to conceive of Europe as their “natural home,” and the ideas of “Western Christendom” and “European civilization” always remained in the background as the widest sphere of supranational identity (Pusta 1931; see Heikkilä 2014). The physical anthropologists interested in racial issues also emphasized that the Baltic nations were racially European, not Asian. The Estonian anthropologists, such as Juhan Aul, vehemently rejected the old nineteenth-century misconception that Estonians (and Finns) were “Mongols” (Kalling and Heapost 2013). Both Estonian and Latvian scientists conducted extensive fieldwork, measuring the skulls of a very large number of people and applying the popular cranial index methods in their analysis. Aul concluded that the Estonians were a mixture of two European racial types—the Nordic (dolichocephalic) and the East Baltic (mesocephalic). Estonia and Finland were, in his view, the core territory of the

East Baltic race, which was another clear sign of their closeness (Aul 1933). Whereas Aul did not construct any psychological or cultural hierarchy on the basis of these types, the Latvian anthropologist Jēkabs Pīmanis argued that the original and “pure” Latvian type was the “Nordic” one, and that Latvians had subsequently been “corrupted” by the influx of Eastern races. Pīmanis could draw upon the theories of his teacher Gaston Backman, a Swedish scholar, who already in 1915 had described the Baltic region as a front line in racial warfare between the “Germanic” and “Slavic” races. In 1920, Backman became a professor at the University of Latvia and initiated a program to systematically measure eleven thousand Latvian army recruits (Felder 2013). The incentive to emphasize the Nordic racial character of the Baltic nations of course increased during the Nazi occupation, when Aul also started stressing the high ratio of “strong” Nordic-type people in Estonia, and pointed out the essential differences between the Estonian East-Baltic type and the similar type in the neighboring areas (Kalling and Heapost 2013, 100).

### The Soviet Period

It can be argued that the Baltic region that we know now was established during the Soviet era. During this period, the prewar concept of “the Baltic states” lost its vagueness and was exclusively reserved for the three republics occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940. The Soviet Union applied almost identical policies toward all three states, starting from the ultimatums for military bases in 1939, staged “revolutions” in 1940, the granting of “Soviet republic” status after the incorporation, and ending with mass deportations in the 1940s, as well as collectivization, nationalization, and other Sovietization practices. Finland, on the contrary, was able to resist a similar attempt at conquest after being conceded to the Soviet “sphere of influence” by the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939, and thus Finland clearly moved away from any Baltic associations. This common historical experience created a sense of unity of fate between the occupied republics. This was expressed in stronger cultural cooperation than had been the case in the interwar period, and also in a coordinated dissident movement (e.g., the “Baltic appeal” of 1979; see Shtromas 1996, 105–6). This unity was also sensed from the perspective of the Soviet Union, where the three republics were called by a single name, “the Soviet Baltic” (*Sovetskaja Pribaltika*), and acquired the image in the Soviet Union as “the Soviet West” (*Sovetski Zapad*). In the actual West, the occupation created the persistent diplomatic problem of recognition, subsumed under the common name of “the Baltic question” (see Hiden, Made, and Smith 2008). The fact that the Baltic issue was not buried during the Cold War, and that the policy of nonrecognition was pursued by most Western states until

the end of the occupation, is partly attributable to the very strong cooperation between the Baltic expatriate communities, who actively advanced their cause in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Sweden. In this period, many Baltic societies and organizations were founded, and the concept of Baltic studies was launched (Rebas 1990).

The feeling of common identity culminated during the “Baltic revolution” of the years 1987–91, which resulted in the regaining of independence. Symbolically, the cooperation climaxed with the “Baltic Way” (or “chain”) on 23 August 1989, when approximately two million citizens formed a human chain between the three capitals. Political cooperation was institutionalized in 1991 in the form of a Baltic Assembly—an interparliamentary consultative body. The Assembly coordinated the policy of the Baltic states toward Russia (e.g., the withdrawal of Russian troops) and the EU, with a view toward meeting the criteria for accession. It also established Baltic prizes for literature, arts, and science, which somewhat increased the awareness of cultural and scientific activities across the region. An institution for intergovernmental collaboration, the Baltic Council of Ministers, was founded in 1994.

### **Post–Cold War Identity Politics**

Nevertheless, the common Baltic identity diminished in the 1990s, when the three states started looking for broader regional affiliations. The situation after the end of the Cold War was, to a certain extent, similar to the period after World War I, in the sense that the small (re)established states started to look for a broader regional affiliation that would reduce the security risks arising from their geopolitical location (Hiden 2003). The common denominator “Baltic” was seen as less desirable, as it reminded people of the Soviet legacy and seemed to condemn the Baltic states to the “post-Soviet space,” alien to European values and politically dominated by Russia (Brüggemann 2003). The primary aim of all three states was to be accepted as members of Europe, or more broadly to be recognized as part of “the Western civilization,” with the concomitant living standards and security guarantees (see Kuus 2012; Rindzeviciute 2003). On the rhetorical level, it was emphasized that the Baltic states were not endeavoring to “become” European but were “returning” to the European “family of nations,” since Europe was, historically and culturally, their “natural home” (Pavlovaite 2003). Institutionally, this meant that the ultimate aim was access to the EU and NATO, but in the early 1990s this still seemed a distant dream. Therefore, various other forms of supranational regional cooperation were pursued, both for their own sake and instrumentally, because they were regarded as means to move toward Europe. Again, the Nordic region loomed large in these regionalist dreams, especially for Estonia and

Latvia, which emphasized their historical connections with the North (Lager-spetz 2003). This was accompanied by mnemohistorical activities such as organizing royal visits and opening monuments to commemorate Swedish kings.

As it was clear that it would be rather difficult to be accepted officially as belonging to the Nordic family of nations, the “Baltic region” itself was reconceptualized so that it would involve countries on all sides of the sea. A favorite regionalist concept launched at the time was the “Baltic Sea Area,” with schemes for institutionalized cooperation in all spheres of society (Ewert 2012; Grzechnik 2012). The concept “Baltic world” was developed by historians who emphasized the historical unity of the region around the Baltic Sea (Kirby 1995 and 1998). An alternative concept was “North-Eastern Europe,” favored especially by German historians, who consciously promoted the unity of *Nordosteuropa* as a “historical region” (Zernack 1993 and 2002; Hackmann and Lehti 2010; Hackmann and Schweitzer 2002a and 2002b; Troebst 1999 and 2003). In the early 1990s, the concept of a “New Hanseatic Region” was also popular, but its significance gradually diminished, probably because of its overwhelmingly German orientation. All of these concepts can be considered instruments for overcoming the Cold War–era legacy of dividing Europe into the East and the West.

Nevertheless, these regionalist constructions did not replace the established concept of “the Baltic states.” Also, trilateral Baltic cooperation remained the primary focus of the identity narratives of the political elites in all three states, as M. Jurkynas has shown in his quantitative study. In official speeches, “the Baltic” prevailed among all regional references in the period from 1992 to 2004. At the same time, the Baltic references were often accompanied by broader regional affiliations. Estonia and Latvia tended to refer to themselves as Northern countries, whereas the Lithuanians viewed themselves simultaneously as part of Central and Eastern Europe, or as a bridge or link between the Baltic region and Central Europe (Jurkynas 2007, 58–108). Against this broader picture, the attempt by the Estonian foreign minister Toomas Hendrik Ilves in 1998 to “move” Estonia out of the Baltic region was more an exception than the beginning of a new official narrative. Quite like Ilmar Tõnisson had done in the 1930s, Ilves described Baltic identity as a “poorly fitting, externally imposed category,” and launched instead a poetic vision of “Yule-land” which located Estonia, but not Latvia or Lithuania, within the Nordic family of nations (Ilves 1998; see also an official speech in 1999, quoted in Jurkynas 2007, 83). Ilves’s vision can be interpreted as a sign that some Estonians had started to treat the Baltic affiliation as a burden, feeling that their slightly more slowly developing southern neighbors were dragging them down in their move toward the EU. The Estonians’ sense of a different trajectory was undoubtedly enhanced by their linguistic separation

from the “Balts,” as well as their particularly close economic and cultural connections with their so-called fellow Finns.

Such attempts to reconceptualize “the Baltic” have not come to fruition, largely because the international community always treated the three states as a single unit, and did not deviate from this policy, accepting all of them simultaneously, rather than one-by-one, as members of the EU and NATO in 2004. Since then, the regionalist denominations have stabilized. The Nordic countries have not been a target of regional affiliation to the same extent as earlier, partly because the Baltic states are more integrated into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures than most Nordic states at the moment.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, successful integration has diminished the incentive for trilateral cooperation. From 2004 onwards, Latvia has been the strongest proponent of institutionalized cooperation, whereas Estonia has suggested a less institution-alized pattern. An analysis of government and party programs has shown that after integration with Euro-Atlantic structures, the issue of Baltic collaboration has played a somewhat smaller role than previously in political debates of all three countries (Jurkynas 2007, 127–29). Another tendency is to tie the tri-lateral cooperation into larger formats. A more recent development in Europe is a new cooperative framework between Visegrad-Nordic-Baltic states in the form of regular meetings of foreign ministers, who coordinate their policy with regard to issues threatening the stability and welfare of this broadly conceived supranational region (“Meeting of Foreign Ministers” 2013).

To conclude, the “Baltic” is less and less viewed as a problematic concept, especially in the light of the current tentative reconceptualization of Europe on the North–South axis rather than the West–East one, reflecting, among other things, the different approaches taken to cope with the fiscal crisis and austerity measures. The Baltic nations figure relatively high in the recent comparative analyses of democratic institutions, social welfare, education, countering corruption, etc. Therefore, their current effort is to promote the “Baltic” brand by advertising their achievements, rather than to reconceptu-alize the region as such. Marko Lehti has spoken of the newly self-assertive voice of the Baltic nations, “who are shedding the image of nations in transi-tion, insisting that in new Europe all are equal” (Lehti 2005). In light of the increasingly tense security situation in Europe, the division of nations along the old geopolitical “spheres of influence” is a scenario that the Baltic nations are definitely keen to avoid.

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## Notes

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1. For a semantic and etymological analysis of the concept, see Hackmann 2015, 26–28.
2. In the nineteenth century, it was often retrospectively called *Alt-Livland* in order to distinguish it from the later Swedish and Russian province of Livland, which comprised only the southern part of the medieval *Livland*.
3. The historical province of Saaremaa (Ösel) had its own Ritterschaft.
4. From 1863 also *Baltische Wochenschrift für Landwirtschaft*. For liberal Baltic German ideology, see Bahn 2008; Wittram 1931.
5. For Harry Jannsen, see Jansen 2005, II, 32–42; E. Piirimäe 2012, 112. Estonian statesman Jaan Tõnisson argued as late as in 1926 that “Baltic national identity” is a cover to hide the class ideology and power claims of German barons (Tõnisson 2011).
6. The local news in Harry Jannsen’s newspaper *Die Heimath* was divided along these ethnic lines (Jansen 2005, II, 39).
7. The situation in Latvia was more complicated; see Rauch 1974, 60–69.
8. An Estonian encyclopedia (1932) says that “sometimes Finland is included in the Baltic states”; “Baltic union” (*Balti liit*) is defined as “cooperation between the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland) and Poland.” A Latvian encyclopedia defines “the Baltic problem” (*Baltijas jautajums*) as the process of the formation of four Baltic states in 1917–20 (“Baltijas jautajums” 1927, “Balti liit” 1932, “Balti riigid” 1932).
9. Its broader interpretation in the form of the pan-Turanic movement advocated by the Hungarians never found resonance among the Finns and the Estonians. (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 362–63)
10. As of 2016, all three Baltic states are members of NATO, while Sweden and Finland are not; all three are members of the EU, while Norway and Iceland are not; all three are members of the Eurozone, while only one Nordic country (Finland) has joined.

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## Chapter 4

# The Mediterranean

*Vaso Seirinidou*



As powerful topoi of geographical imagination, seas have seldom been simply a watery surface. Whether as the center or the fringe of the world in classical antiquity, the “great abyss” of the Bible or the epitome of leisure and holiday recreation in modern times, a domain for exercising inventiveness and freedom or a realm of fear, the sea has always been a rich pool of meanings, images, and metaphors.

Associated geographically with the emergence of two fundamental components of the hegemonic Western cultural paradigm, the Greco-Roman classical ideal and the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Mediterranean enjoys a conceptual preeminence among the world’s seas as the birthplace of European civilization. Moreover, it constitutes an exceptional case of a sea that serves at once as attributive of a hinterland, a climate, a vegetation, a landscape, a diet, a body type, a temperament, and a morality, while serving as a point of reference for, or lending its name to, other seas. The description of the Baltic-North Sea complex as the “Northern Mediterranean” has been in use since the 1970s among economic historians of late medieval Europe (Lopez 1976, 95), while recently new Mediterraneans have been added to the map of the world’s seas: the Mediterranean Atlantic, the Pacific Mediterranean, the Caribbean Mediterranean, the Japanese Mediterranean, or the East Asian Mediterranean (Abulafia 2005; Shottenhammer 2008).

The effectiveness of a sea to rhetorically and conceptually colonize the hinterland, the peoples, manners, and other seas is what renders the Mediterranean a historiographical problem (Horden and Purcell 2006, 725). Or, as Predrag Matvejević (1990, cited in Bouchard and Ferme 2013, 13) put it, “The Mediterranean is suffering from an excess of discursiveness bordering on verbosity.” This chapter does not intend to solve the historiographical problem of the Mediterranean, but rather to actualize it, or even to accentuate

it, showing the ways and the discourses through which the Mediterranean was transformed from a sea basin to an interpretative *passe-partout* of societies and cultures.

## A Sea with Multiple Names

The idea of the Mediterranean as a region with a distinctive geophysical setting that produces a particular way of life and culture is less old than we may imagine. It was the result of scientific and cultural classifications originating in the age of European geopolitical expansion in the area, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century. While the birthday of the modern idea of the Mediterranean enjoys a consensus among scholars, its conceptual history prior to this point is quite controversial. The question of whether any regional conceptualization of the Mediterranean existed in antiquity and the Middle Ages cannot be definitely answered.

If the existence of a collective name is indicative of a sense of collectivity or even unity, then the onomatology of the Mediterranean complicates rather than clarifies the picture. While terms suggesting a basic conception of the sea as a whole appeared in ancient Semitic languages (“the great sea”) and in Greek (*he megale thalassa*/“the great sea,” *he hemetera thalassa*/“our sea,” *he kath’hemas thalassa*/“the sea in our part of the world”), these coexisted with terms implying a fragmented view of the sea beginning in the tenth and the sixth century BC respectively, and multiplied throughout antiquity (*mare internum*, *mare insentinum*, *mare nostrum*, *mare mediterraneum*) (Burr 1952) and the Middle Ages (*Bahr al-Rūm*/“the sea of the Greeks,” *Bahr al-Shām*/“the sea of Syria,” *Bahr al-Maghrib*/“the sea of the West” for the Arabs) (Dunlop 2013). Herodotus, for instance, used the names of individual seas instead of a collective term for the Mediterranean (Burr 1952; xxx), and the same holds true for Byzantine (Kazdahn 2012) and Arab scholars (Matar 2013).

The multiplicity of names for the sea from antiquity to the modern period indicates a variety of conceptualizations and a lack of a coherent view of the Mediterranean as a unified entity. It is characteristic that although the term “Mediterranean Sea” (*mare mediterraneum*) was introduced as early as the mid-third century BC and attested in the sixth century, it would not be imposed as a universal designative term before the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, members of the London Trinity House, the authority responsible for providing navigational information and shipping aid, had not designated a common name for the Mediterranean (Matar 2013), while in the second half of the eighteenth century, Comte de Buffon in his *Natural History* used the term “mediterranean” in adjective form to enumerate “toutes les mers méditerranées” (Ruel 1991, 7).



Ancient geographers seem to support the argument of those scholars who insist on the absence of any regional conceptualization of the Mediterranean in antiquity. In the ancient cosmologic perception of the world that promoted the division of the earth into *climata*, the Mediterranean was not considered a distinct region, but was intersected by different zones. This perception traverses the Middle Ages and is apparent in the fourteenth century, in Ibn Khaldūn's famous classification of the universe along latitudinal climatic zones (Shavit 1988, 99).

At the opposite pole of cosmologic geographical thought, however, a practical topographical knowledge of the Mediterranean was developed as result of the centuries-long practice of long-distance trade and shipping (Horden and Purcell 2000, 29–30). This found its expression in the literary genre of *periplous* (circumnavigation)—a listing of ports and other landmarks that a ship could expect during the navigation of the coast (Johnson 2012, 1–3)—which in the Middle Ages developed into the cartographic genre of *portolan* that remained in use until the end of the seventeenth century (Campbell 1987; Tolias 1999). Mapping the space as a sequence of places, *periploi*, and, especially, portolan charts promoted the view of a Mediterranean connectivity (della Dora 2010, 4–9). As Corradino Astengo (2007, 175) argued, portolan charts depicted the Mediterranean as “more than a simple unified physical site with a common climate,” portraying it rather as “a common locus of human activity, a unit held together by a fine weave of sea routes.” The portrayal of the Mediterranean as a succession of itineraries is also to be found in the Arabic geographic tradition. Nevertheless, late medieval and early modern Arabic cartography do not seem to sustain the rather harmonic view of the Mediterranean attributed to the portolan charts. On the contrary, while perceptions of the Mediterranean as a whole are not absent, the latter is mainly presented as a set of fragments, often marked by fear and conflict (Brummett 2007, 16, 24). According to Karen C. Pinto (2004, 233–34), “this Muslim vision of the Mediterranean is not a simple representation of placid harmony, but rather one of frightening and ever-shifting conflict. This reading of the image of the Mediterranean fits with the negative passages of the sea that are sometimes boldly asserted, and at other times vaguely hinted at in some of the geographical texts.” After all—and contrary to Pirenne's thesis—the late medieval and early modern Mediterranean was for the Muslims a *Bahr al-Rūm*, namely, a Christian sea (Pinto 2004, 235; Matar 2013).

The last remark reminds us that spatial conceptualizations involve not only geography, but also power relations. Despite the multiple geographical definitions of the Mediterranean prior to the nineteenth century, the sea “has endured a long tradition of totalizing imaginings, visions, and hegemonic projects, of which geographical mappings and rigid cartographies are but one

obvious expression” (Bouchard and Ferme 2013, 213). Among the hegemonic projects affecting the Mediterranean in the period under consideration, the Roman *mare nostrum* was the most successful and rhetorically evocative, although the Greek *hemetera thalassa* (our sea) also implied a claim to the sea (Purcell 2003, 13). In the third century AD, the split of the Roman Empire into an eastern and a western part laid the ground for the consolidation of the East–West axis as the organizing principle of the division of the Mediterranean into different political and cultural spheres.<sup>1</sup> The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople deepened this partition, by replacing the division between Byzantium and Rome with that between Islam and Christendom. Between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries, the divided Mediterranean was transformed into a unified economic space—an international market—under the scepter of Venice. The shift in the focus of world trade toward northwestern Europe beginning in the seventeenth century gave weight to the North–South axis as the new spatial gradient of economic and cultural affiliation. Although divisions associated with the East–West axis did not cease to exist, the Mediterranean would be more and more perceived in terms of the North–South axis as a fringe of Europe (northern shores), or as a space of European colonization (Bouchard and Ferme 2013, 3, 21). It was exactly in this frame where the modern idea of the Mediterranean began to take shape.

### Discovering the Mediterranean: The Grand Tour and the Voyage Philosophique

Long before the Mediterranean found its scientific validation as a region, it already had a history as an object of exploration and as a site of discursive practices. By the early modern rediscovery of the Mediterranean it was the educational travels of the young English nobles that set the tone, producing a rich pool of images and conventions. In this early phase of the Grand Tour, Italy incarnated the ideal of the classical Mediterranean (Pemble 1987; Black 1992; Wilton and Bignamini 1996; Chaney 1998).

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the increasing involvement of the middle classes in travel coincided with the emergence of a new intellectual taste that privileged the Greek over the Roman classical past (Turner 1989). The introduction of Greek in the curricula of public schools, the translations of classic Greek texts, the collection of Greek antiquities and the adoption of Hellenic themes in art, architecture, and literature were expressions of a new cultural canon connected with the emergence of the European bourgeois society (Crook 1995). The shift of scholarly interest from Roman to Greek antiquity redirected the itineraries of the Grand Tour toward Greece. Visiting

the Greek lands and studying the ruins became an obligation for the educated European classes (Eisner 1993).

The rediscovery of Greece was accompanied by the invention of a new quality of the Mediterranean that emphasized its climatic idiosyncrasy. In this case, the inclination of the Enlightenment thought toward environmental causation found its expression in the writings of the German antiquarian and art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68). Attributing Greek classical culture to the specific climatic and geographic conditions of the Greek peninsula, Winckelmann in his *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764) initiated a literary convention that would dominate both scholarly and popular discourse on the Mediterranean for the next century (Lepenies 1986; Potts 1994; Hachmeister 2002, 13–28; Jakobs 2006). In turn, romantic travel literature endowed this convention with plentiful landscape descriptions along with rich iconographic material (Tsigakou 1981). The increasing appeal of marine picturesqueness beginning in the last quarter of the eighteenth century—as a byproduct of the increasing attractiveness of the shore<sup>2</sup>—with its emphasis on delimitation and smoothness, contributed essentially to the creation of the image of the Mediterranean landscape (Gaschke 2006).

The aestheticization of the Mediterranean nature was closely associated with the aestheticization of the Mediterranean body. Beginning with Winckelmann, who recognized the archetype of male beauty in the classical Greek statue, a whole homosexual aesthetic arose around the Mediterranean. As Robert Aldrich (1993, x) notices, “the image of a homoerotic Mediterranean, both classical and modern, is the major motif in the writings and art of homosexual European men from the time of the Enlightenment until the 1950s.”

The aestheticization of Mediterranean nature and the naturalization of Mediterranean culture developed in tandem with a declensionist approach to the region’s present. Although apparently contradictory, both narratives ascertained the peripheral condition of the Mediterranean. Conscious of their cultural superiority, European travelers often contrasted the glorious classical past of the Mediterranean lands to their gloomy present. Environmental degradation, political corruption, backwardness, and poverty, as well as vulgarity, sentimentalism, or lack of depth, were highlighted as inherent characteristics of a marginal area of the civilized European world. At the same time, this distance of the Mediterranean from the central places of European modernity was what rendered it a romantic refuge against the dramatic changes brought about modernization and industrialization (Mendelson 2002, 28).

On the other hand, the growing significance of the Mediterranean for European trade gave impetus to the systematic exploration of the region. Scientific research in the Mediterranean was originally a French enterprise. In order to encourage and protect its maritime trade, France, which was the domi-

nant mercantile power in the Mediterranean during the eighteenth century, developed an active cartographic activity in the area. The outcome was “an unparalleled system for the coordination of geographic information that transformed representations of the world and the practice of cartography, nowhere more dramatically than in the Mediterranean” (Armstrong 2005, 242). Alongside maritime geography, the flora and fauna as well as the subsoil of the region became objects of systematic observation and classification according to the spirit of the Enlightenment. The botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656–1708), with his detailed description of the natural setting of the Greek islands and the Black Sea in his *Relation d'un voyage du Levant* (1717), is a prominent example in a series of state-sponsored explorative missions in the Mediterranean that would reach its peak in the French expedition in Egypt (1798–1801), followed by the expeditions in Morea (1829–31) and Algeria (1839–42) (Bourguet et al. 1998; Gillispie 2004, 557–600).

While in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelogues and other literary works it was Italy and Greece that determined the image, both positive and negative, of the Mediterranean world, in scientific literature the focus was on the Eastern Mediterranean, and specifically on the territories of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup> Although geographically adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea, these territories were not considered to belong to the Mediterranean schema, but to the geographically vague “Levant.” Used since the late Middle Ages in the maritime trade vocabulary to denote, in general, the Oriental coast of the Mediterranean, the term “Levant” entered into the discursive arsenal of imperialism to denote imperial fantasies of the Ottoman Empire both in pejorative and nostalgic or romantic terms (Carlino 2006, 2–3; Nocke 2009, 180–84; Stanivuković 2007, 11). There were also Christian lands that were not considered parts of the Mediterranean environmental and cultural schema. Yaakov Shavit (1988, 100) highlights the example of H. T. Buckle’s *Introduction to the History of Civilization* (1857–61), where “Spain and Greece are presented as two contradictory types of environment and, hence, of human culture. Spain resembles tropical lands such as India, and its climatic conditions (heat and dryness) are considered a fertile breeding ground for superstition and ignorance. Greece, on the other hand, is considered by him the ‘natural soil’ for the propagation of arts, sciences and liberalism.” Even as a rhetorical term, “Mediterranean” appeared sporadically, and almost always in narrowly localized Italian and Greek contexts.

## A New Geographic Region

In the nineteenth century, it was the science of geography that integrated the whole area into a coherent conceptual and rhetoric frame. Despite the pio-

neering French contribution to the scientific discovery of the Mediterranean, the paternity of the idea of the Mediterranean as a geographic region was German (Stroch and Meiring 2000; Ben-Artzi 2004). The need to reorganize the accumulated geographic knowledge across new taxonomic categories resulted from the disruption of the traditional political boundaries in Europe during the Napoleonic Wars. The quest for boundaries not vulnerable to political or other changes promoted spatial classifications based on the constant factors of geographic division, such as continents, water surfaces, climate, soil morphology, flora, and fauna (Leighly 1938, 241). It was the prominent German geographer Carl Ritter (1779–1859) who first conceived the Mediterranean as a distinct geographic unit. In the first volume of his universal *Erdkunde* (1817, 1042), Ritter detached the North African countries as a *Naturtypus* from the African continent, assigning them to the Mediterranean lands (*Mittelmeerlande*). Ritter introduced new taxonomic criteria in the geographic science and was the founder of regional geography (*regionale Geographie*). The latter combined geographic determinism with anthropogeographic approaches and examined the interaction between the physical and cultural characteristics of a given world region that determined its physiognomy (Blotevogel 2002, 39).

The transition of anthropogeography to the regional level in the second half of the nineteenth century advanced the study of the Mediterranean as a region. Two of the foremost representatives of this tradition were the German geographers Theobald Fischer and Alfred Philippson. In his Mediterranean writings, Fischer (1877; 1879; 1913) spoke about a uniform “zone” or “area” that transcended political boundaries, whereas Philippson, in his *Das Mittelmeergebiet: Seine geographische und kulturelle Eigenart* (1904) almost half a century before Braudel, formulated the thesis that the Mediterranean region is a separate part of the world, with a uniform natural setting and a shared history that created similar social and cultural patterns among its adjoining populations.

On the other side of the Rhine, Elisée Reclus was the first to establish the Mediterranean as a coherent object of study. In his *Nouvelle géographie universelle* (1876), he suggested an economic approach to the Mediterranean as the birthplace of European trade. With Reclus, the Mediterranean was transformed into a value. Starting from the study of its physical characteristics and climate, he composed a historical, economic, and political portrait of the Mediterranean that affirmed its cultural superiority over other seas (Ruel 1991, 9). The tradition inaugurated by Reclus was developed further by Paul Vidal de la Blache and his followers. Vidal began his scholarly engagement with the Mediterranean with an essay on geopolitics and then proceeded, under the influence of Theobald Fischer, to the study of rural landscapes as expressions of a specific Mediterranean *genre de vie* that corresponded to environmental conditions (Nordmann 1998; Claval 2007, 6, 8–11).

The emphasis of nineteenth-century geographical thought on the impact of the physical environment upon human culture was compatible with the positivist scientific paradigm that recognized nature as the determinant of historic development. Yet the transformation of the Mediterranean into a region was mainly the byproduct of a new conceptualization of space intended to rationalize and legitimize geopolitical ambitions in a period of imperialistic rivalry. The eighteenth-century tradition of the *voyage philosophique* was replaced by scientific institutions serving national and imperial policies, while scientific disciplines themselves became sites of antagonism. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the competition between the French and the German schools of archaeology was expressed through two different approaches to the Mediterranean past. Emphasizing the Roman heritage, French archaeology sought to appropriate the Mediterranean by promoting the idea of its Latinity. Germans, on the other hand, saw in the classical Greek *métro*n the archetype of the Germanic ethic of simplicity and purity, as opposed to Roman moral decadence (Ruel 2000, 13–14). Paradoxically, as Anne Ruel (2000, 15) has noticed, the very moment when the unity and universality of the Mediterranean were conceived was also the moment when the various European ambitions clashed directly in a logic of national confrontation.

In the age of nationalisms, there were also alternative conceptualizations of the Mediterranean that prioritized a pluralist regionalism instead of an exclusive nationalism (Isabella and Zanou 2015). This was the case with the Adriatic regionalism proposed by intellectuals living in the multinational Habsburg Empire's Northern Adriatic regions, such as Niccolò Tommaseo, Francesco Dall'Ongaro, Stipan Ivičević, Ivan August Kaznačić, Pacifico Vallussi, and Medo Pucić, who sought to integrate Italian and Slavic nationalism into a greater Adriatic maritime regional context. In this new Adriaticism, it was multinational Trieste that formed the unifying center rather than the Venetian metropole (Reill Kirchner 2012). Obviously, the pluralist visions of this post-Napoleonic generation of nationalists were never realized. Nevertheless, as we shall see in the next section, the Mediterranean would not cease to inspire universalistic narratives, even in the turbulent decades of the following century.

## A Turbulent Sea

At the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the division of the African and Asian shores of the Mediterranean into colonial frontiers and spheres of influence proceeded in parallel with the emergence of imperial ideologies that sought to reconstruct the unity of the region under the scepter of a given power (Chambers 2008, 13–15). The revival of the Roman *Mare*

*Nostrum* during the liberal *Cinquantennio*, which was central to both Italian foreign policy and national self-fashioning, was the most elaborate and enduring ideological and cultural project on the Mediterranean (Trinchese 2005; Fogu 2010, 6–8). In their turn, organic intellectuals of the French colonial regime in Maghreb promoted the concept of “Latin Africa,” popularizing the idea that the French colonial mission in North Africa was a continuation of the Roman conquest, and that therefore Latin civilization was indigenous in North Africa (Lorcin 1999, 201–13). In Catalonia, the appropriation of the Latin Mediterranean past by the cultural movement of *Noucentisme* was consonant with Catalan nationalism (West 2013, 392–93). As for Britain, its naval predominance in the Mediterranean since the end of the eighteenth century was seen as the natural destiny of the maritime empire (Holland and Markides 2008; Holland 2012).

The elevation of the Mediterranean to a geopolitical space implied a reorientation of the scientific interest in the region. Regional and human geography gave place to political geography, while political analysts, journalists, and experts in geopolitics and international affairs appeared next to the heretofore traditional scholars of the Mediterranean—the archeologists, art historians, and geographers. The relevant studies were referring more and more to the “Mediterranean problem,” which had “become a major focal point of international relations and international dispute” (Langer 1936–37, 660) and was summarized in the “command of the sea, shared precariously at present by three great powers and a few small states, notably Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey, which the great powers seek to attach to their interests” (Gordon 1938, 97). Their focus was not only on the morphology of the Mediterranean, but also on its history and on the position of its adjoining countries in the geopolitical system of the period. One of the most characteristic samples of the intellectual production of the period is a book by the director of the magazine *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, Hans Hummel, entitled *Der Mittelmeerraum: Zur Geopolitik eines maritimen Grossraumes* (1936). Highlighting the examples of Mussolini’s Italy, Franco’s Spain, and Atatürk’s Turkey, Hummel stated that the Mediterranean peoples had returned to the fore of history as agents of the world’s order and warned Britain that if it attempted to disrupt this historical development it would collide with the strong response of the spirit of the “Mediterranean personality.”

Alongside the imperialistic visions of the Mediterranean, the interwar period witnessed the emergence of an intellectual sensibility that recognized a new humanist essence in the region’s past. In the 1930s, the literary review *Cahiers du Sud*, founded in the 1920s in Marseilles by the writer Jean Ballard, became the forum for a whole generation of French intellectuals to elaborate the idea of a common Mediterranean homeland beyond cultural and national

frontiers. Rejecting the dogma of Latinity, writers such as Paul Valéry, Gabriel Audisio, and Albert Camus, among others, developed the concept of a Mediterranean melting pot with a civilizing power (Fabre 2000, 53–68, 80–87; Fox-lee 2010). This Mediterranean universalism, however, was not always without a sponsor. As Gabriel Audisio argued in his *Jeunesse de la Méditerranée* (1935), referring to Mediterranean cosmopolitanism, this “heterogeneous population, made up of people from the Languedoc and Provence, Catalans and Corsicans, Andalusians and Neapolitans, Minorcans and Maltese, Arabs and Berbers . . . , they are a mixture which is now in the making. As Algeria will be: a synthesis of Mediterranean breeds cemented by French culture” (cited in Gastaud n.d.).

In the same period, academic institutions devoted to the study of the Mediterranean began to be established in France. In 1926 the *Académie Méditerranéenne* was founded (in 1935 it would move to Monaco); and 1933 saw the creation of the *Center Universitaire Méditerranéen*, with Paul Valéry as its first administrator. Both institutions promoted the idea of an inclusive Mediterranean culture and humanism. It was in this intellectual context that Braudel’s Mediterranean began to take shape.

### **The Mediterranean and the Social Sciences: Braudel and Beyond**

When in 1949 Fernand Braudel published the first edition of his *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, the Mediterranean was far from being only a sea. As a product of an intellectual quest that lasted for almost two and a half decades, *La Méditerranée* bears the traces both of the intellectual climate of its time and the personal experiences of the historian. Braudel’s ten-year stay in colonial Algeria and his personal involvement in the project of “Latin Africa,” his brief acquaintance with Sao Paulo (which was crucial for the embedding of the global perspective), the Parisian circle of the *Annales* and his reflections on history, the captivity in Mainz, and his acquaintance with the world of German geography—all of these composed the intellectual frame within which the Braudelian *La Méditerranée* came into existence (Paris 1999).

Although the Mediterranean already existed as a historical subject (Horden and Purcell 2000: 31–35), Braudel promoted it to a historical agent. The Braudelian Mediterranean constituted a milestone in twentieth-century historiography and a reference point for Mediterranean history. It has also received much criticism, which was focused mainly on the banishment of the perspective of time and on its use of an immobile geography as a prism for reading society (Dosse 1987, ch. 4). Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, what



deserves our attention is the critical note made by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell in their *Corrupting Sea* (2000, 39–43)—a work that claims to offer a new paradigm for Mediterranean history<sup>4</sup>—that instead of a starting point, *La Méditerranée* signaled the end of Mediterranean studies. Braudel had said everything, and major synoptic works were rare (Horden and Purcell 2006, 729). Despite its wide reception, Braudel's paradigm did not dominate subsequent historiographies, which continued to deal mainly with histories *in* and not *of* the Mediterranean, to use the pointed distinction proposed by Horden and Purcell. Braudel has been also criticized for having confined the study of the Mediterranean world to the end of the sixteenth century, when the political unification of the region under Philip II fell apart and the world economy shifted toward the Atlantic (Fogu 2010, 2). Whatever Braudel's responsibility might be, the fact is that Mediterranean historiography has traditionally been practiced by historians of antiquity and the Middle Ages. Shlomo Goitein's monumental *A Mediterranean Society* (1967–88) deals with medieval Jewish trade communities, while *Corrupting Sea's* time scope spans from antiquity to the Middle Ages. The last two decades have witnessed a blossoming of early modern Mediterranean history (Green 2000 and 2010; Dursteler 2006; Fleming 2007; Fusaro, Heywood and Omri 2010), but the modern Mediterranean still remains underconsidered.<sup>5</sup> Faruk Tabak's *The Waning of the Mediterranean* (2008) signaled a first and successful attempt at a history of the Mediterranean that focuses on the “twilight” period of the region (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries) and discusses from a geohistorical point of view its integration in the mid-nineteenth-century world economy.

While the modern Mediterranean was absent from historiographic discussions on modernity, it was British and American anthropology that, from the mid-1960s on, set the tone for academic discourse on the area. The promotion of the Mediterranean to an ethnographic field marked a break with the tradition of colonial anthropology occupying itself with the study of so-called primitive peoples (Davis 1977). The anthropology of the Mediterranean became the scene of a remarkable discrepancy between British social anthropologists on the one hand, and mostly American cultural anthropologists on the other. The former were uneasy with, or even outright rejected, the notion of a “culture area,” privileging instead a more plural approach and using terms such as the “Mediterranean world” and “Mediterranean peoples” (Boissevain et al. 1979; Pina-Cabral 1989, 400). A telling example is the pioneering study of John Davis's *People of the Mediterranean* (1977), in which the author emphasizes the notion of “cultural contact,” that gives the area its “unity,” negating the existence of cultural homogeneity. This Mediterranean unity, however, was precisely at the heart of American cultural anthropological studies (Gilmore 1982; Pina-Cabral 1989, 401). The professed discovery

of the Mediterranean as an ethnographic field by American anthropologists was not irrelevant to the emergence in the US universities during the postwar period of the so-called area studies programs, which promoted interdisciplinary research on wide non-European regions. The Mediterranean has never been systematically integrated in the program of area studies, apparently for the same reason that Mediterranean societies and cultures could not fit easily into the typical ethnographic categories. In other words, they were neither exotic nor familiar enough. As the American anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (1987, 11) has noted, “the extension of ethnography to the circum-Mediterranean has created a need for exoticizing devices to justify research in what is otherwise a familiar cultural backyard. One of these devices is the complex literature that presents honor and shame as the moral values of the Mediterranean society.”

Whether as an area of cultural unity or an area of cultural diversity, the Mediterranean has been thematized in the context of anthropological inquiry as a zone of cultural distinctiveness. Shame and honor, together with patronage, were seen as indicatives of archaism, providing keys for interpreting modern social and political phenomena in the region (Pitt-Rivers 1963; Peristiany 1965; Schneider 1971; Gilmore 1987). Recent anthropology looks critically at the use of universalistic categories, and has even questioned the validity of the Mediterranean as an ethnographic category (Herzfeld 1980 and 2005; Albera and Blok 2001). To the question “Are there any common denominators as implied in the term “Mediterranean?” the reply by the anthropologist Henk Driessen (2002, 11) is more than indicative: “After more than fifty years of ethnographic fieldwork in countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, this question still is a haunting as well an embarrassing one, even in view of the common anthropological knowledge that no single let alone definite answer can be given to such questions.”

### One Sea for all Purposes

If Mediterraneanism—namely, the substantiation and essentialization of the geographic, environmental, historical, and cultural characteristics of the region—was a product of academic discourse, the integration of the Mediterranean in the world tourist market has transformed academic Mediterraneanism into a commodity for mass consumption. The creation and promotion of Club Med villages as shelters against urban hurry and the North European industrialized way of life, as well as the publication of Elisabeth David’s *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950), which contrasted “honest” Mediterranean cooking to “sham Grand Cuisine,” were key moments in the commodification process of the region (Gordon 2003, 216–17). Since the 1960s, the most

diffused and powerful image of the Mediterranean both inside and outside of the basin has been that of summer holidays by the sea (Urbain 2003). In the fictitious world of Club Med, the Braudelian immobility was replaced by a sense of “out of time temporality.” As Antonis Liakos (2011) has argued, “we usually think that the construction of regions is the work of high politics and academic agendas. The case of the Mediterranean illustrates how academic concepts are related with popular culture, and how the market contributes also to the transformation of space and time into meaningful regional concepts and experiences.”

The appropriation of Mediterraneanism by the countries and the peoples of the Mediterranean coastline served the needs of their promotion in the tourist market, while also functioning as a pool of positive self-representations. Manliness, temperament, pride, hospitality, warm sociability, and sun were what Mediterranean people had and northern Europeans lacked. Nevertheless, the use of the Mediterranean label within the Mediterranean varies in space and time. Ethnographic fieldwork has shown that nationality, locality, and religion are much stronger categories of self-identification and that when a Mediterranean identity is invoked, this happens in various ways and for multiple purposes (Driessen 2002, 13). Greeks, for instance, are more attached to their “Mediterraneanness” as an attractive alternative to being Balkan, while Italians “may attribute Mediterranean characteristics to themselves; but they do so, not as Italians, but as Romans” (Herzfeld 2005, 58). Catalans, on the other side, tend to accentuate their cosmopolitan Mediterranean identity opposing themselves to the Castilian agrarian conservatism (Driessen 1999, 55).

Since the 1990s, the popularity of the Mediterranean has been increasing both in the academic milieu and in identity politics. Scholarly reflection on the validity of the traditional categories of center and periphery and the search for nonrigid analytic frameworks have made Mediterranean paradigms attractive “because of their ‘exchange’ systems, their decentralized points of observation, and their fluctuating categories, in which ‘subjects’ and ‘objects’ keep changing places and roles” (Malkin 2005, 2). The last two decades have witnessed a striking rise in the number of academic journals dealing with the history of the Mediterranean (Alcock 2005). The Mediterranean perspective appears more and more in research projects and as the focus of conferences, promising to offer an alternative framework of study to those of the “classical world,” the “empire” and the “nation” (Morris 2003, 30–32).

This conceptual positioning of the Mediterranean between the national and the global renders it a pool of alternative identities. In Israel, for instance, the reemergence in the academic and public discourse of an old idea of Mediterraneanism (*Yam Tikhoniut*) that goes back to Zionism constitutes an effort to redefine both Israeli cultural identity and Israel’s place in international

politics by relating them to a more expansive cultural and geopolitical space (Shavit 1988; Nocke 2009). The success of Israeli Mediterraneanism lies exactly “within its power to join existing models of identity without either threatening their legitimacy or replacing them” (Nocke 2009, 29). In Turkey, the Mediterranean provides the middle classes of Istanbul and of the western coast with an alternative identity that distances them from the Central Asian epicenter of Turkic tradition (Örs 1998, cited in Driessen 1999, 55, 62; O’Connell 2005), while Croatia’s Mediterraneanism detaches the country from its Balkan context and serves as a link to the European Union.<sup>6</sup> In this perspective, the maritime Republic of Dubrovnik of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, as opposed to its Slavic hinterland, is highlighted as a crossroads and a melting pot of Western/Latin and Eastern/Slavic cultures (Zrnić 1999, 151). In a different vein, Italian intellectuals have argued for a reevaluation of Camus’s Mediterranean humanism, considering the Mediterranean as a source of critique against colonialism, cultural imperialism, and economic domination (Chambers 2008; Casano 2012).

In the age of globalization, the Mediterranean has acquired new, though contradictory, meanings and roles. In its idealized version as the sea of civilizations, intercultural communication, and exchange, it has been celebrated as the forerunner of capitalist globalization. This instrumentalization of the Mediterranean past is evident in projects such as the *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership* (1995) and its successor, the *Union for the Mediterranean* (2008), a brainchild of French President Sarkozy that aimed at the creation both of a free-trade zone between the EU and the non-EU Mediterranean states, and of a platform through which Europe would conduct its relations with Turkey and the Arab world. On the other side of the coin is the role the European Union’s borders policy has attributed to the Mediterranean: that of the frontier against the so-called invasion of Europe by immigrants, of the centuries-old border between the “civilized North” and the “wild South” (Ribas-Mateos 2005). This role has been boosted by the ongoing refugee crisis.

Since the onset of the economic crisis in late 2009, the admittedly positive and optimistic resonance of the Mediterranean has lost much of its force. Once the “cradle of European civilization,” the Mediterranean is regarded increasingly as an “anomaly” in the European economy, even as a deviation from the European socioeconomic ethos. The derogatory acronym PIGS, referring to the vulnerable economies of Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain, has become a popular entry in finance jargon, while environmental interpretations have been set in motion anew to explain the failure of people in the Mediterranean to adapt successfully to European economic and social norms.

Within a century and a half, the Mediterranean has become a geographic region, a climatic zone, a geopolitical space, a historical agent, a cultural area, and recently a reservoir of identities and a successful historical example of globalization. Is a new life of the Mediterranean currently under construction?

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## Notes

1. The East–West axis was also dominant in the perception of the *oikoumene* in Antiquity. According to G. W. Bowesock (2008, 170), “In general the east–west orientation of the *oikoumenê* seems clearly determined by the possibility of travel across the wide expanse of sea. . . . It seems to have been rare for an ancient author to describe the civilized world by longitude, in a straight north–south direction.”
2. The shift of the European attitude toward the sea and the seaside after the middle of the eighteenth century is discussed in depth by Alain Corbin (1994).
3. The Eastern Mediterranean, specifically the Ottoman Empire, was a popular theme in the early modern literature (Stanivuković 2007). But this popularity was mainly inscribed in the broader fascination for the “Orient.”
4. The publication of the *Corrupting Sea* has provoked lively discussion among scholars of Mediterranean history. Unlike Braudel, Horden and Purcell (2005) emphasize the micro-level, and instead of the unity they insist on the fragmentation and connectedness of the region.
5. David Abulafia includes the modern and contemporary Mediterranean (“The Fifth Mediterranean, 1830–2010”) in his synthetic work, *The Great Sea* (2011).
6. This view has been clearly expressed by Croatia’s President Franjo Tuđman in an interview in New York in 1992: “Croats belong to a different culture—a different civilization from the Serbs. Croats are part of Western Europe, part of the Mediterranean tradition. Long before Shakespeare and Molière, our writers were translated into European languages. The Serbs belong to the East. They are Eastern peoples like the Turks and Albanians. They belong to the Byzantine culture . . . despite similarities in language we cannot be together” (cited in Bellamy 2003, 68). However, the idea that Croatian culture is distinctive among the other Slavic cultures due to its connection with the Mediterranean is older. Long before Pre-

drag Matvejević wrote about the Mediterranean region, the émigré historian and writer Bogdan Radica, in his *Sredozemni povratak* (1971), formulated the idea of a supranational Mediterranean identity that is transposed to specific national idioms (Zrnić 1999, 151), inscribing Croatian identity within the classical humanist canon, away from Yugoslavism.

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## Chapter 5

# Southern Europe

*Guido Franzinetti*



This paper intends to examine the connection between the conceptualizations of European historical regions and some key historical passages in the history of Southern Europe. Its perspective is that of an observer specializing in East Central and Southeastern European history. It is in this sense an intentionally external and highly selective perspective. It focuses on a case of “the dog that did not bark” (as Sherlock Holmes would have put it)—that is, a category which has never really been consolidated conceptually, let alone in terms of scholarly research.

The end of the Cold War is sometimes used as an all-encompassing turning-point for all kinds of scholarly debates and polemics, but in the conceptualization of historic regions it has played an indisputable role. It has provided the basis for, on the one hand, the actual process of European unification (East–West, and no longer simply North–South, as was the case with the so-called Carolingian EEC), and, on the other, for a radical rethinking of the definition of historic regions in modern and contemporary European history (Troebst 2003; Mishkova, Stråth, and Trencsényi 2013; Baumeister and Sala 2015).

### **Which Southern Europe?**

The term “Southern Europe” remains a highly elusive concept, even in comparison with other highly contested regional conceptualizations. This is due to a variety of factors, which will be discussed in this paper. Two preliminary points should be stressed. The first is that it remains an asymmetrical category: while in historical and scholarly literature there is a “Southeastern Europe,” there has never been any consolidated use of the term “Southwestern Europe,” despite the fact that this is, in fact, the precise geographical region

which is usually intended by the term “Southern Europe.” When Gustav von Aschenbach planned “a siesta of three or four weeks in one of the usual places for holidays in the lovely South,” there is no question as to which “South” was to be the destination: Venice, Italy (Mann 1912, quoted in Schenk and Winkler 2007, 8).

The second point is of a more practical nature. For a variety of reasons, over the centuries the concept of Southern Europe has generally tended to be associated with the territories south of the Alps (i.e., Italy), rather than south of the Pyrenees (i.e., Spain and Portugal). The latter have not generally been associated with Southern Europe, but rather with the Iberian Peninsula. The exceptions to this trend have occurred during the phase of the so-called Southern European Transitions to Democracy (which covered the cases of Portugal, Greece, and Spain in 1974–75) and, more recently, the financial and economic crisis that started in 2009 with the Greek Depression and rapidly spread to Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Even these exceptions have never led to the consolidation of any image (or self-image) of Southern Europe. The conceptualization of a hypothetical Southern Europe has, in any case, remained a fragile construction, not least because of the very strong competition from alternative conceptualizations, starting from a variety of “Mediterranean world” categorizations.

### **The Montesquieuian Moment and the Nineteenth-Century Perspectives of the Midi**

The distinction between Southern and Northern Europe appears to be so firmly rooted in European intellectual history from time immemorial as not to require any great elaboration. For some centuries, the dichotomy had functioned as a distinction between the “barbaric” North versus the “refined” South (Thompson 1957; Jones 1971; Shuger 1997). It is, in fact, intimately connected to the development of climate theory in European intellectual history, from Ibn Khaldūn to Bodin (Gates 1967; Tooley 1953).

A key shift occurred with Montesquieu’s climate theory in 1748, which defined the basis for the conceptualization of a “backward” (Catholic) South versus an “advanced” (Protestant) North (Shackleton 1955; 1960, 302–19; Rotta 1974, 200–1). The basis for this conceptualization was the fact that “The discovery of the New World and the concomitant outbreak of modernity had caused a radical shift in the axis of world trade, now centered on northern Europe and the Atlantic. . . . not only had Montesquieu’s Mediterranean been marginalized by the discovery of America; it had also been pushed to the margins of modernity itself” (D’Auria 2015, 44). Unsurprisingly, Montesquieu’s conceptualization of Southern Europe did not find a receptive audience in

the region itself, since it involved the acceptance of historical marginality. Crucially, this marginalization extended also to the intellectual sphere. By the end of the seventeenth century, “the spiritual hegemony [was] no longer exclusively Latin” (Hazard 1935, vol. 1, 102).

The classic case of a reemerging dichotomy between Northern and Southern Europe was provided by Madame de Staël (as it happens, a French intellectual at one point married to a Northern European diplomat). In her many essays and novels, she confirmed the paradigm of the radical difference between Northern and Southern sensibilities (Staël-Holstein 1799; 1807; 1813; see also chapter 16 in this volume). Climate was the key factor in explaining it (Staël-Holstein 1799, ch. 11).

A more formalized contribution and systematization was provided in 1813 by Sismondi’s *De la Littérature du Midi de l’Europe*, which presented an overview of the literatures of all the Romance languages, from the Middle Ages onwards (with a chapter on early Arabic literature). In this context, the four-volume work is significant not just for the title chosen, but also for referring to “les peuples du Midi” as “un ensemble” (Sismondi [1813] 1829, volume 1, ii).

The affinity of Romance languages and literatures was always acknowledged in the study of languages and literature, but the presumed unity of the “peuples du Midi” was not. Various factors determined this result. For a start, French culture was not inclined to belittle itself by associating itself with cultures in decline: the golden age of Portuguese and Spanish literatures was over, and the end of the seventeenth century saw a radical change of the terms of intellectual exchange between France and Italy (to the detriment of Italy) (Wachet 1989).

Romance studies always preserved some idea of regional unity. In 1842, the Collège de France nominated Edgar Quinet to the chair of *Histoire des littératures et des institutions comparés du midi de l’Europe*, from which he was suspended four years later for political reasons (Quinet 1842; Bataillon 1947). Significantly, in 1925 the chair was newly titled *Histoire des littératures comparées de l’Europe méridionale et de l’Amérique latine* and assigned to Paul Hazard. The new appellation reflected a further shift away from regional categorization. From all these literary endeavors, despite their potential for further development, no conceptualization of “les peuples du Midi” was ever consolidated; the linguistic and cultural element (*langues néolatines*) always prevailed over the regional aspect, and in any case excluded France itself: according to Quinet, “la mission de l’esprit français est de servir de médiateur entre l’Europe du Midi et l’Europe du Nord” (“the mission of the French Spirit is to serve as a mediator between Southern Europe and Northern Europe”; Quinet [1848] 1857, 73).

From the neoclassical and romantic eras onward, German perspectives on Europe south of the Alps were heavily oriented toward the literary and cultural sphere (classical heritage and romantic imagination). There was also, however, a more strictly geographical perspective, which began to emerge from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards. Hans-Dietrich Schultz has provided a broad overview of the varieties of categorization of Southern Europe that emerged in so-called classical German geography. The starting point is Zeune's assumption that "Südeuropa" consisted of the "Pireäenhalbinseln," the "Alpenhalbinseln" and the "Balkanhalbinseln" (Zeune 1808). This was soon discarded in favor of a clear division of "Western" Europe into a Northern part (the Nordic countries), a Central part (Mitteleuropa, including France, German lands, and the Habsburg monarchy), and a Southern part (the Italian peninsula) (Wittmann 1839). This was then followed by another division into a Northern (British Isles and Scandinavia), Western (France and the Iberian Peninsula), and Southern part (the Italian and Balkan peninsulas) (Fischer 1860). In 1931 there emerged a division into Western Europe (British Isles and France), Northern Europe (the Nordic countries), Central Europe (Germany and East-Central Europe), and finally Southern Europe (the Iberian, Italian, and Balkan peninsulas) (Seydlitz 1931). All these categorizations reflected historically contingent factors (Schultz 2003, 291). These German categorizations, despite their differences, appear to share a more land-oriented approach, rather than a sea-oriented approach. In the case of Southern Europe, this created the basis for a more consistent conceptualization. Conversely, a sea-oriented approach would have led (as it regularly did in other conceptualizations) to dissolving "Southern Europe" into the Mediterranean Sea.

## Imperial Interests

Since the eighteenth century, British perspectives on "the South" have been strongly oriented toward the literary sphere (travel literature in the widest sense) and Anglo-Italian historical links (British sympathies for the *Risorgimento*) (Pemble 1987). In fact, the Anglo-Italian connection was firmly established once British naval power consolidated itself in the Mediterranean. As Frank O'Gorman (2009–10, 129–30) has pointed out, "The Mediterranean was absolutely central to British political, economic and naval interests throughout the eighteenth century" (see also Holland 2012). This remained the case until the 1970s.

For Italian observers, and especially aspiring leaders of emerging Italian nationalism, the categorization of Southern Europe was crucial, involving the Mediterranean balance of power and ultimately the role of the future Italian

nation-state. Twentieth-century Italian historiography has often framed this issue in terms foreshadowing Italian imperialism in later eras, seen either as a positive development (by historians of the Fascist period) or as a negative one (by later historians). More recently, Maurizio Isabella (2012) has argued, instead, for approaches that “address the Risorgimento debates on empire in their own right” (232) and considers definitions in this perspective:

what the [Italian] patriots hostile to European imperial expansion and those in favor of it both shared was a determination to define Italy as, at one and the same time, a European and a Mediterranean country. . . . The combination of the two geographical definitions, the European and the Mediterranean, is crucial. First, it enabled Italian intellectuals both to demonstrate that Italy was part of a geographical space to which the most advanced countries in the world belonged, and to vindicate the specificity of her location in the Mediterranean. This combination also enabled patriots to respond to the Northern Europeans’ condescending remarks about the degeneration and backwardness of Italy. What was at stake was precisely the position of the country in the geography of civilization: Italy was indeed a Mediterranean periphery and not, more worryingly, outside of it, and abutting upon the uncivilized East. (247).

For Italian patriots, says Isabella, “the stakes were high, because Italy and Greece risked being perceived simply as another Palestine or another Egypt, not as the Southern appendix of civilized Europe, but as the Western border of the Eastern world” (659–60).

From the Franco-Prussian War until World War I, there was not much scope for any conceptualization of Southern Europe (Moe 2002). In this respect, the consolidation of a system of nation-states (following the Italian and German models and the results of the Berlin Congress of 1878) made any inclination to conceptualize a wider region (such as “Southern Europe”) much less likely.

At the same time, a quite different factor emerged on the European scene: the *Kulturkampf*. This new religious divide reflected cleavages within societies (pitting secular elites against Roman Catholic rural populations), within states (non-Catholic regions and central authorities versus Catholic regions), and ultimately a general cleavage between a Protestant and/or “secular” North and a Catholic South (Clark and Kaiser 2003). This was essentially a conflict over visions of modernity, described by Manuel Borutta (2013, 62–63) as: “The dichotomizing of Catholicism and modernity was ‘naturalized’ in the process; the conflicting character of the culture wars was obscured by the objectivist tone of seemingly neutral academic analysis” (see also Borutta 2011).

This renewal of Montesquieu’s dichotomy in a more advanced historical setting, and for that matter in a “scientific” form, made any regional categorization even less likely than before. Portugal had long been marginalized in



Europe; Spain would soon be experiencing the end of its imperial delusion with the trauma of 1898. For its part, Italy was intent on projecting its new-found political, economic, and military power eastwards (across the Adriatic, in the Balkans), or southwards (Ottoman Libya, East Africa).

France continued to remain outside the picture of any conceivable Southern Europe. The potential for a Southern-oriented identification (which could have been represented by some form of Occitanism) was always weak, and was firmly ruled out after the French defeat in the war of 1870–71, which led to a much stronger centralizing orientation in the French state (Zantedeschi 2013). At a wider European level, there could also have been some potential with the Latin Monetary Union, created in 1865 and theoretically existing until 1927 (Einaudi 2001). Despite its name, it was not exclusively Latin (since Greece was at one point part of it). Once again, the name chosen reflected a presumed cultural affinity, rather than any regional unity.

### The Fascist Dream and Southern Europe

The immediate result of World War I and of the peace treaties that followed was Italy's promotion from the uncertain status of "The Least of the Great Powers" (Bosworth 1979) to a fully-fledged great power. This would prove, in retrospect, to have been a great illusion; but at the time it had some credibility, even outside Italy. After all, the defeat of Germany, the greatest military and economic power in continental Europe, together with the transformation of Imperial Russia into a Soviet "rogue state," created the appearance of Italy as a great power.

This repositioning of Italy led not so much to a change in Italian perspectives, but rather to the extension of preexisting Italian ambitions. The key elements were, on the one hand, the recognition of Italian rights (as a full-fledged great power, finally) over the Mediterranean as a whole (*Mare Nostrum*); and, on the other hand, the acceptance of Italian expansion in North Africa and East Africa. Indeed, the objective was to curtail both French and British presence in the Mediterranean. These ambitions were not confined to radical Fascist fringes; they were part of the assumptions shared by large parts of the Italian establishment (pre-Fascist, Monarchist, Liberal, and Fascist).

The Fascist dream of Italy as a great power was too short-lived to serve as the basis for any new conceptualization (which in any case would have been centered on the category of the Mediterranean rather than an ambiguous Southern Europe). The proceedings of the Volta Conference of 1932 provide some indication of what could have been the direction chosen by the academic supporters of Italian Fascism (Giordano 2004, 116–17; Fioravanzo 2011). Giotto Dainelli, one of the leading Italian geographers, did in fact produce a

comprehensive geographic conceptualization of Europe (see Dainelli 1933). He did not point to any North–South dichotomy, but rather to an East–West dichotomy (in which Italy was firmly attached to the West), while at the same time emphasizing the “Mediterranean” dimension of European civilization (centered on Rome and Italy). Echoes of this orientation can also be found in the work of Carlo Curcio, who in 1927 actually produced a journal entitled *Sud*. The purpose of the journal was not to study a hypothetical “Southern Europe,” but rather “to study aspects and technical problems of our inevitable and necessary march toward Africa and the East” (Curcio 1941, 7; see also Curcio 1927).

A much more significant case of a Mediterranean perspective was offered by Federico Chabod, generally considered one of the most important Italian historians of the twentieth century (Woolf 2002). After a highly successful academic career during the Fascist era, he managed to achieve full acceptability in the postwar era, through his participation in the anti-Nazi resistance in 1943–45. What stands out in his historical writings on Italian foreign policy is not any Fascist subtext, but rather a remarkable continuity in his historical work on Italian Mediterranean policy, from the pre-Fascist era, through Fascism and its final unravelling in 1943, to his history of Italian foreign policy in 1870–96 (Chabod 1940; 1951; and 2014). As Piergiorgio Zunino has clearly illustrated, for Chabod there was no contradiction in being critical of Fascism as a totalitarian system, being hostile to the alliance with Nazi Germany, and holding a firm belief in Italy’s rights as a Mediterranean power (Zunino 2002).

All these Italian Mediterranean dreams—pre-Fascist or Fascist—evaporated in the face of the Italian collapse of September 1943 (Aga Rossi 2000), which is still seen as a “death of the Nation” (Galli Della Loggia 1996). This reaction has led to a tendency in Italian debates to underestimate the seriousness of Italian Mediterranean aspirations, at least from an intellectual point of view, if not from a strategic perspective. Fascism had actually created or strengthened a whole range of academic and policy-oriented institutions, ranging from an already consolidated tradition of Oriental studies, to institutes for the study of Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Soravia 2004; Santoro 2005; Bona 2005). The experience of defeat in 1943–45 led to an unceremonious burial of these traditions. In short, in interwar Italy there was no conceptualization of any Southern Europe.

## Postwar Visions

Southern Europe emerged, quite literally, with the Cold War. It was the natural consequence of the redefinition of strategic interests following the collapse of the Fascist dream in September 1943. This was already evident in the well-

known Churchill-Stalin talks in Moscow in October 1944, with the so-called percentages agreement, which involved a conceptual redefinition of the borders of Eastern Europe (and, by implication, also of Southern Europe).

These talks have been extensively interpreted and discussed (Resis 1978; Tsakaloyannis 1986; Sfikas 1999; Roberts 2006). In this context, what matters is the actual meaning of the presumed agreement. The only substantive point of the agreement was that Greece was going to be left to the Western Allies (Roberts 2014, 251). The rest of the agreement concerned countries that were destined to end under Soviet control, and Churchill was well aware of that. As he said to Stalin, "Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans. Your armies are in Rumania and Bulgaria." The percentages agreement did not create Southern Europe (out of a division of Europe), but it represented a tentative ratification of the new balance of power in Europe, which the military outcome was creating on the ground. As a consequence, Greece was (militarily and conceptually speaking) excluded from Eastern Europe (to which it had belonged since at least the Byzantine era). Maria Todorova has pointed out the discrepancy between Churchill's relatively accommodating attitude to a Communist takeover in Yugoslavia and his very strong feelings on the possibility of an equivalent takeover in Greece (Todorova 1997, 135).

The separation of Greece from its historical hinterland was rarely challenged in the Atlantic sphere, with a few exceptions (Seton-Watson 1975, 483). Scholarship in the Federal Republic of Germany was less affected by this exclusion, because of the existence of research centers organized around the category of "Südosteuropa," which would also have included Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus (see, e.g., Grothusen 1975–98). The incorporation of Italy into NATO was by no means as smooth as might seem in retrospect. Truman was very reluctant to agree to include Italy in the first wave of NATO members; after all, Italy was neither Northern nor Atlantic (Smith 1983). At the negotiations for the creation of NATO, as Sergio Romano (2002, 58) has pointed out, "the majority of participants argued that the presence of Italy was undesirable." France seems to have played a role in supporting Italian entry into NATO, stressing the Mediterranean dimension of the military alliance, since at the time it still possessed a *département* on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, in Algeria (Romano 2002, 60).

Greece and Turkey had to wait for the first NATO enlargement in 1952 to become fully integrated members of the Alliance (Hatzivassiliou and Triantaphyllou 2012, 667–69). This marked the creation of NATO's "Southern Flank." No conceptualization of the Southern Flank as some kind of Southern Europe ever took place. This was due not only to the most obvious cultural and religious diversities, but first of all because the Southern Flank was always seen in strictly military terms and it was never expanded into the po-

litical and economic sphere. Furthermore, by 1955 the divergence of interests of the three pillars of the Southern Flank was manifest after the outbreak of the anti-British rebellion in Cyprus and the anti-Greek riots in Istanbul in 1955. As Dionysios Chourchoulis (2015, 223) has pointed out, “The Southern Flank in the 1950s was a political situation rather than a military strategy of the alliance.”

What is interesting is what this definition left out, from a strictly Southern European perspective: Spain and Portugal. Spain was an embarrassing partner kept out of NATO (and, by implication, of the subsequently created EEC). There was consistent opposition to Spanish entry from some Northern European EEC members (for example, the Netherlands), despite French efforts in that direction. Portugal was a different case: it was a marginal player from an economic point of view (although not from a strategic point of view), and in many respects it was historically more connected to Great Britain than to the emerging Western European entities (Kiernan 1973).

A conceptualization of Southern Europe (in the sense of Southwestern Europe) would not have emerged simply as a result of the existence of a Southern Flank of NATO. Nor would the presence of an adequate US university-based area studies focus on Southern Europe have been sufficient to ensure such a conceptualization. However, the absence of these two factors did play a role (together with many other factors) in discouraging the establishment of a Southern European perspective.

The year 1955 represented in itself a turning point for Southern Europe, with the admission of Italy, Portugal, and Spain as new members in the United Nations, as part of a sort of formalization of the end of World War II (Mazower 2014, 313). The crucial French decision to go ahead with plans for the creation of the EEC was taken in the aftermath of the Suez debacle of 1956, which marked a downsizing of French ambitions as a European power (Milward 1993, 187–89). This was the moment when there was a decisive shift from a trans-Mediterranean framework to a neo-Carolingian one. Thus a Franco-German hegemony was rapidly and irreversibly defined, starting from the administrative practice of the EEC. All these changes deeply affected Southern Europe as a whole. The result was the emergence (at different levels) of Italy and Spain as significant players on the European scene; but “Southern Europe” never emerged as a category for analyzing the region.

## Southern Europe in the Social Sciences

A “Southern Europe” of sorts actually emerged in the field of development economics. When in 1944 Wilbert Moore began publishing his studies on economic demography, he used the label “Eastern and Southern Europe,”

as if it were uncontroversial (Moore 1944 and 1945). However, in 1943 Paul Rosenstein-Rodan (who came from a Polish and Habsburg background) was already talking of “Eastern and Southeastern Europe,” almost as if he were implying the existence of some kind of Southwestern Europe (Rosenstein-Rodan 1943). He subsequently explained that “Eastern and Southeastern Europe were selected as a model not because of any special interest in those countries, but because their governments in exile were in London and because Eastern and Southeastern Europe (like Latin America) constitute a group of similar but not identical models” (Rosenstein-Rodan 1984, 207). Clearly the perception of the incoming Cold War was beginning to have an effect. Rosenstein-Rodan had been involved in the study of Italian economic development since the 1930s, and he maintained a connection with Italian economists throughout his working life (Bhagwati and Eckaus 1972).

The relevance and salience of the debates on Italian economic development throughout the entire Cold War era was evident, both among neoclassical economists and less orthodox figures such as Alexander Gerschenkron and Albert Hirschman (Gerschenkron 1962 and 1968, Adelman 2013). These debates were also connected (often critically) to the wider framework of modernization theory in its economic aspect (Rostow 1960; Gilman 2003; Sosnowska 2004; Leszczyński 2014), and they also connected to the creation of a community of economic historians that covered both sides of the Cold War (Berg 2015).

A conceptualization of Southern Europe (or, quite exceptionally, of Southwestern Europe), eventually emerged in the early 1990s, on the basis of the flowering of economic history in post-Franco Spain (Molinas and Prados de la Escosura 1989; Tortella 1992); Portuguese economic history emerged somewhat later (Lains 2002). Greek historians benefited from an earlier entry into the European Community and from the strong increase of their presence in Northern European academic institutions. Various factors played a role in this unfolding. The 1980s (and even more the 1990s) reflected a more general pattern of academic renewal and expansion of the countries of the region. Despite the fact that Italian social scientists, as a whole, proved to be much less interested in comparative research, it represented a genuine breakthrough for Southern European studies (Tortella 1991).

Economic development debates had an impact, at least in terms of the research programs, in US-based area studies. This became clear at a later stage, at the end of the 1950s, in the heyday of modernization theory. The stage was set by Banfield’s *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Banfield 1958; Gilman 2003). His work continues to find an echo (however critical it may be) in social science debates in Italy and elsewhere (Ginsborg 1990; Putnam 1993; Meloni 1997; Mastropaolo 2009). The fact that it has quite recently

been translated into Greek is surely significant (Banfield 2014). In fact, Banfield's idea of "amoral familism" (as the key to understanding a backward society, such as Italy was called at the time) was only one of a series of concepts that social scientists (first and foremost social anthropologists) have used to explain Southern European and Mediterranean societies: honor, patronage, clientelism. Taken as a whole, they are best seen as a cluster of mutually reinforcing concepts. In their wider usage in public debates (as distinct from scholarly discussions), the terms are often interchangeable.

The case of social anthropology was, apparently, quite distinct. In this discipline, Southern Europe found its place as a subregion of the so-called Mediterranean sphere, which John Davis surveyed as a whole (Davis 1977; for a subsequent overview, see Albera 2001; see also chapter 4 in this volume). This was in many ways inevitable: a whole series of factors (disciplinary, political, and cultural) pushed toward a conceptualization of this kind. As Davis pointed out, "The Mediterranean attracted anthropologists almost before any other region of the world." But, at the same time, "Mediterranean people have been affected, sometimes in important ways, by the anthropological works which have been written about them: for better or worse, anthropology has helped create a history of the Mediterranean" (Davis 1977, 1–3).

A focus on Southern Europe was to emerge much later, in 1954, with the publication of Julian Pitt-Rivers's *The People of the Sierra* (Boissevain 1979, 81). Anthropological interest in the Mediterranean as a whole vastly overshadowed any potential interest in Southern Europe as a distinct entity. The postwar era coincided with the golden age of social anthropology, dominated by the British tradition (Barth 2005, 32–53). Predictably, the key concepts to emerge (or reemerge) in the postwar era were honor, patronage, and clientelism. Anthropology as a whole could not share any of the normative implications of political science, let alone those of modernization theory. What Banfield saw as symptomatic of a generally "backward" society, social anthropology could analyze in terms of "Mediterranean" societies.

## **The Southern European Transitions and the End of the Cold War**

The wave of democratic transitions was not entirely unexpected. What was unexpected was the speed of these transitions, and their virtually peaceful outcome (despite the attempted Spanish military coup in February 1981). This outcome facilitated, in the first half of the 1980s, a new phase of enlargement of the European Community, which was now to include Southern Europe in its entirety. In terms of conceptualization, it also led to the emergence of a subfield of transitological studies (which were destined to have a

strong influence on the interpretation of the post-Communist transitions). A useful overview of the available literature was eventually produced as a serious effort to establish an actual field of Southern European studies (Malefakis 1992). There was also a general history of the region, which included Turkey in Southern Europe (Sapelli 1995). Yet all these efforts were rapidly overshadowed by the second transitological wave, which followed the end of the Cold War (Linz and Stepan 1996). It is striking that social scientists working in Southern Europe have generally neglected an element of all the countries of the region: the common experience of dictatorship. This is in part due to the difference in timing of the transition to democracy in Italy (1945) and in Portugal, Greece, and Spain in the 1970s. There is also a clear desire to minimize the historical heritage of all these dictatorships (Troebst 2014).

The end of the Cold War also had another consequence, less emphasized at the time: the creation of a set of “orphans” of the Cold War. All of a sudden, at the end of 1991, a whole series of political elites on the Northern shores of the Mediterranean lost their strategic relevance, at least in the eyes of the remaining superpower. Henceforth, the old clients and beneficiaries of the Cold War in the region (starting from Yugoslavia) lost their strategic value. Southern Europe in the strict sense (Italy, Spain, and Portugal) was not affected in the same way by the post-Cold War changes in US priorities in relation to the Balkans. On the other hand, Greece (which had always kept and acknowledged some aspects of a Southeastern European historical identity) was significantly affected (both in its internal politics and in its external relations). The exception to an otherwise stagnant debate on Southern Europe in the social sciences as a whole is represented by social policy. It is the one case in which the debate has introduced a new approach with clear implications for government policies. It also offers a new angle for an actual conceptualization of Southern Europe (meaning of course Southwestern Europe).

The debate emerged in the 1990s, focusing on the emergence of what began to be defined as the “Southern European welfare model” (Ferrera 1996; Rhodes 1997 and 2015). This debate pointed quite clearly to the characteristics that had been taken on by the welfare state in Southern Europe following decades of European Community integration (and funding). The social, economic, and, ultimately, financial consequences of this model were to prove quite stark. The issue of the Southern European welfare model has also been discussed (and adapted to the local context) by social scientists in Turkey (Buğra and Keyder 2006).

This is not in itself an argument in favor of a rehabilitation of Banfield’s analysis. It is, rather, an argument in favor of a conceptual reevaluation of the historical heritage of the European South. From a historian’s point of view, what is interesting in Ferrera’s and Rhodes’s conceptualization is the fact that

it is not a rehabilitation of all-encompassing categories such as “amoral familism” or “clientelism,” but is instead a straightforward illustration of a causal process (Rhodes 1996).

Another field in which some kind of conceptualization of Southern Europe might have emerged (and perhaps did, in an informal way) was the debate on the “varieties of capitalism” which emerged after the 1990s. While not specifically focused on regional conceptualization, the analysis of long-term trends in economic management in Southern European countries still offers scope for innovative perspectives on the historical similarities (and dissimilarities) between these countries (Molina and Rhodes 2007).

### Adjacent and Counter-Concepts: The “Défi Méditerranéen” and the “PIGS”

Braudel’s major historical work (Braudel 1949)—conceived and written at a time in which France still possessed territories on the southern shores of the Mediterranean—also helped to focus attention on the sea as a category. Furthermore, the label “Mediterranean” has presented many advantages in terms of academic marketing, since it potentially covers a very wide range of topics, ranging from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Algeria, from Cyprus to Spain, from Turkey to Italy. This continues to be the case, and many social scientists have adopted the Mediterranean label (e.g., Burke III 2012). Southern Europe remained on the drawing-board of social scientists.

John Armstrong (1977, 635) saw Braudel’s *Méditerranée* as “*Un Défi Latin*,” (“A Latin Challenge”) envisaging “a reaffirmation of Latin civilization which is bound to influence Latin America as well as Latin Europe.” Armstrong called for “tighter, more consistent theories” that would have required “more precise conceptual points than Braudel [could] offer” (636). In the post-Cold War era, the Latin *défi* has been advanced essentially by Italian philosophers. The starting point was a book by Franco Cassano (1996), a Southern Italian sociologist (writing in an essentially philosophical manner). This was written in response to Fukuyama’s (1992) book on the “End of History,” which Cassano considered an enshrinement of the “North-Western” model. Interestingly, the counter-concept proffered was not the idea of European “Southernness,” but, rather, the idea of *mediterraneità* (Cassano and Fogu 2010). The only acceptable “South” was the global one. The use of the term “South” (in the sense of “Global South”) came into public discourse following the publication of the “Brandt Report” in 1980 (ICIDI 1980; Garavini 2012).

In 2013, these themes were broached in a more incisive manner by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben in a widely circulated newspaper article



titled “Se un impero latino prendesse forma nel cuore d’Europa” (If a Latin Empire took shape in the heart of Europe; Agamben 2013). The interview was taken up all over Europe, not least in Northern Europe. In fact, Agamben was echoing a relatively unknown essay by Alexandre Kojève, “Esquisse d’une doctrine de la politique française,” dated 27 August 1945 (Kojève 1990 and 2015; Howse 2004). Agamben (2013) summarized Kojève’s essay in the following terms:

Kojève proposed that France should head a “Latin Empire” which would have united economically and politically the three great Latin Nations (namely France, Spain and Italy), aligned with the Catholic Church, of which it would have collected the tradition, while at the same time remaining open to the Mediterranean. According to Kojève, Protestant Germany, which was soon to become the richest and most powerful nation in Europe (as it has become), would be led to adopt the forms of the Anglo-Saxon Empire because of her extra-European vocation. But, in this case, France and the Latin nations were destined to remain a more or less alien body, inevitably reduced to a peripheral role as a satellite.

Agamben’s rediscovery of the idea of a “Latin Empire” had great resonance, although the target was in fact the European Union (Schümer 2013). The use of the term “Latin” is indicative of the artificiality of the label. It remains rather infrequent in Italian usage (in the Fascist period, the label “Roman” was preferred). In fact, it is more typical of French usage; the label “Latin America” reflected French, rather than Spanish, influence (Molino 2005, 58).

The “Mediterranean vocation” has always been present in Italian post-war politics and culture, occasionally with very concrete objectives, as happened when Enrico Mattei’s National Hydrocarbons Agency (Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi, or ENI) strove to establish an independent policy in the field of petroleum supplies in the late 1950s. Otherwise, this so-called vocation consisted of speeches by politicians from all sides of the political divide, which were rarely taken seriously during the Cold War.

One of the consequences of the Eurozone crisis, which began in 2009 with the revelation of the depth of the Greek crisis, was the sudden reemergence of the term PIGS (covering Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain, and even Ireland for a certain period). This sudden revelation of the frailty of the Southern European economies appeared to retrospectively justify a conceptualization of Southern Europe, brushing aside the ambiguity inherent in the term “Latin” (inappropriate for Greeks, as heirs to Hellenic civilization). In fact, the gradual decoupling of Portugal, Italy, and Spain from the most serious aspects of the Greek crisis deflated the prospect of a negative Southern European identity. Given the durability of the crisis, it is unlikely that any of the countries

labeled “PIGS” will be inclined to remain attached to this identity, whatever label is used.

It is striking that the revivals of these labels always assume the primacy of cultural, religious, or linguistic affinities, rather than any shared historical experiences or interests. This happens precisely when economists begin to look at Southern Europe as a regional entity (Grahl and Teague 2013; Simonazzi, Ginzburg, and Nocella 2013 and 2015).

## Conclusion

A proper conceptualization of Southern Europe (in the sense of Southwestern Europe) has never really emerged, despite a number of factors and circumstances that could have favored some conceptualization. To be sure, the conceptualization of a South of Europe had an intellectual pedigree which went back to the Middle Ages (for example, the early versions of climate theory). Montesquieu provided an unequivocal version, in which the South was clearly identified with backwardness. Nineteenth-century literary sensibilities could have provided a more positive conceptualization, but this was never consolidated in other fields. German geographers favored a land-centered approach. Italian *Risorgimento* nationalists were more inclined to stress the Mediterranean dimension of Italy. This tendency was further developed when the modern Italian state was created, and even more after World War I, when Italy acquired an even more pivotal role in the Mediterranean. These dreams of Italy as an effective great power were finally shattered in 1943, with the collapse of the Italian state.

The Cold War created a “Southern Flank” of the NATO alliance, but it never acquired any cultural substance. The EEC marked a decisive shift toward a Northwestern European orientation, centered on the Franco-German axis. In the postwar era Southern Europe reemerged, conceptually speaking, in the social sciences, usually in a negative form, with a focus on economic backwardness, amoral familism, and clientelism. The Southern European democratic transitions offered a slightly more favorable conceptualizing option, but the end of the Cold War swiftly curtailed tendencies in that direction. At this point the notion of a Southern European welfare model began to emerge. However, the chain of economic and financial crises which began in the 2000s led to the emergence of an even more negative picture of financial profligacy (PIGS). Southern European intellectuals reacted defensively, arguing in favor of a “Latin” cultural and social alternative to Northern European models. At the end of the day, “Southern Europe” remains a highly elusive concept.

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## Chapter 6

# Iberia

*Xosé M. Núñez Seixas*



In the beginning there is a paradox. While the term “Iberia,” which was coined by the ancient Greeks to name the peninsula and which apparently comes from a river named Iber, is widely used in the English-speaking academic world, this label has an exotic flavor to most Iberian intellectuals and academics. A detailed thematic search in the catalog of the Spanish National Library offers a first insight into this cleavage. If the term selected is “Iberian Peninsula,” several hundred titles match our request. However, if the term selected is “Iberia,” just 131 matches are registered. But almost 90 percent of them refer exclusively to the Spanish airline Iberia, founded in 1927.<sup>1</sup> The geographic term is only employed by some foreign companies for their branches in Spain and Portugal to make it explicit that these delegations are responsible for operations on the whole peninsula, as well as by some football clubs, which were mostly founded by British settlers during the first years of the twentieth century. Very few memoirs, novels, or even periodicals mention Iberia (or Iberian) in their titles or headlines. In short, the label is no commonplace in Portuguese and Spanish culture, and has given its name to very few literary, essayistic, or artistic works. Only one exception comes to mind: the suite for piano *Iberia*, composed between 1905 and 1909 by the Spanish composer Isaac Albéniz, which is considered to be his masterpiece.

In contrast, “Iberia” is a term primarily used by non-Iberian observers, even by well-informed experts on Spain or Portugal or both, whose main conclusion used to be that there was no Iberian identity whatsoever, but a number of Iberian identities merely united by geography and the outside gaze (Herr and Polt 1989; O’Flanagan 2008). As in the case of the Balkans, it can be affirmed that the outside gaze, particularly during the French Enlightenment and the romantic period, also reinforced the perception of Iberian space as

being a non-European, uncivilized, exotic border area between Africa and Europe. The travelers' accounts written by German, British, and particularly French intellectuals who visited the Iberian Peninsula beginning in the late eighteenth century emphasized the exotic character of the Iberian lands, as well as their extreme internal diversity, regarded as a complementary feature to that exoticism (Bradford 1809). Alexander von Humboldt's views on the Basques as a people invested with proto-democratic institutions had little to do with his perception of the "Arabic" South of Spain. The same could be said of other foreign visitors (Fischer 1799; Humboldt 1903, 224–300; Michener 1968). Some of them, particularly French romantic travelers of the 1840s,<sup>2</sup> selected a set of images corresponding to Southern Spain—flamenco dancers, picturesque bullfighters, the female stereotype of the Andalusian woman represented by *Carmen* (Prosper Mérimée 1847), which came to be considered representative of all of Spain, and even of Iberia as a whole. These icons were later adopted as an inverted mirror in self-portrayals by many Spanish writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as by official propaganda campaigns—for example, for the purpose of promoting tourism—although in this case the meanings ascribed to those images were conveniently resignified (Núñez Florencio 2001; Musser 2011).

The exotic and romantic icon of Iberian identity was extended throughout Western and Central Europe in the second half of the twentieth century and has displayed an enduring resilience. Although it was explicitly applied to Spain, its limits and nuances were extremely unclear, and on many occasions the stereotype was identified with Iberia as a whole. In fact, many travelers to Portugal used to note with great surprise "how different" this land was from what they had expected before entering it, as their previous image of Portugal was that of a country which was smaller and poorer, but also somewhat similar to Spain, while similar stereotypes were ascribed to the inhabitants of the two Iberian lands (Borrow 2006; Andersen 2007). French geographers and travelers seldom used the concept *Ibérie*. Something similar can be said of German travelers and geographers. They preferred the term "Iberian Peninsula" or simply referred to "Iberia" when writing about the ancient times of the Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup>

Internal (that is, Iberian) consumers have mostly used the term "Iberia" as a political, cultural, and geographic metaphor. Only Spanish and Portuguese historians of antiquity have consistently made use of the term as the best marker for the territory not yet conquered by the Romans, which then went on to be labeled "Hispania," the term coined for the peninsula by its new masters.<sup>4</sup> The more abstract and fluid the term was, and the more imprecise its limits, the more useful and recurrent its use turned out to be in the sphere

of politics. In this latter case, the coherence and limits of the term “Iberia” were much less relevant than its ideological utilization.

The term “Iberia” is not in common use in Iberian languages for political, academic, or cultural purposes. However, the term “Iberian Peninsula” has enjoyed widespread use in such disciplines as geology, the natural sciences, and geography, in particular physical geography. This formula is, however, of merely geographic and/or cartographic compass. It has constituted, and still constitutes, a mosaic of different ethnic groups and languages. Two separate nation-states share its space, at least since 1640, as well as a microstate (Andorra) and a remnant of the British overseas empire (Gibraltar). At least five languages enjoying official status in their respective territories also share this space from the last quarter of the twentieth century (Castilian; Portuguese; Catalan in Catalonia, Valencia, and Andorra; Galician in Galicia; Basque in the Basque Country and Navarre; as well as English in Gibraltar). Despite its internal ethnic diversity, the Iberian Peninsula also tends to be regarded from the outside as a more or less wholly homogeneous unity, where a dominant ethnicity expressed in a world language (Spanish/Castilian) exists alongside a minor and subordinate element, also expressed in a world language of some lesser relevance (Portuguese). However, the rest of the components of the Iberian ethnocultural landscape (the Galician, Catalan, and Basque cultures, as well as other subnational and regional peculiarities and Gibraltar) have often been obscured, in spite of the visibility acquired by the Basque question since the 1970s, the architectural flavor of Santiago de Compostela as the final station of the Way of Saint James, or the important (self-)advertising role of the city of Barcelona for Catalan identity (Resina 2008).

The Iberian Peninsula is not, like the Balkans, an area where border regions and entire territories were transferred from one sovereignty to another, and therefore where conflicting national narratives over a same territory co-existed. The long-term stability of its internal frontiers since the late seventeenth century constitutes a European exception, as the Spanish-Portuguese border has been subject to very little modification since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the French-Spanish border was marked by the Pyrenees, with no changes since 1659. This fact did not prevent Iberian state-led nationalisms from claiming sovereignty over neighboring territories, nor from imagining one’s own national borders as being very different and larger than their present shape. But this irredentist imagination has played a minor role in modern Iberian identity politics (Núñez Seixas 2010a). However, the relationship of Spaniards and Portuguese to the cartographic representation of their homelands is very different. For most Spaniards, the geographic image simply overlaps with the Iberian Peninsula as a whole. For many Portuguese, on the contrary, the peninsular space is often regarded not as a comfortable

lap, but as a threatening territory where their small country risks disappearing, subjugated by the outstanding weight and dimensions of its Spanish neighbor—conversely regarded as a homogeneous Castilian ethnicity.

Iberianism as a political concept (*iberismo*) was employed by several political and cultural actors beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. It was a utopian horizon that accompanied federal Republican projects, workers' internationalism, substate nationalist projections of a new Spain (and consequently a new political structure of the peninsular space), and even monarchist projects (Catroga 1985; Rocamora 1994; Campos Matos 2007). Very diverse authors, from the revolutionary anarchists who founded the Iberian Anarchist Federation in 1927 (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*, FAI),<sup>5</sup> and the non-Stalinist dissident communists of the Marxist Union's Workers Party (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*, POUM) during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), to the Portuguese authoritarian monarchists after 1910, have echoed a rhetorical appeal to an Iberian unified polity. Nevertheless, in almost all cases, the term “Iberia” was used merely as a label of substitution, in order to avoid the words that were uncomfortable: the “Portuguese Republic” or “Spain,” depending on the respective objective they aimed at: an Iberian monarchy or a “Union of Iberian Socialist Republics.” The term “Iberia” was meant here to express a lack of satisfaction with the existing political regime in Spain, in Portugal, or in both nation-states (Duarte 2010).

## When Was Iberia?

What are the main historical turning points of the conceptualization of Iberia as a common reality? There is no common pattern to be found among the diverse Spanish and Portuguese historical narratives. Spanish and Portuguese historiographies followed parallel paths from the late eighteenth centuries, but they simply ignored each other (Campos Matos and Mota Álvarez 2008; Núñez Seixas 2011). Therefore, the chronological points where a certain concept of Iberia as a so-called historical region emerges are in most cases vague and undefined. Nonetheless, some crucial moments have been outlined by historians, geographers, politicians, and opinion-makers, who also ascribed them different interpretations. Thus, a chronology of Iberianism can be obtained from different sources and includes the following historical turning points:

- 1) The ancient times are the sole period when the peninsula is indisputably considered to have been a unity. The Iberians are usually described in Spanish and Portuguese textbooks as the set of tribes and peoples that inhabited the peninsula before the arrival of foreign conquerors: the Carthaginians and especially the Romans, who launched the conquest of the Iberian territory

in the year 276 BC. Ancient Iberians were given great relevance in Spanish historical culture, as they were considered the first representatives of the Hispanic national character, although it was generally accepted that only the Romans gave them a sense of unity.<sup>6</sup> The subsequent emergence of the Roman province of Hispania was the first expression of peninsular unity, as well as of historical and geographical distinctiveness. Hispania was not meant here to be a political but rather a geographical concept.

2) The Gothic invasions and the consolidation of the Gothic kingdoms began in the fifth century; they then merged into the first unified polity of the whole peninsula, the Visigoth kingdom, particularly after its conversion to Catholicism (and the abandonment of heretical Arianism) by the king Recaredo in the year 574 AC). This was seen by nineteenth-century Spanish historians as an important cornerstone on the way to peninsular unity, as well as proof of the intrinsically Hispanic character of the whole territory: even newcomers accepted the legacy of civilized Iberianness. Territory decisively shaped the Iberians' mind and their natural striving for unity. Peninsular unity was also a legacy from Greco-Roman culture. Catholicism, as displayed in the work of Saint Isidore of Seville, had acted as a unifying element favoring the fusion of Iberians and Goths with the civilization of the Romans.

3) The Arab invasions in the year 714 AC and the eight subsequent centuries of more or less forced and more or less peaceful coexistence of three religious confessions (Muslims, Christians, and Jews) on the peninsular soil were regarded from a more ambivalent angle. Spanish and Portuguese nationalist historiography in the nineteenth century coined the term "Reconquest" for the era to describe the steady process of southward expansion of the Christian kingdoms, which step by step gained terrain from the Muslim emirates and kingdoms of Southern Iberia. The process was supposed to have an end in January 1492, as the city of Granada surrendered to the Castilian queen Isabella.

4) The historical evaluation of the Middle Ages has been double-edged and contradictory. On the one hand, the "March to the South" of the Christian kingdoms has been interpreted as an endeavor guided by a common enterprise, that of reconstructing the lost peninsular unity inherited from the Romans and the Goths, and reinforced by the Christian faith. On the other hand, most Iberian national narratives place the origins of their nations precisely in this period, particularly in the Portuguese (and later Catalan and Galician) cases. The emergence of distinctive ethnicities, languages, and political communities after the multiplication of Latin romance dialects paved the way for the first proto-national polities. Therefore, the Middle Ages were also seen by the supporters of Iberian unity as a moment of success for the traditional defects they considered characteristic of Iberians: a pathological drive for individualism, only compensated by generosity, bravery, and disdain

of materialistic values. An expression of this exalted individualism had been Portugal's decision to go its own way, not counterbalanced by a parallel move toward dynastic unity, as had been the case for the Kingdoms of Aragón and Castile.

5) The Portuguese discoveries, as well as Columbus's discovery of America in 1492 and the subsequent overseas expansion of the unified Spanish monarchy, define a period that led to Iberian—particularly Castilian—imperial hegemony in the world for a century and a half. This period is mainly regarded by Spanish and Portuguese nationalist historians as the peak moment of historical grandeur. For Alexandre Herculano and his followers, the overseas discoveries of the fifteenth century also meant Portugal's liberation from Castilian hegemony. Several contradictions were underlined in this period, which is also regarded as the crucial moment when parallel lines of proto-national and territorial expansion were competing. As Spain (Castile and Aragón) was a part of the Habsburg Empire, one of these lines led toward Central Europe. The other led toward the Americas.

6) The second line of overseas expansion prevailed, and was overly emphasized by the nationalist historical narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Iberian transatlantic empires had made an enduring contribution to world civilization, as they gained a set of new lands for the Catholic faith in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, and spread the Castilian and Portuguese languages.

7) The Napoleonic invasion of 1808 and the following Napoleonic (or "peninsular") war, later renamed the War of Independence, were interpreted as the moment of the emergence and/or consolidation of modern Iberian nation-states, rather than an expression of genuine Iberian solidarity. In spite of the fact that the war was fought on Iberian soil, engaging soldiers from at least four nationalities (French, Spanish, British, and Portuguese), there is no common Iberian narrative of the conflict. Some contemporary poets referred to the "brave Iberians" who had expelled the French just as their ancestors had resisted the Romans, but "Iberians" simply meant "Spaniards" (Valdaires y Longo 1835). Portuguese and Spanish national historiographies regarded the conflict as the opposition of patriots to the French invaders (Alvarez Junco 1994).

8) The common imperial crisis of the late nineteenth-century affected Iberia as well. Beginning with the 1890 Ultimatum crisis in Portugal, as British pressure forced the Lisbon government to abandon its plans of forging a Portuguese South African empire by uniting Angola and Moçambique, and the 1898 crisis in Spain, as the country lost its overseas colonies after a short war against the United States, both countries were regarded by European public opinion as declining powers in the age of imperialism. As a reaction to

this, several supporters of the project of Iberian political union, which would enable a new Iberian confederation to play a more relevant role in international politics, gained renewed attention. Yet they were unable to surmount nationalist prejudices. While for the Portuguese any project of Iberian political union was suspected of being antipatriotic, Spanish intellectuals shared a tendency to regard Portugal merely as a part of Spain that had been unduly separated from the national core in 1640. When they used the term “Iberia,” it was just Spain (in some cases, ancient Spain) that was meant.<sup>7</sup>

This contradiction may be illustrated by the views on the concept of Iberian civilization that were held around 1900 by the Portuguese historian Joaquim P. Oliveira Martins and the Spanish Rafael Altamira. Both believed in the convenience of crafting a common narrative that would permit the declining Iberian powers to play a new role in the age of empire. They emphasized the distinctive Iberian contribution to world civilization and stressed the values that had oriented the imperial expansion of Iberian peoples in the past (that is, spiritualism, disdain of material benefits, purportedly generous treatment of subject peoples). According to this interpretation, Iberians had incorporated the Luso-Hispanic peoples of America, Africa, and Asia into a shared destiny. However, while Oliveira Martins advocated the recovery of the concept of Iberian civilization, his Spanish colleague opted for the term “Spanish civilization,” and stressed the transatlantic link to the Iberoamerican nations. Furthermore, both acted as national historians. While the Spanish national narratives (both liberal and traditionalist) had no real problem in adopting an Iberian vein, as Portugal was regarded as a prodigal son of Hispanity, it was more difficult for Portuguese historians to accept the Iberian dimension without betraying the main tenets of their own national narrative (Campos Matos 2009; Núñez Seixas 2010b).

9) The consolidation of enduring authoritarian dictatorships in the twentieth century (1926–74 in Portugal, 1939–1975 in Spain), characterized by their Catholic-traditionalist slant, and their survival after 1945, also led some social scientists to refer to a specific species of “Iberian Catholic fascism” or Iberian dictatorship as a peculiar and distinctive form of political regime (Loff 2008), which was sometimes compared later to the Greek military dictatorship, and even to some dictatorial regimes of Central and South America during the second half of the twentieth century.

The limited academic and journalistic emphasis on the Iberian dimension of transnational fascism has been counterbalanced by the striking differences existing between Salazarism and Francoism, as well as by the more pronounced overseas and imperial orientation of Portugal during this period. However, European social democracy, and in general terms the European left, regarded the peninsula as a whole, or at least to a certain extent, as part of a



no-less-vaguely defined “Southern Europe,” and envisaged a common path for achieving democracy for the whole area. But they were also aware of the fact that the political dynamics of Iberian paths to democracy could hardly be more different from each other. While a military coup in Portugal in April 1974 was followed by a period of revolutionary turmoil, a relatively smooth and consociational transition took place in Spain after the death of General Franco in November 1975.<sup>8</sup>

10) Finally, the period of democratic consolidation that peaked with Portugal and Spain’s entry in the EEC in 1986 was marked in both countries by a strong wave of Euro-optimism. It was regarded as the end of what had constituted Iberian exceptionalism until that moment: the sum of economic decline, authoritarian rule, and cultural backwardness. Joint participation in the EEC/EU also meant a substantial reversal of historical *othering*. “Europe” ceased to be an alien space located beyond the Pyrenees. The Iberian “others” during the 1990s and the twenty-first century became increasingly similar to most Western Europeans. Since 1986, both countries saw their cultural, economic, and political exchanges rapidly intensifying.

This fact has had little impact, however, on the historiographic level. Although academic exchanges between Spanish and Portuguese historians have increased substantially since the mid-1980s, joint research projects and historical meetings did not usually lead to a systematic comparison, even less to a transnational perspective, but to a juxtaposition of two narratives. Very few Spanish historians are acquainted with the basics of modern Portuguese history, and to a lesser extent something similar happens the other way round. Even less frequent are attempts at building an agreed-upon concept of Iberia as a historical region. More often than not, Portuguese and Spanish historians have only been forced to think about this when they have been compelled or motivated to place Iberian history in a broader context (Costa Pinto and Núñez 1997; Sáez-Arance 2003).

## Iberian Metaphors

The geographical location of Iberia between Europe and Africa has also been the object of diverging historiographic and cultural interpretations of the Iberian space. These have depicted the Iberian territory as a place where different religious beliefs (Christian, Muslim, and Jewish) coexisted in harmony until the sixteenth century, and they have also presented it as a crucible—sometimes as a salad bowl—of different ethnic groups and cultures of both European and non-European character, from Southern European and Northern European origin. Later on, America’s so-called discovery and colonization during the early modern period also led Iberian historical narratives to stress

the role of the peninsula not only as a gateway between Europe and Africa, but above all as a transatlantic gateway between the old and the new world.

A similar metaphor was applied to the concepts of the Iberian “crucible.” The fusion of races and ethnic groups that occurred on the Iberian Peninsula was now extended to America and, to a more limited extent, to several territories of Africa and Asia (Goode 2007). The miscegenation that started in Europe in the early Middle Ages was then transplanted to America, and therefore the Iberian nations were also recreated and reproduced overseas in their racial and ethnic diversity. This representation, together with the common enterprise of extending the Catholic faith, tended to underscore the specifically “benevolent” character of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism. This was sometimes depicted by certain historians as a distinct pattern of Iberian colonialism, differentiated from the “racist” French, German, or British models. Yet this positive view also obscured the many dark sides of Iberian empires, such as violence, slave labor, and enforced cultural assimilation (Schmidt-Nowara 2006).

The Iberian Peninsula’s relative isolation from Western and Central Europe, sanctioned by the existence of the Pyrenees, also gave rise to very divergent reactions beginning in the late eighteenth century. Iberia was often regarded by traditionalists and counterrevolutionaries as a “bulwark” of Christianity and tradition against the perverse influence of the French Enlightenment, against revolutionary liberalism and the British tradition of rational thought, and against heretic doctrines and freemasonry. However, the peninsula was also portrayed as a premodern and exotic space, whose geographic isolation and eccentric location on the southwestern corner of the continent had prevented its inhabitants from joining progress and civilization, attributes that seemed to be proper to other areas of Europe. Iberia was not a land of passage, but a place where conquerors and invaders were forced to stop at the sea, once they found themselves unable to go any farther.<sup>9</sup>

While the first narrative depicted Iberia as a repository of the purest essences of classic heritage, Christian tradition, and even ancient European distinctiveness, the second interpretation portrayed the Iberian lands as the last refuge of ideological and cultural reaction, fanaticism, intolerance, and backwardness. Some of the main arguments that embraced Iberian (particularly, but certainly not only, Spanish) backwardness and barbarism were then forged and diffused. This was the case with the “Black Legend,” as well as the myth of the Spanish Inquisition as a long-standing characteristic of Spanish (and, by extension, Iberian) character. On the contrary, for progressive liberals and republicans alike, the Pyrenees were not a barrier against European influence, but a permanent and undeletable link with the continent and its intrinsic values (freedom, tolerance, modernity).

In practice, there were few alternative concepts that could compete with the prevailing Iberian notion of historical space. Iberia appears to be a natural entity, marked by clear-cut natural barriers: mountains, seas, straits, and rivers. It is a solid, concrete metaphor: a number of territories sharing some organic features, among them mighty rivers, which are seen as powerful backbones that create a sense of common destiny.<sup>10</sup>

Alternative supranational concepts of historical regions that may go beyond the Iberian space have barely been used in Spain and Portugal. Neither the concept "Southern Europe" nor that of "Southwestern Europe" has succeeded in Iberian historical narratives. The label "Mediterranean Europe" was also unable to tempt many Portuguese, Galicians, or Basques to become a part of it, as they have mostly defined themselves as Atlantic peoples. However, the Mediterranean dimension was much more comfortably accepted by historians and intellectuals from Catalonia or Andalusia, as their link to the Greek-Roman heritage was therefore emphasized. Yet there have been a few exceptions to this rule.

A first exception was the recurrent inclusion of Spain into the Southern European category by economic historians during the 1980s and 1990s, as well as by migration studies and, in some cases, by political scientists, who compared Spain with Portugal, Italy, and Greece. This was paradoxically related to the necessity to overcome some pessimistic paradigms of Spanish historical writing that had become a Spanish *Sonderweg* thesis. One of these referred to the failure of the bourgeois revolution. The other was the thesis of the failure of the industrial revolution. And a third, although more contested, paradigm that still endures is the thesis of the weak Spanish nation-building. Instead of looking at France and Britain as historical patterns of comparison, younger Spanish historians turned their eyes to Italy and the Mediterranean basin during the 1980s and 1990s. This trend was favored by the linguistic proximity to Italian and the attractive performance of Italian historiography in the 1980s. By making Spain more "Mediterranean," inferiority complexes resulting from the persistent implicit comparison with the North should vanish.

However, the Mediterranean dimension stood in open contradiction with the Iberian paradigm. Given the fact that between Spain and Portugal there existed a clear imbalance of economic power, demographic dimension, and cultural influence, comparison with Portugal was considered an almost negligible endeavor by most Spanish historians. For some Portuguese historians, looking to Spain was also of little help, as it could only serve to reinforce a pessimistic view of their country's economic performance in the modern period. As a parallel phenomenon, Portuguese historians have looked for commonalities with other purportedly Atlantic and Southern European countries, in order to place their country's political and economic evolution in a wider

framework. Economic historians emphasized comparisons with “peripheral” Atlantic or Mediterranean countries, such as Greece or even Sweden (Lains 2003). Political historians have also attempted to place the Portuguese path to political modernization within the Southern European framework of early parliamentarianism and late social modernization (Tavares de Almeida, Costa Pinto, and Bermeo 2003).

Alternative constructs such as that of Hispanity (*Hispanidad*), until the 1980s, and Lusophonia (*Lusofonia*), until the present day, proved to be more successful. They were politically promoted in different periods—from the beginning of the twentieth century in Spain, increasingly invested with a Catholic-conservative meaning, and from the mid-1970s in Portugal, enhancing a linguistic and cultural character (Sepúlveda 1994, Castelo 1998)—and were intended as an alternative search for a cultural and “spiritual” empire. This would also serve to reaffirm the Iberian influence in world affairs. Both concepts followed parallel paths until the 1990s, as the terms “Iberoamericanism” and “Ibero-America” emerged. This was seen from the Spanish side as a necessity to overcome the authoritarian and traditionalist tones that the Franco regime had given to the concept *Hispanidad*. But it was also regarded as a necessary response to the spreading of the term “Latin America,” whose origins—which dated back to the mid-nineteenth century—were seen in the French, Italian, and British attempts at undermining the predominance of the Spanish language in the Americas.<sup>11</sup>

On the Portuguese side, the motivation was different. The imbalance in size, power, and economic influence between the ancient metropolis (Portugal) and the former colony (Brazil) is so huge, that the invention of “Ibero-America” appeared as an efficient strategy to overcome that contradiction. This is perhaps the sole case where the term “Iberian,” though associated with the Americas, has experienced some success, at least in the diplomatic sphere. However, while more or less widely used in the Spanish and Portuguese public sphere, the term “Ibero-America” has not managed to impose itself in the Americas, where the term preferred by Spanish and Portuguese-speaking elites themselves continues to be Latin America. And it is used even less in the academic world, apart from several attempts at building transatlantic networks where Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American historians would collaborate in creating a common framework of transnational history. Their success (for example, in the domain of conceptual history) has remained limited so far, as the circulation of ideas in the Iberoamerican space has followed very divergent paths.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the independent connections to other cultural and political areas (North America, Western Europe, etc.) were often more important than those established within “Ibero-America.” Apart from some segments of English-speaking academic Hispanism, one of the few ex-

ceptions is the German *Hispanistik* school, where the label “Iberoamerican history and culture” has been successfully used through the last fifty years to name a rather vague field of study embracing both Latin American and Iberian history.<sup>13</sup>

Not even substate nationalist narratives in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia have been capable to fully overcome the Iberian frame of reference. Yet Catalan and Galician nationalists dreamed of *another* Iberia, one that would go beyond the existing nation-states and adopt a federal or confederal structure, based on the free association of the linguistic ethnonations of the peninsula (Martínez Gil 1997; Medeiros 2003; Núñez Seixas 2013). They attempted to establish an independent bridge between the Catalan, Galician, and Portuguese historical experiences (supposedly united by sharing a common enemy—that is, Castile), attempting to build a different Iberian perspective of shared history and culture. This perspective strives to be polycentric instead of binational, thereby giving a more complex but also more balanced dimension to the interplay of Iberian cultural spaces. It has also referred to Iberian culture(s) alternatively as an addition or juxtaposition of a number of cultural and linguistic domains: three in some versions—Portugal plus Galicia as a shared linguistic space, whereas Basque culture was simply left aside—or five, if Basque and Galician cultures are included as equal partners and not dissolved into the Portuguese and the Castilian cultural spheres.

During the period 1900–36, a vaguely defined concept of an Iberian literary sphere emerged among some Catalan, Galician, and Portuguese writers, with the support of a set of publishing houses based in Barcelona (Harrington 2005; 2010). An academic translation of these tenets may be found among some scholars from the field of Hispanic cultural studies in English-language academia, who have recently coined the term “Iberian cultures” as an alternative to “Spanish/Hispanic cultures” and “Portuguese/Lusophone cultures,” by broadening its scope and diversifying its content as well. This has been crafted as a new strategy to regain academic terrain and effectively compete with the greater literary and philosophical prestige of French and German culture, as well as a way of redefining the traditional hierarchies among the different cultural domains of the Iberian Peninsula (Resina 2009; 2013; Dougherty and Azevedo 1999). However, so far there have been no parallel attempts on the historiographic level to elaborate an alternative concept of a multinational historical region.

## Deconstructing the Iberian Mosaic from the Periphery

The historical narratives emphasizing peninsular decline, which became characteristic of Iberian historiographies between 1880 and 1930, were always

flanked by alternative narratives that emphasized the glorious role of the Iberian lands in the past and the present in three respects: as a bulwark against non-European barbarians, as a crucible of different cultures and peoples (Romans, native Iberians, Goths, Muslims, and Jews) and as a gate of intercultural communication, both to the Arab civilization and, later, to the Americas.

However, these narratives were openly challenged beginning in the 1890s by the emergence of alternative national histories developed in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia. These questioned the idea of Iberia as being a shared territory and/or a spatial “community of destiny,” and highlighted the peculiarity of each nation-state. The Iberian space seemed to them excessively dominated by a hegemonic partner, called Castile (or the Spanish-speaking lands), whose demographic over-importance remained unchanged. As an alternative, Portuguese national narratives, as well as substate nationalist narratives within Spain, preferred to look for “escape routes” from a geographical space that encapsulated the visibility of their respective national communities and isolated them from “Europe”—that is, Western Europe. Therefore, Portuguese imperial narratives focused on early modern overseas expansion, turned their back on the rest of the Iberian Peninsula and advanced the idea that Portugal was a progressive sailors’ and merchants’ nation that sailed the ocean to communicate with the outside world. It was not surprising that Portugal’s elites preferred to stress its historical and cultural links with Great Britain and other overseas empires. In the mid-twentieth century, the Portuguese New State under Salazar also embraced the self-definition of a “multicontinental” and Christian nation extending over three continents. This permitted Portuguese nationalism to imagine its homeland in terms of a great European power. Some propaganda posters of Salazar’s period put a map of Portugal, Angola, and Moçambique on the background of a European map, to conclude that “Portugal is not a small land” (Alexandre 2000).

In a similar vein, Catalanist historical narratives from the beginning of the twentieth century looked toward the Western Mediterranean as a new space of belonging. Apart from taking on the Occitanian writer Frédéric Mistral’s utopian project of a great Latin federation, Catalanist historians and intellectuals particularly highlighted the past heritage of the Catalan-Aragonese empire of the Middle Ages and historical cultural links to Southern Italy, Sardinia, and even Greece. Many elements were combined into this “Mediterranean imagination,” from music to history, and from architecture to archaeology. Therefore, the history and culture of the small Catalan-speaking community of the Sardinian town of Alghero became a privileged object of Catalanist attention. Similarly, the Roman archaeological sites of Empúries and Tarragona were celebrated as remnants of a period when Catalonia played a crucial role in the commercial routes of the ancient Mediterranean. Many Catalan

intellectuals wished to go northwards (to Paris) and eastwards (to Italy). The Principality of Andorra, however, the first state where Catalan was recognized as an official language, received little attention from Catalonia, in comparison with the frequent inclusion of the Roussillon (annexed by the French Crown in 1659) into the cartographic imagination of Catalan nationalists, as well as to the symbolic role played by the neighboring Occitanian culture since the end of the nineteenth century. Many Catalanist intellectuals thought of the French South as a natural area of cultural expansion, which linked them to the core of European culture (Rafanell 2006; González Vilalta 2006, 290–97).

This trans-Pyrenean solidarity had indeed very fluid contents, as the boundaries of “Occitany” or “Provence” were far from concrete. But this also permitted Catalanist intellectuals to combine their references to a new Iberia with a resurrected “Catalan Midi” as complementary metaphors. Portugal was imagined by Catalan nationalists in similar terms to Catalonia: a prosperous, entrepreneurial, and dynamic people concentrated on the coastal shores, but conditioned and pressed (and sometimes oppressed) by an inhospitable interior region, Castile. However, both Catalanists and Portuguese intellectuals ignored each other’s realities beyond the efforts of some minority mediators. Therefore, they were unable to understand the inner complexities of their neighbors. This was also common among Spanish travelers to Portugal in the nineteenth and twentieth century (Giner de los Ríos 1888; Calvet 1963).

Basque nationalist narratives looked to French Basque Country in search of a trans-Pyrenean space of communication that would enable them to jump over the frontier and find a direct connection with the European core. The image of their homeland accepted and propagated by Basque nationalists presented them as a small but proud people, unified in character and customs, who lived across two bigger and more-or-less oppressive states—a people whose spinal column would be the *muga* (border), which now became a symbol of linkage, and not of division. Therefore, the terminology set in motion by Basque nationalists tends to reflect this trans-Pyrenean character and avoids referring to Iberia. Instead, the Spanish Basque Country is alluded to as the “peninsular Basque Country” or “Southern Basque Country” (*Hegoalde*), while the French Basque Country is labeled the “Northern part” (*Iparralde*) or “Continental Basque Country.” Cartographic representations in textbooks and the arts have increasingly tended to depict a map of the Basque territories that consciously or unconsciously skips Iberia and emphasizes their character as lands of passage (Esparza 2011; Bray 2011).

However, professional historiography has barely followed this path. The historical narrative of the Basque Country often appeals to past and present parallelisms beyond the Pyrenees, particularly as seen from the Spanish side. But no systematic trans-Pyrenean comparison has ever been made, and de-

spite some unprofessional attempts made by certain Basque radical nationalist historians, the two sides of the Pyrenees have barely been integrated into a consistent historical narrative. There are a number of general histories of the Spanish Basque Country (some of them including Navarre), but very few serious attempts at writing a common historical narrative of all Basque territories on both sides of the frontier.<sup>14</sup> In this respect, political and cultural imagination has gone far beyond professional historiography.

Finally, Galician nationalist historical narratives have stressed Galicia's transatlantic historic vocation as a land of mass migration to America, as well as its privileged link to Portugal and the "Celtic nations," forging an "Atlantic facade" of Europe. Diasporic imagination has played a major role here, by stressing the link between Galicia and Atlantic metropolises like Buenos Aires or Havana, where Galician immigrants set up dense networks of mutual-aid associations that shaped authentic diasporic communities, and where the legacy of Galician culture and the memory of self-government found shelter during the Franco years (Núñez Seixas 2002). However, no consistent historical narrative has been constructed beyond the specific field of migration studies. The same applies to the purportedly privileged relationship between Galicia and Portugal, as a means of consolidating an alternative Atlantic Iberia. Beyond the field of linguistic and literary history, it has proved impossible to reconcile Portuguese and Galician historical narratives, as the former intended to be self-sufficient and not integrated as a subordinate part into a "Lusitanian" story (Vázquez Cuesta 1995; Villares 2002). Iberianism is also seen in this case as a possible solution for the dilemma. But this view was never shared by Portuguese historiography.

### **Iberia: Geographically Obvious, Historically Diffuse**

The natural borders of Iberia are an indisputable reality. This was a point of departure for variegated Iberian historiographies as well. However, and perhaps because of its being so blatant from the outside, Spanish and Portuguese historians have not felt obliged to further reflect on what is evident. Instead, they have preferred to concentrate on state-making and nation-building, as well as on the existing political borders and the extent to which the peninsula was a "natural" container of just one hegemonic nation rooted in geographical determinism and historical tradition (Spaniards), or a geographic limitation that had to be overcome (Portuguese).

The asymmetries between Spain and Portugal regarding their demographic size, political influence in the world, and economic development have also strongly conditioned the historians' different views on Iberia as



a historical region. Iberia was always a recurrent metaphor whose concrete meaning was liquid and versatile, but it has barely been the subject of any sophisticated historical narrative attempting to stress commonalities, apart from a generic awareness of shared territory, past grandeur, and modern decline and backwardness. And even these notions were only somewhat shared by Portuguese and Spanish historians, depending on the period and the area they analyzed. Portuguese historians tended to avoid the Iberian dimension, while Spaniards used “Hispanic,” “Iberian,” and “Spanish” interchangeably. The big Iberian brother identified the geographic label with its own political community.

The emergence of substate nationalisms on the Spanish periphery beginning in the end of the nineteenth century revitalized interest in the Iberian perspective on the part of some historians and intellectuals committed to the task of building historical narratives opposed to the Spanish one. Iberia was now regarded as a new metaphor signifying “multinational Spain,” in which Portugal continued to be an imagined partner rather than an integrated counterpart. Portuguese national history concentrated on the golden age of the early modern discoveries, the transatlantic empire, and later on Lusophonia as possible escape routes from a Castilian/Spanish-dominated Iberian space regarded not as a link to Europe but rather as an obstacle to be surmounted. Catalan historians frequently looked to the past in search of the Mediterranean dimension of Catalonia’s (in reality the Kingdom of Aragon’s) empire in the Middle Ages; they also emphasized Catalonia’s proximity to France and its origins as a part of the Carolingian empire, and emphasized the relevance of past cultural relations with Occitany. Meanwhile, Galician historians tended to stress the Atlantic character of a land of migration. They also referred to the Jacobean tradition (the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela) as a direct link to Central Europe existing since the Middle Ages.

Yet the external perspective on Iberia has tended to emphasize the compact character of that historical region. The real problem arises when trying to establish its common characteristics. Even the most enthusiastic supporters of an Iberian vision in the cultural and political sphere have failed to define the common traits of Iberian identity and culture, beyond the sharing of a geographical space. Perhaps its common link was the awareness of being a periphery of the European “center,” and therefore of being caught in a trap that almost everyone wanted to escape. This may be a paradox of Iberia as a political and cultural construct: social scientists, historians, and politicians as well have constantly tended to transcend geographical space and to assert that their nations and states belong to global areas, regarded as spheres of interaction that promise a better future.

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## Notes

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- 1. The company, initially founded during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera as a private endeavor, was nationalized in 1944. The name was chosen to stress the patriotic character of the airline: see Vidal Olivares 2008.
- 2. See, e.g., Gautier 1845. Nonetheless, this author differentiated between the “European” Northern Spain and the “African” South.
- 3. There are just a few exceptions, such as Petitcolin 1899; the term “Iberien” has rarely been used in German.
- 4. See Guzmán, Gómez Espelosín, and Guzmán Gárate 2007. An example of how the terms “Hispania” and “Iberia” are interchangeably used for referring to the origins of present-day Spain is Gómez Espelosín 2008. See also García Alonso 2008.
- 5. See a later example of this “Iberianism” in Aláiz 1984.
- 6. See, e.g., Eslava Galán 2004. Very few historical essays use the term “Iberia” as the place inhabited by ancient Iberians: exceptions are González Reyero 2010 and Berrocal, García Sanjuan, and Gilman 2012.
- 7. See, e.g., the title of the tendentiously right-wing revisionist journal of history *Historia de Iberia Vieja: Revista de Historia de España*, founded in 2005.
- 8. See, e.g., International Marxist Group 1975. In the United States an Inter-American Committee for Iberian Freedom issued the journal *Iberia* (later renamed *Ibérica: For a Free Spain*) from 1953 to 1975. See also Muñoz Sánchez 2005; 2012. The term “Iberian transitions” also applied as a model for understanding Latin American post-dictatorial transitions of the 1980s, in Warda (1996).
- 9. See several examples in Alvarez Junco (2013).
- 10. A good example is the literary metaphor used by the Portuguese Nobel Prize recipient José Saramago in his novel *A jangada de pedra* (1986, translated as *The Stone Raft* by Giovanni Pontiero in 1994), according to which Iberia had never been a part of Europe. Therefore, its best destiny would be to navigate inde-

- pendently, like a boat that breaks free from the continent and goes west, like the lost Atlantis. See Archer 2010 and Saramago 1995.
11. The term was first employed at a public speech in Paris in 1856 by the Chilean philosopher Francisco Bilbao, as well as by the Columbian writer José M. Torres Caicedo. It was then spread by French diplomacy during the Second Empire, as Napoleon III invaded Mexico and attempted to establish a privileged relationship with the South and Central American Republics, replacing British, American, and Spanish influence. Later on the label “Latin America” became popular and extended itself as a term that did not include all Romance language-speaking American countries, but mainly Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America—thus excluding Québec or the French-speaking communities in other Canadian and North Atlantic territories, as well as Louisiana. Early in the twentieth century, the concept was also invested with socioeconomic and ethnic connotations. See Funes 2006.
  12. See, e.g., from the perspective of conceptual history, Fernández Sebastián 2009; 2012.
  13. E.g., the Berlin-based journal *Iberoamericana*, which publishes articles in Spanish, Portuguese, and English; or the Adelaide-based *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*.
  14. Only some examples of nonprofessional historians (politically very committed to radical Basque nationalism) can be quoted, such as those who penned the *Historia de Euskal Herria*, 3 vols. (Tafalla 1997).

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## Chapter 7

# Balkans / Southeastern Europe

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### Conceptual Precursors

For most of history the status of the Balkans as a peninsula remained indistinct. According to circumstances it bore different names—Hellenic, Byzantine, or Illyrian peninsula; Romania (for the Eastern Roman empire); and Rumeli (as an administrative unit of the Ottoman Empire)—but these were neither geographical notions nor even well-defined in terms of borders, especially to the north. “Turkey in Europe,” “European Turkey,” and *la Turquie d’Europe* began to be used by the Ottomans and in Western Europe in the sixteenth century and became standard around the mid-eighteenth century. It included the Romanian Principalities, despite their different administrative status, and was occasionally subsumed under the then-emerging *Europe orientale*. The gradual disintegration of the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of “the Eastern Question” strengthened the political connotations of the term “Turkey-in-Europe,” which remained dominant until the late 1870s. The few integrative studies of the region, such as Ami Boué’s renowned “La Turquie d’Europe” (1840), where the term Southeastern Europe was also used, helped standardize this appellation. Greek texts, on the other hand, often featured another imported name, “Graicia,” for the area.

The geographical notions of the “Balkan Peninsula” (or “the Balkans”) and “Southeastern Europe” were relatively late occurrences of nonlocal origin. The former term (*Balkanhalbinsel*) is a misnomer coined in 1808 by the Prussian geographer Johan August Zeune, who, following the classical and humanist tradition, wrongly believed that the Balkan (Haemus) mountain range was *Catena Mundi*, crossing the whole peninsula and separating it from the continent. For quite some time, this term was used in parallel with Turkey-in-Europe/European Turkey.

During that period, the terms “Southeastern Europe” and “European South-East” were also used, although more rarely (Drace-Francis 2003). They were first employed in linguistics and geology, but the area covered in each case differed considerably. Johann Georg von Hahn, an Austrian diplomat, philologist, and Albanologist referred, in 1861, to “Southeastern European peninsula” (*Südosthalbinsel*) as the most appropriate name for the region. German geographer Theobald Fischer (1893) established the term “Southeastern Europe” in *Länderkunde*, while attributing its coinage to Hahn. Interestingly, some Russian scholars at the time also spoke about “Southeast-European countries” (as they did again after World War II), thus aligning themselves with the viewpoint of the continental center. Since the early nineteenth century, these regional terms have coexisted and partly overlapped with the alternative cultural space of “Slavic Europe” or the “Slavic world,” while the study of European Turkey was overshadowed by the much more developed “Slavistics.”

## Emergence of the Balkans as a Political Concept

The secession of the European provinces from the Ottoman Empire, especially after the 1870s, expanded the number of references to “the Balkans” and the “Balkan peninsula” in scholarly, political, and popular parlance. Concurrently, the external and the internal regional terminology began to bifurcate. External usages of “the Balkans” and “Southeastern Europe” became largely synonymous, with identical orientalizing connotations. In the Austrian and German nomenclature, references to *der Balkan* and *Südost Europa* intermingled and coexisted with the “Danubian space” (*Donaupraum*) as primarily an economic unit centered on the “Danubian Monarchy” (Austro-Hungary).

The intertwining of scholarly and political terminology in the last third of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century was accompanied by two complementary developments: the final phase of the Eastern Question (now also called “the Balkan Question”) and the institutionalization of the study of the Balkans/Southeastern Europe. Although it reached its peak in the interwar period, *Südostforschung* goes back precisely to the period prior to and during World War I and relates to the emergence, among Austro-Hungarian and German financial and diplomatic circles, of the concept of Southeastern Europe as an adjacent area open up for grabs. The *Meyers großes Konversations-Lexikon* of 1908, which contained an entry for “Balkan” but recommended the use of “Southeast-European Peninsula,” explained the region’s particular importance for European politics by referring to its “intermediary location between Asia and Europe,” which made it one of the most important transition zones for the Levantine trade. The German interest in the region



built, in fact, on a preexistent notion of *Mitteleuropa*, formulated in the 1840s, where the vision of a strong Central Europe already implicated the Balkan Peninsula as a German sphere of interest (Meyer 1955). The French academic approach to *les Balkans* was shaped mainly by fears of this “pan-German” economic and political thrust in the area, which also explains the French preoccupation with the South Slavs, whom they portrayed as the moral, political, and racial opposite to the Germans (see, e.g., Léger 1869). The Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople (1894–1914) was a typical Orientalist enterprise intended to support, in the words of the Byzantinist Fyodor Uspenski, “Russia’s part in the Eastern question [which] was bequeathed to her by history” and to participate actively “in the settlement of matters connected with the Byzantine heritage” (Uspenski 1914, xii).

The military struggles for national unification, which culminated in the Balkan wars (1912–13), greatly contributed to the stabilization of the Balkans as a political concept standing for an ethnically unsettled, explosive region threatening the European peace. At the turn of the century, this unsavory representation was diffused through numerous studies on Macedonia (and “the Macedonian Question”) featuring it as the “miniature of the Balkans.” How this image—supplemented with the predicaments of “Europeanization”—molded the (Orientalist) western public discourse of the Balkans has by now been abundantly surveyed (Todorova 1997). By the eve of World War I, the full convergence of geography and politics at the level of terminology was in place.

The array of political conceptualizations of the region in the nineteenth century is rounded off by the various (con)federalist projects which emerged out of liberal-democratic and socialist plans for national liberation free of great-power interference and for coping with the impossibility of creating ethnically homogeneous states. In the 1860s and early 1870s, the Bulgarian liberal Lyuben Karavelov saw the federation as the small Balkan nations’ only alternative to succumbing to the new “yoke” of the European powers and to the claims drawn from historic right ad absurdum. The Swiss confederation was for him, as for many liberals, the perfect model, ensuring the Balkan nations’ unification, cultural autonomy, and democratic (republican) self-rule (Ormandzhiev 1947, 27–43). Svetozar Marković was a populist-socialist and the earliest champion of the Balkan federation in Serbia; his plan for a Federal Republic of Free Nations of Southeastern Europe was modeled on the traditional south Slavonic community, the *zadruga*, which was to constitute the nucleus of the political reshaping of the entire peninsula. In his vision, the Balkan federation would be made of such self-ruling communities with free will, not nationality, as a guiding principle that would ensure bypassing the stage of capitalist development (Marković 1872). These plans originated,

and remained, at the fringes of political life. Nevertheless, the nineteenth-century federalist idea did provide a concept of the region and of its political rearrangement that the by far better-organized social-democratic and communist movements would prove eager to capitalize on after the Great War.

## **Southeastern Europe and the Balkans as Cultural-Historical Concepts**

Parallel to the stabilization of the Balkans as a political concept, the turn of the century also saw the emergence of a local, cultural-historical concept of the region. This was spurred by the rise of comparatist methodologies in a number of old and new disciplines and by political contingencies: the ultimate dismantling of “Turkey-in-Europe,” which ushered in the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1908) and the two Balkan wars.

Awareness of and research into Balkan linguistic community (Jernej Kopitar, Franz Miklosich) and folklore/ethnography were the first areas where the concept of a Balkan historical commonality was seriously deliberated. The so-called Balkan linguistic area (or “linguistic league,” *Sprachbund*) was one of its prominent outcomes, as it proved to be “the first area of contact-induced language change to be identified as such” and *the* model prototype for language contact, interaction, and convergence (Friedman 2006, 657–72). Indeed, it was by linguists that the term “Balkanism” was first introduced to indicate the opposite of fragmentation: a lexical and, more indicatively, grammatical feature shared among the unrelated or only distantly related languages of the Balkans. (Linguistic “balkanization” thus implies the very opposite of political “balkanization.”) Similarly, regional ethnographers and literary historians such as the Bulgarian Ivan Shishmanov (1965–1966) and the Romanian Ioan Bogdan (1905) substantiated the notion of the Balkans as an area of cultural osmosis based on longstanding cultural interaction and exchange.

The scholar who contributed most to the cultural-historical definition of the region before World War I was Nicolae Iorga, the founder of the Institute for the Study of Southeastern Europe in Bucharest in 1914. The scope and underlying contents of Iorga’s notion of Southeastern Europe were in outspoken opposition to “the Balkans” and the “Balkan Peninsula”—a geographical term that he deemed “inaccurate [and] unjustified; there exists no element on which it can lean.” The region of Southeastern Europe, on the other hand, according to Iorga, included the area from the Carpathians to the Aegean, thus incorporating the Romanians with the once-Romanized inhabitants (the *Vlachs*) to the south of the Danube—that is, in “the Balkans” proper. In anthropogeographical terms the region thus named was said to be the opposite of Eastern Europe, which Iorga considered identical with

the “Eurasian world.” Beneath its diversity and ethnic fragmentation there lurked a historical, ethnographic, and civilizational “synthesis of a completely particular character common to the whole South-East of Europe.” This specificity, drawing upon the great Thraco-Illyrian-Roman tradition and epitomized by Byzantium, was taken over by the Ottoman Empire and constituted the heritage that all the Southeast-European peoples shared. Iorga thus pitted the Balkans and Southeastern Europe against each other, so that they began to function as counter-concepts in the Koselleckian sense (Iorga 1935a; 1940; and 1999, 122–25, 135–37).

Characteristic of these cultural-historical conceptualizations was the combination of national and regional registers and agendas. Both Iorga and Jovan Cvijić, famed as the founder of Balkan geology, geography, and anthropogeography, forcefully exemplified this entwinement by repositioning the national through the regional. While Iorga’s historical notion of Southeastern Europe endorsed the unity of the Romanians from Transylvania in the north to Macedonia and Greece in the south, his cultural notion of Southeastern Europe underscored their place as the real transmitters of the Byzantine tradition after Byzantium had ceased to exist politically (Iorga 1935b). Combining geomorphological, geophysical, geopolitical, and ethnopsychological analyses, Cvijić, for his part, lent scholarly standing to the inherent diversity of the “Balkan peninsula,” which thus became constitutive of the region. But while this ontological fragmentation ensured the impossibility of a unitary concept of the Balkans, mobility and migration, or what Cvijić called metanastatic movements, acted as a powerful vehicle of intraregional “penetration and connection,” effectively subverting the centrifugal tendencies. Metanastatic movements were what ultimately defined the prevailing civilizational and ethnodemographic profile of the region. Hardly surprisingly, the Serbs stood out as the most populous and dynamic force behind these movements—the vibrant Balkan metanastatic population par excellence and the natural unifiers of the greater part of the Balkan Peninsula (Cvijić 1918).

### The Heyday of Political Balkanisms

The period between the two world wars saw the peak of supranational scheming focused on the Balkans and Southeastern Europe, both inside and outside of the region. One can witness an interesting differentiation and parallelism of concepts. On the one hand, references to Southeastern Europe grew not only in German scholarship but also in the official French and British nomenclature. In the 1920s, the practitioners of Southeast-European studies in the Weimar Republic were recommending *Südosteuropa* as a “neutral, non-political and non-ideological concept,” even if this did not prevent them from appeal-

ing, in an as-yet-liberal vocabulary, for adherence to Friedrich List's "valuable pointers [for economic expansion] toward Southeastern Europe" (Maul 1929, 299; Mitrović 1977, 16).

Meanwhile "the Balkans," and the popular discourse of Balkanism, continued to inform Western understandings and dominate in journalism, travelogues, and political literature. Indeed, the aftermath of World War I signaled the emergence of the word "Balkanization"—an evocative conceptual hypostasis, which in the following decades underwent wide diffusion in various professional parlances. Initially used as a political term denoting the fragmentation of the Habsburg and Romanov Empires into small independent states in the manner of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, it was soon charged with the fully negative connotations of political instability, nationalist enmity, international menace, and great power machinations. The post-World War II period saw the complete decontextualization and deterritorialization of the term, whereby the "Balkan" was "snatched from its ontological base and recreated as an abstract demon" (Todorova 1997, 32–37).

Against this backdrop it is striking to witness the systematic efforts at rehabilitating "the Balkans" and its veritable renaissance in the local regional context during the interwar years. This revaluation was central to and underlay several parallel international and supranational undertakings: the communist project for Balkan federation, the liberal one for Balkan union and the new "science of Balkanology." It was animated by various artistic and intellectual currents, noteworthy among which are the avant-gardist movements of the 1920s and the various autochthonist, antiliberal visions of the 1930s.

The concept of the Balkans/Southeastern Europe was an "active" one in the pre-World War I socialist and interwar communist discourses. The Balkan social democrats and communists were not interested in drawing a straightforward cartography of the region (and they used the terms "Balkans" and "Southeastern Europe" interchangeably). But they did conceive of it as a unified space, characterized by distinctive socioeconomic circumstances, convergent social dynamics, and a relatively autonomous political trajectory. A common articulating feature of the region in their view was its socioeconomic "backwardness" (a term applied to agricultural countries, which are industrially undeveloped and incapable of political resistance). A legacy of the antiquated feudal-bureaucratic regime of the Ottoman Empire, this backwardness was perpetuated after these countries' independence by the imposition of a relationship of dependence to the European capitalist economic system. This process of becoming "colonies of foreign capitalism" involved the political sphere as well: through defining state borders and sowing discord between the Balkan states, the European powers exercised political control over the Balkan space and maintained its political dependency. The resultant

division of the area into small, weak, and inefficient political entities, plagued by mutual enmity and insecurity, ensured the reproduction of semicolonial patterns of domination. The unity of the region, and the distinct meaning that communist discourse attributed to the term “Balkans,” was thus rendered by a series of perversities: agrarian backwardness and exacerbated rural problems, underindustrialization, the semicolonial status of the state and economy, acute national tensions, and political impotence vis-à-vis the European powers. The unified space of the Balkans, in other words, ensued from its integration into the world capitalist system (Resolution 1910, 64–66; Kolarov 1924: 78–79; Hatzopoulos 2008, 69–80).

For both socialist and communist analyses, this concept of the region was functional in that it underpinned their plans for erecting a Balkan democratic federation on the ruins of what they perceived to be “artificial” nation-states. But while the socialists spoke of “rapprochement among the Balkan peoples and their union in a federation of independent States,” whose frontiers should be determined by plebiscites, and of “the Balkans for the Balkan peoples,” for the communists the idea of federation was inherently associated with the primary goal of organizing a communist revolution on a regional scale, whereby the designations “Balkans,” “Balkan revolution,” and “Balkan Socialist Soviet Republic” were consistently linked (Stavrianos 1944, 204–13, 303–6). The success of the revolution hinged on the Balkan communists’ ability to capitalize on the national question—in the ploys of the Comintern, national fragmentation and national conflicts in the region were strong destabilizing elements in the service of social revolution.

In many ways, the movement for a Balkan Union—the so-called Balkan Conference of 1930–34, initiated by liberal-minded politicians and intellectuals—presents a contrasting case in that it was concerned mainly with institutional innovation and drew on expert knowledge rather than ideology (Papanastassiou 1934; Kerner and Howard 1936; Geshkoff 1940). It rested on a concept of the Balkans as a space defined by a “community of interests and of civilization,” vowing to create a new Balkan self-identification which would turn the Western notion around. It vied to put the term “Balkan” at the heart of political discussion, so that “the Balkans would become a concept that shaped political thinking, a concept that was central to the drafting of policy proposals” (Hatzopoulos 2008, 100). The liberal understanding of the region involved a broad array of cross-national projects and institutions aimed at guaranteeing regional peace and security, nonintervention by the European powers, economic “denationalization,” “moral agreement” and “Balkan consciousness,” as well as freedom and prosperity for the Balkan people. The oft-resurfacing slogan, “The Balkans for the Balkan people,” admittedly encapsulated this ambitious but basically defensive vision, where

regional economic and intellectual collaboration (partly implemented) was seen as the most promising field of action preparing the ground for political unification.

The Balkan Conference and the liberal outlook informing it were premised on the conviction that progress lay in the economic and political unification of the region and the gradual superseding of existing state borders. It confirmed the salience of the independent, free nationalities as the main bearers of the process toward union while, at the same time, subverting the nation-state system. However, the Balkan Pact, signed in 1934 by Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, contained few of the ideals of the visionaries of Balkan unity: it was a conventional alliance on behalf of existing state borders against Bulgarian revisionism. Despite its unimpressive ending, the liberal project of the 1930s went further than any other in envisioning a particular concrete plan for the Balkans as a political region.

### **The Rehabilitation of “the Balkans” and the Emergence of the “New Southeastern Europe”**

The political designs for a Balkan union had direct bearing on the institutionalization of regional studies. The 1930s was the period when the “new science of Balkanology” took shape, which aimed at orienting national academic research “toward the study of a Balkan organism that had constituted one whole since the most distant times” (Budimir and Skok 1934). Balkanology was meant to deal with the general, the syncretic—the “Balkan reality,” the “Balkan man,” the “Balkan organism”—not the nationally specific, and strove for a regional “synthesis drawing on the elements of Balkan interdependence and unity” (Papacostea 1938, vi). The founder of the Bucharest-based Institute for Balkan Studies and Research, Victor Papacostea (1938; 1943; 1996), considered the adoption of the very idea of the nation-state (one that was “created in the West and for the West”) to have had catastrophic consequences in the Balkans—a region that, unlike Western Europe, was marked by a unity of economic geography, by “the same community of culture and civilization born by long coexistence.” Papacostea talked of a “Balkan nationality” and “Balkan society” as well as a “*homo balcanicus*,” and of nationality as being precarious and uncertain, “in reality a notion, not ethnic, but mostly political and cultural.” Hence his appeal for a confederation of the Balkan states to be named *Balcania*, a term once used by Mazzini.

Interwar Balkanology was explicit in its political foundations and objectives: both its “pan-regional” agenda and the several institutional venues supporting it made no secret of their immediate political goal—the conclusion of a Balkan Pact. For none of those scholars did the “Balkan idea” imply obliteration

ation of the national, yet neither did any of them reduce it to the sum total of its constitutive nation-states. More radically than Iorga, interwar Balkanologists “redeemed” the region by pushing it to fill in the symbolic space that was conventionally occupied by the nation and transferring the autochthonist national imagination and discourse onto the region. They embarked on vindicating the “strong and irreducible Balkan individuality,” which they saw as a token for the region’s “historic function” of safeguarding humanism, heroism and “unity in variations” (Budimir and Skok 1934).

Balkanology was just one attempt among others at devising a missionary discourse centered on the humanistic rejuvenation of the West. Ideals for “the balkanization of Europe” were encapsulated in various vitalist imageries of the Balkans, such as Vladimir Dvorniković’s (1939) “epic man” or “the Balkan Barbarogenius,” a mythic hero of the most influential Yugoslav avant-garde movement *Zenit*, invoking a resurrected Balkan ethos and authentic existence capable of generating a new European culture in the face of Western degeneration (Golubović and Subotić 2008). Extraregional, especially German scholarship focused on the Byzantine heritage and Slavic studies, took part in this construction of a peculiar Balkan world and Balkan man, endowed with “heroic life-forms” and proper cultural consciousness, as a way “to retrieve the Balkans for Europe” (Thierfelder 1941; Gesemann 1943). Drawing on an earlier tradition of positing the “East” as a counter-concept to the “rotten West” and defying the popular reading of “balkanization,” the interwar notion of Balkanness endeavored to indigenize and devour the historical teleology and the cultural authority of Europeanness. In the longer run, though, it helped stabilize one of the distinctions of the region as the last site in Europe where archaic modes of life could be observed in their pure form, and where the premodern and the modern existed side by side for an unusually long period of time.

A striking feature of all this was the complete reversal which the valence of the term “Balkans”—and of being Balkan—underwent within a large sphere of converging scholarly and political discourses in the 1930s, to the extent that Papacostea, who, like Iorga, deeply disagreed with such a regional denomination, saw himself compelled to surrender to the impossibility of replacing it. The movement toward “Balkan Conference” and Balkan Pact,” as well as the founding of “Balkan institutes” to conduct “Balkan researches,” converged on the slogan “The Balkans for the Balkan peoples,” which, as a contemporary observer noted, “aimed to create a new political concept of the Balkans by the Balkan countries themselves” and “an autonomous organization of a part of Southeastern Europe” (Ronneberger 1943: 75–76). The Balkan idea of the 1930s was an emancipatory one: it was a response to the awareness of frail state sovereignty, which led to an attempt at transposing sovereignty onto

the region as a way of offsetting the impotence of small statehood in the geopolitical ambiance of the 1930s. But it was also an attempt to counteract the “non-European” character of the Balkans and assert its primordial cultural creativity, revolutionary energy, and civilizational potential. It was “the Balkans,” not “Southeastern Europe,” that could lay claim to a special culture and a special legacy. As it happened, the politics of culture made itself manifest in both autochthonist and regionalist directions.

Self-assertive “Balkan” perspectives were buttressed by the positive Balkanism of certain Western academic circles, as in France, who were growing increasingly apprehensive of the German and Italian drive in the area. While relegating the Balkans geopolitically to the “small-nation area” of Central Europe, the French geographer Jacques Ancel (1926; 1933) spoke about a “unity of Balkan civilization” defined by similar, pastoral and agrarian, ways of life and about a common “psychology of the Balkan peoples” nurtured by geographical links, common customs, and historical fate. He also advocated a pan-Balkan union based on these societies’ rural-democratic and anti-urban leanings and on their will for economic and political rebuilding. Such soft orientalist conceptualizations, featuring a symbiosis of youthful nationhood, underdevelopment, traditional (as opposed to law-based) democracy, and potential for future growth, were not an exception at the time. They were supplemented by numerous studies by Western linguists, Byzantinists, and art and economic historians of particular “Balkan commonalities,” many of them published in the periodicals of the newly launched trans-Balkan institutions such as *Revue internationale des études balkaniques*, *Balkanica*, and *Les Balkans*.

The German contribution to the research on and conceptualization of the Balkans and Southeastern Europe was substantial, as it had been with Eastern Europe and Central Europe. Since the late nineteenth century, the practitioners of *Südostforschung* (research on the Southeast), especially those active after World War I, like Fritz Valjavec, Georg Stadtmüller, Otto Maull, Franz Ronneberger, Josef Matl, and Gerhard Gesemann, had been the most powerful external generators of conceptual innovation, even if their impact on internal spatial constructions proved to be limited. Drawing upon the historiographical traditions in the vein of *Volksgeschichte*, German Southeast-European historiography underwent a boom. The intensive promotion of *Südostforschung* continued during the period of National Socialism, when it was institutionalized, buoyed by the growing affinity of ideas and politics between the regime and most of those engaged in the field. The long-term German geopolitical and economic interest in the area was now couched in the Greater-German view of history and *Volkstumsideologie*, while Südosteuropaforschung evolved into a “warring science” increasingly entangled with Nazi racial policy and expansionism (Beer 2004, 14–15). During the 1930s,



the German understanding of the region became closely associated with the concept of *Ergänzungswirtschaft*—a supplementary economic area of the Third Reich, thus a natural component of the German *Lebensraum* (Mitrović 1977). The proponents of this concept disagreed as to the geographical scope and political content of *Südosteuropa*, but concurred in that it constituted, in the words of one economic authority, “a single large area in the political and economic sense of the word,” whose main attributes were “countries that are prevalently exporters of raw materials; their population predominantly agrarian with low levels of education and little organizational ability” (Gross 1937, 224). The theory postulated the inseparability of Southeastern Europe and Germany based on geographical (*Donaupraum*), historical, spiritual, political, and ethnic affinities and, above all, economic complementarity.

Other proponents of interwar *Südostforschung* sought to vindicate Southeastern Europe as a positive political term designating a geopolitical area whose coherence and wellbeing required the organizational power of the Reich. Southeastern Europe, Franz Ronneberger wrote, was a German concept with its origin in the political reconfiguration produced by World War I, which formed an integral part of the notions of *Mitteleuropa* and *Zwischeneuropa*, while the Balkans was a “primarily historical concept” (1943). Characteristic of this area, incorporating the Slovaks, Magyars, Romanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, Croats, and Slovenes, was the absence of a nationality with a numeric preponderance big enough to create a stable political center and exert a pull on the other nationalities. For this reason, the “organizing factors” operative in this region had always been “powers external to Southeastern Europe”—the Roman Empire, Byzantium, the Ottomans—whose dominance had left deep imprints on the economic profile and social structure of the region.” The inference drawn from all this was that “this space does not and cannot have a proper political life. The economic aspect is in no way the only one that requires the complementarity of another space. . . . Therefore, the political concept of Southeastern Europe should be thought of not as a term for an insulated Southeastern Europe, but only as one [designating] a part of the whole Central European living space.” The Balkans could still be an appealing concept signifying certain “pure, unadulterated values”; it was the new political notion of Southeastern Europe, however, that could bring the region back to (“new”) Europe (Ronneberger 1943). Southeastern Europe in this vision became entirely “Central European,” whereas the “the Balkans” became redundant.

It would be misleading, however, to deduce that all German conceptualizations, some of them executed with considerable erudition and dexterity, were simply contingent geopolitical constructions. For Fritz Valjavec (1941; 1942), the Balkans was neither geographical and territorial nor political, but

a historical space: its relative internal cohesion was cultural-morphological, resting mainly on the Byzantine and the Ottoman historical layers. Since their secession from the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan states were undergoing a process of fast and sweeping Europeanization, which implied “cultural ‘de-Byzantinization’ and ‘de-Balkanization.’” State-promoted nationalism had further undermined the “common Balkan traits” bequeathed by the previous political unity. Under the growing sway of the West and nationalism, the Balkans were becoming ever more “Southeast-European” in the sense of acquiring sociopolitical and cultural elements common for the whole European Southeast (Valjavec 1943, 1–4, 6–7). By contrast, and despite the need for a single concept capable of embracing the successors to the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires, Valjavec admitted the lack of an “at least to some extent unitary research area and unitary concept of Southeastern Europe” (*einheitlichen Südosteuropabegriff*). For him, Southeast-European studies were a methodical “complexio oppositorum” (bringing together a wide range of simultaneously applied disciplinary methods), where Southeastern Europe served above all as a “working concept” (*Arbeitsbegriff*); its “spatial-territorial boundaries remain fluid,” involving also extensive “intermediate and transitory” peripheral zones (Valjavec 1941, 15, 28, 32; 1943, 6). Some years later, Georg Stadtmüller (1950, 14) would note in a similar vein in his *History of Southeastern Europe*, “We should nonetheless be wary of the dangerous and misleading notion, that [the term Southeastern Europe] implies a peculiar unity of the space thus denoted. The space of Southeastern Europe is rather marked by internal diversity and differentiation as no other part of Europe is.” Taking seriously the underlying geopolitical stakes, one should at the same time recognize that Valjavec’s vision of historical spaces as intellectual construction and heuristic tool (*Arbeitsbegriff*) is remarkably modern. He neatly distinguished between the historical, and thus transient, reality of the Balkans as the Byzantine-Ottoman legacy and the “working concept” of Southeastern Europe, and underscored the variability of boundaries in time and space. In this he made explicit the connection between regional (re)conceptualization and political changes in not only spatial, but also, and mainly, social terms: it was through industrialization, migration, and the politics of national homogenization that the Balkans was being divested of its Byzantine-Ottoman “Balkan” attributes to become part of a bigger “European” whole. In Valjavec’s spatial conceptualization, therefore, diachronic dynamics and historical change occupied the central place.

Significantly, scholars from the region remained unmoved by the argument: they cursorily referred to it only to reconfirm their attachment to the notion of a persistent and organic “physical, anthropogeographical, historical and economic unity” of the Balkans in contrast to the “artificial” geopolitical

concept of Southeastern Europe. It was the former notion, as we can see, that inspired the variety of local political and intellectual projects on the region between the wars.

## **Southeastern Europe after World War II**

Compared to the preceding decades, the late 1940s and the 1950s showed little enthusiasm for “the Balkans.” Earlier divisions and “Europe” itself were outclassed by the new political, economic, and cultural schism between the socialist and the nonsocialist world. For a brief while, between 1945 and 1947, the idea of a Balkan confederation between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania, and possibly Hungary and Greece, was revived on the initiative of Josip Broz Tito, the all-powerful leader of the communist-led liberation front in Yugoslavia. That proved to be the swan song of Balkan federalism, as Moscow refused to accept Belgrade’s independent actions, while Sofia and Tirana were reluctant to sacrifice their independence for the sake of a federation centering on Belgrade. Attempts at reviving the idea in a new form were made by the Romanian and the Bulgarian governments in the late 1950s with appeals for peaceful coexistence and general disarmament in the region, but they also came to nothing. Even so, by the end of the 1960s, most of the countries in the region had reached a geopolitical *modus vivendi* through bilateral treaties on trade, tourism, and cultural and scientific collaboration (Iacob 2015, 24–26).

The spatial classifications after World War II along the East–West axis did away with the Balkans/Southeastern Europe as a separate (geo)political or economic area. For the scholars in the region, the relocation of its bigger part into Eastern Europe signified a political act with far-reaching military and economic consequences and totally restructured the terms of international affiliation. In terms of the actual spatial categories they were operating with, however, its impact was far less straightforward. At no point did the concept of Eastern Europe become a focus of self-identification or a powerful frame of reference. For some time after the war, the quasipolitical notion of “Slavdom” as a counter-concept to the imperialist West and the “Teutonic drive” gained currency and lingered on in subsequent years, but with diminishing appeal. “Europe” (if not at all times “the West”) soon recuperated its status as a measuring rod, whether to demonstrate identity or differentiation, for the historical modernization and civilizational profile of these societies. The core of the Marxist social-science vocabulary related to “feudalism,” “capitalism,” “nationalism,” social “classes,” and “stages of economic development” remained palpably Euro- (or Western-) centric. This, on the other hand, rarely led regional scholars to lump Russia and the Balkans in a single category.

In terms of geopolitical affiliation in this period, we can roughly distinguish between three categories of states: NATO members Greece and Turkey; Communist Romania and Bulgaria; non-aligned Yugoslavia and maverick Albania. In terms of symbolic-cultural imageries and spatial self-identifications, however, discrete national viewpoints tended to override such groupings.

It is therefore significant that despite their different, at times contradictory, objectives, all these countries partook in the Southeastern European academic project. Research on Southeastern Europe resumed in the 1960s in an atmosphere of political détente between the two blocs. What distinguished this period was the strong drive toward state-sponsored academic institutionalization of the field in all Balkan countries across the Iron Curtain. An “International Association of Southeast-European Studies” (AIE-SEE) was formed in Bucharest in 1963 under the auspices of UNESCO, briefly followed by the (re)establishment of national institutes for Southeast-European/Balkan Studies in Romania (1963), Bulgaria (1964), Yugoslavia (1969), and Greece (already opened in 1953 as a branch of the Society for Macedonian Studies) and of specialized chairs in the major universities. Starting in 1966, International Congresses of Southeast-European Studies were convened every four years. This proliferation of regionalist organizations and the consolidation of Southeast-European studies as an autonomous field were fueled by agendas of political and cultural diplomacy that were different for the different countries involved. To the extent one can speak of a common ideology, it was the aspiration to highlight the universal contribution of the individual Balkan nations through the mediation of the Southeast-European cultural-historical heritage. For some countries vying for a more independent role in the two-bloc constellation, like Romania, Yugoslavia, and Albania, it was also a means to boost their state sovereignty and mediating function.

The conceptualization of the Balkans that crystallized through this institutional web and scholarly exchange drew entirely, in a theoretical and methodological sense, on the premises formulated by the interwar generation of regionalists. At its core lay the ontological binomes of diversity and unity, individuality and synthesis. Diversity and individuality (or originality) were said to revoke homogeneity and were epitomized by the Balkan nations, each one of which, in the words of Tudor Vianu, out of the common fund, “selects, interprets and creates new meanings in accordance with its own particular conditions and with a view to its own genius.” The Balkan unity and civilizational synthesis were European in their cultural morphology, yet neither Western nor Eastern but endowed with “the special vocation of facilitating the mutual understanding between the East and the West” (Vianu 1962, 11–14) The emancipatory potential of such a notion unfolded on two levels: it

displayed the originality of the regional national cultures and turned around the established image of the Balkans as alien to Europe. A cluster of additional antinomies came to underscore the unique relationship between particularism and integration: “oscillating movements from synthesis to differentiation,” “affinity vs. homogeneity,” “permanent interdependence of national history and regional history,” interlocking local, regional and global circles, etc. (Vianu 1962; Zakythinos 1972; Berza 1975). This was a convenient formula in several ways: it provided a venue for high international visibility of the national while purportedly eschewing parochialism; it sought to assert a modicum of sovereignty in a hegemonic world as well as a distinctive Balkan Europeanness; it granted access to cultural universalism and to a specific modern mission transcending the Iron Curtain; it also allowed operating on different registers depending on circumstances and audiences: particularistic (nationalistic) and regionalist (universalistic).

Actual research behind this self-assertive regionalist ideology was even more equivocal. In some disciplinary fields, such as history, the bulk of studies were only nominally Southeast-European, in that they concerned groups and states located in the area but whose commonalities were rarely tested. Cross-national relations and exchanges were usually dealt with on a bilateral basis, with the individual national historiographies tending to stress particular aspects of the “common Balkanness/Southeast-Europeaness” where they could claim a special contribution for the respective nation. Moreover, the comparative regional approach, to the extent it was employed, did not affect the writing of national history, which remained a self-contained, didactic, and parochial field. The advances in social and economic history in the rest of Europe and the imposition of Marxist methodology in large parts of the region failed to yield a socioeconomic “synthesis” of the area—a strange absence, considering both the burgeoning neo-Marxist comparatist approaches in the 1960s–1970s and the strong preoccupation with the economic unity of the region before the war. As before, “softer” disciplinary fields and subfields like linguistics, ethnography, cultural and literary history, classical archaeology, and history of ideas fared better in terms of integrative visions and regionalist research, and communication in these areas with fruitful developments outside of the region (for example, history of mentalities, social anthropology, Byzantine studies) was more productive in rendering some elements of a Balkan cultural-historical ontology. From the mid-1970s, however, nationalist discourses in all of these states were growing increasingly radicalized, self-centered, and xenophobic (Verdery 1991; Elenkov 2008; Stefanov 2011). The mythopoetic vision of the Balkans, harking back to interwar Balkanology, was declining precisely at the time when that of Central Europe was on the rise (see chapter 8 in this volume).

As for external conceptualizations, the first twenty years of the work of the Moscow-based Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies (1968) were dominated by country-based research (*stranovedcheskie issledovaniia*). The Balkans as a discrete historical space was largely subsumed under two other overarching geographies: the (South) Slavic world and the socialist “Central and South-eastern Europe.” Paramount among the comparative-historical themes purportedly delineating a “Central and Southeast European region”—typically in collective works bringing together several national cases—were the “ethnogenesis and ethnic history,” “transition from feudalism to capitalism,” nation formation, the building of socialism, and “the formation of Marxist aesthetics and the theory of socialist realism” (*Conférence internationale* 1984: 95–109). Parallel to these, a series of monographs or collective works appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, examining Russia’s political and military involvement in “the Balkan Question.” Next to the traditional fields of ethnography and linguistics, the studies devoted to Russia’s Balkan policy rendered the most consistent vision of the Balkans as an entity in the Soviet scholarly literature after the war, different from “Central and Southeastern Europe” or the “Slavs.”

The Anglo-American scholarly literature was perhaps most strongly affected by the overriding East-West political divide, which led to radical re-shuffling of the map of the region, leaving Greece and Turkey out of it. The area became subsumed in another term and another scholarly paradigm—“Eastern Europe,” construed as coterminous with the “Soviet/Communist Bloc” (see chapter 9 in this volume). Historical geographies often conceived of Eastern Europe as the eight satellite states of the Soviet Union, subdivided by certain socioeconomic criteria into northern Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and the GDR) and southern Eastern Europe (e.g., the Balkans—Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia), while its unity was made to rest on the historical struggle between nationalism and imperialism and on economic backwardness (Turnock 1989, 316). East Central (along with Southeastern) Europe was a parallel notion, said to be limited by “the eastern linguistic frontier of German- and Italian-speaking peoples on the west, and the political borders of Russia/the USSR on the east.”<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, the concept of the Balkans/Southeastern Europe did not die out altogether. In British and especially American usage during the 1950s and 1960s, it implied a “sensitive spot in the complex of relations with the Soviet Union,” and was frequently marketed as a “prototype” for the developing countries in Asia and Africa (Wolff 1956, 3–9; Warriner 1965). In social and economic analyses, at the same time, the region was presented as an intrinsic part of Eastern Europe.

The French postwar notions of the region were similar, taking into account, however, that France witnessed a veritable meltdown of interest in the area—a meltdown that was barely reversed during the 1970s–1980s. Writing

in 1965, geographer André Blanc surmised that “the Balkans is more of a problem than a region.” Too complex and variegated, underdeveloped, with archaic social structures and estranged nations, physically part of Europe yet culturally not fully European, it could perhaps hope for a better future. What distinguished the French approaches was the consistent exclusion of Romania (and less consistently of Greece and European Turkey) from the map of the region, assigning it either to Central (or “Danubian”) Europe or to a separate category. When, in the beginning of the 1970s, an attempt was made at reinvigorating interest in the Balkans, it was effectuated under the auspices of the “Center for the Study of Civilizations in Central and Southeastern Europe.”

Émigré scholars, especially in the United States, continued to deploy the Balkans and, more rarely, Southeastern Europe as a cultural-historical or “civilizational” (in the *Annales* sense) notion, usually including Greece and the Ottoman Empire but rarely Turkey. In the 1970s–1980s it was underpinned by discussions of *longue-durée* socioeconomic trends and the predicaments of modernization in the light of the neo-Marxist center-periphery and “world-economy” paradigms, family patterns, and political trajectories typically associated with the “peculiarities” of nation-building. A critical strain in the “history of ideas,” on the other hand, chose to cast the regional variants of nationalism, authoritarianism, fascism, and communism in an East European, rather than Balkan or Central European, frame.

In West Germany and Austria, where *Südosteuropaforschung* survived institutionally and in personnel, Southeastern Europe not only endured as a cultural-historical concept but provoked discussions over its changed understanding in the new circumstances after the war. During the late 1950s and 1960s, prewar leaders of the school, such as Fritz Valjavec (1957) and Franz Ronneberger (1963), continued to plead for the “strict separation of Southeastern from Eastern Europe in geographical, historical and cultural sense” (Valjavec 1957, 72). Faced with the challenge of the rising *Osteuropaforschung* and stepping on the sociological and ethnological advances of the interwar *Volksbodenforschung*, the proponents of Southeastern Europe studies attempted to go beyond the “working concept” approach and frame a distinct, structurally unitary space capable of vindicating and sustaining an autonomous research field. The actual discoverers of such structural similarities were said to be the practitioners of the young social sciences, such as economy, sociology, and political science, including those whose work in the 1930s subscribed to the *Ergänzungswirtschaft* theory, such as Giseler Wirsing and Hermann Gross. For Mathias Bernath (1973, 142), however, what legitimated Southeastern Europe as a “unit of events” (*Geschehenseinheit*), transcending its historical in-betweenness and consequent inner diversity, were not individual elements and factors per se, but “the peculiar fusion which these ele-

ments had produced.” The concept of Southeastern Europe thus conceived was, in his view, a “neutral, non-political and non-ideological concept which, moreover, eliminated the inherited historical-political dichotomy between the Danubian Monarchy and the Ottoman Balkans that had become redundant” (142). As for the term Balkans, it could remain applicable, as Valjavec had suggested, only as a “spatial designation for certain cultural-morphological interrelationships between individual Southeast-European countries” (Bernath 1973, 142).

### The “Rise and Fall” of the Balkans after 1989

The Yugoslav succession wars in the 1990s once again made “the Balkans” a powerful symbolic concept by rekindling, both outside and inside the region, the Balkan imagery characteristic of pre-World War II western representations. This period saw a veritable boom of publications on the region searching for the roots of the Yugoslav wars, which reanimated discussions of the Balkan *Sonderweg* and the region’s “otherness” to the European project due to its predicament of endemic violence and incessant conflict. Both popular media and academic sociopolitical analyses of the region centered around the category of nationalism as the quintessential feature of an unchangeable Balkan condition predicated upon its dissociation from sociopolitical developments in the rest of Europe.

Resistance to this mode of representation, and concomitant attempts at “normalizing” the Balkans, became noticeable from the late 1990s and took different directions. One was the rebaptizing of the region as Southeastern Europe, a purportedly new and neutral notion doing away with the politically incorrect connotations—as well as the past—of “the Balkans.” This bid for reconstituting the area was originally made by several EU-led political initiatives, such as the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe set up in 1999, with the avowed double intention to effect “international crisis management” and enunciate the region’s European credentials: “the use of the term ‘Southeastern Europe’ . . . would imply recognition of the fact that the region already is part of Europe, that its problems are European and that any viable solution has to be a European solution involving both the deepening and the widening of the Union” (Bokova 2002, 32–33). “Stability” and “security” were the catchwords informing this new meaning of Southeastern Europe. Both entailed “de-Balkanization”—that is, radical Europeanization of the region through the massive introduction of European norms assumed to be alien to the region.

Another, academically more resonant direction was the critical reformulation of the Balkans as a discursive concept inspired by Saidian Orientalism. Central to this is the notion of mental mapping, where the Balkans appears,



not as a historical region, but as an imagined space and simplified representation in the western mind, drawing on a hierarchical relationship between the West and the Balkans and performing crucial functions in discourses of collective identity. The Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) has been justly credited with having compellingly forged this Orientalist (or rather Balkanist) critique of the concept of the Balkans, thus problematizing the regional terminology itself. Yet her position is less unequivocal than commonly assumed, in that she sees the Balkans as possessing not just "imaginary" but also "ontological" aspects, which she defines in terms of continuity and perception of the Ottoman legacy.

Constructivist conceptualizations of the Balkans were countered by so-called structural ones. The German historian Holm Sundhaussen (1999) saw *Europa balcanica*, as he called it, as an "analytical category" defined by a cluster of characteristics (*Merkmalcluster*) which, in their specific combination and high correspondence over time and space, have distinguished the region from the Byzantine era to the present day. He identified two of these—the Byzantine-Orthodox and the Ottoman-Islamic heritage—as decisive for bringing about the political, economic and intellectual structures that had set the Balkans on a distinct path of development in comparison with other European regions. Only the countries sharing this heritage (the post-Yugoslav space, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey), not the wider Southeastern Europe (comprising also Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, and Moldavia), constitute, according to this view, a "historical region."

From a broader perspective, constructivist versus structural conceptualizations fed into the discussion of the definition of historical regions that gathered momentum in the wake of the spatial and transnational turns in the human and social sciences beginning in the 1980s. In its frame the definition of Southeastern Europe—the prevailing regional *nomen* since the 1990s—becomes unstable, informed by neither objective criteria nor essentialist characteristics, but exposed to contestation, "its boundaries seen as intellectual constructs, provisional, open to question and overlapping"—an approach that evokes Valjavec's notion of Southeastern Europe as a "working concept" and heuristic frame (Bracewell and Drace-Francis 1999, 61). Meanwhile, however, the quest for the specificity and scope of the Balkans/Southeastern Europe as a real (as opposed to invented) space has continued. A number of studies since the 1990s have sought to rethink the unity of the region in terms of total history in a Braudelian key (Traian Stoianovich), a specific linguistic and ethnocultural *mixtum compositum* (Victor Friedman, Raymond Detrez, Klaus Roth), a historical-anthropological zone (Karl Kaser), or common mental structures and normative categories of a "Balkan model of the world" (Tat'jana Civ'jan). All in all, despite certain important poststructuralist ad-

vances drawing on the spatial turn, the debate between Southeast-Europeanists and (post)structuralist theorists still goes on.

In the interim, with the “securitization” of the region and Romania’s and Bulgaria’s accession into the EU (2007), both the political relevance of the concept and scholarly interest in the Balkans/Southeastern Europe decreased drastically. A number of spatial alternatives popped up based on new European fault lines or purported reassessments of historical interconnections. In EU cartography the region of the Western Balkans came into being, lumping together the countries undergoing a process of “Europeanization” as preparation for their joining the Union (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo, and occasionally also Moldova!). Stefan Troebst advocated a “circum-Pontic” regional concept—the Balkans-Black Sea-Caucasus (Troebst 2006); Karl Kaser coined the notion of “Eurasia Minor,” incorporating the historical space between the Danube and the Tigris Rivers (Kaser 2011); while French geographers came up with the concept of *Europe médiane*, which included Hungary and Romania but excluded “Balkan Europe” (ex-Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, and Bulgaria) (Carroué and Oth 1997).

Against this backdrop it is curious to witness the ongoing, ostensibly spontaneous Balkan interpellations on the level of popular culture. High-cultural and subcultural production—music, dance, film, fiction—has (re)discovered a reservoir of shared notions, mentality, and aesthetics and come to unabashedly expose a sense of Balkanness all the way from Istanbul through Greece and Bulgaria to ex-Yugoslavia. The political Balkans seems, for all intents and purposes, to be gone; the cultural Balkans is still with us.

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## Notes

1. See the foreword to each of the eleven volumes of the series “A History of East Central Europe,” edited by Peter Sugar and Donald Treadgold (Seattle: University of Washington Press).

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## Chapter 8

# Central Europe

*Balázs Trencsényi*



### Geographical Notions and Imperial Agendas before World War I

The geographical notion of Central Europe can be traced back as far as the synthesis by the German scholar of the Late Enlightenment, Johann August Zeune (1808).<sup>1</sup> In this book, *Mittleuropa* was a notion of secondary importance, with rather blurred geographical coordinates. In his understanding, *Mittleuropa* as a geographical space was characterized by the coexistence and also clash of German and Slavic populations wedged between South-west (including regions from the Pyrenees through Italy to the Balkans) and Northeast Europe (including Scandinavia and Sarmatia—that is, the Polish and Russian lands). In another work, Zeune (1820), combining physical and cultural factors, proposed a triadic scheme including *Nordeuropa*, *Mittleuropa*, and *Südeuropa*, and subdivided *Mittleuropa* to three separate regions, that of the Carpathian Lands (inhabited by various populations, most importantly Hungarians, Romanians, and Slavs), a Germanic region, and a French one. This hesitation reflects the transitional moment when the shift from the traditional North–South axis to the novel East–West one was taking place.

The political conception of Central Europe, though not yet tied to the notion itself, can also be traced back to early nineteenth-century discussions about the balance of power in Europe and the legitimization of the Austrian empire. This idea appears in the political utterances of the mastermind of the conservative Holy Alliance, Count Klemens Metternich, but also in the writings of the reformist Karl Ludwig von Bruck. It also appears in the writings of the Czech national leader František Palacký, who in 1848 rejected the incorporation of Bohemia into the German national framework and argued instead for the maintenance of a multinational Austrian state in the middle of

Europe that offered the possibility of free national development for its Slavic inhabitants. In its turn, the German national project also relied on the notion of the “center of Europe” as a framework of self-description. Thus, the German nationalist Ernst Moritz Arndt spoke of the center of Europe as the geographical location of the German nation, while the economic thinker Friedrich List envisioned a unified Germany in close cooperation with Austria and Hungary as the new core of European politics (see Schultz 2004, 277).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the notion of Central Europe (*Mittleuropa*) appeared relatively frequently in the geographical literature, but in these works it was more of a morphological concept, denoting the core territories (trunk) of Europe, in contrast to the peripheries, which, however, were more important in terms of historical development. At the same time, the notion gradually acquired a political connotation, since the countries covered by it were the broadly defined German space, including the Holy Roman Empire, plus the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and Hungary. By the late nineteenth century, this became a more or less common concept in German and Austrian geographical scholarship, as is evident from the work, first published in the series “The Regions of the World” edited by H. J. Mackinder, of the German Joseph Partsch. Partsch (1904) focused on the German and Austrian lands as the core zone of Europe, but also included the adjacent regions (“from the Western Alps to the Balkans”) in a common geopolitical space.

### **Wartime Transnationalization: In Search of an Integrative Principle**

The concept of Central Europe emerged as a keyword in international politics during World War I, with the reception of the idea of *Mittleuropa* formulated by the German liberal nationalist Friedrich Naumann (1915). However, Naumann’s vision was only one of the manifold formulations of this idea (along with the works of the geopolitician Karl Haushofer and the historian Hermann Oncken) and it was also interpreted differently by different audiences. In the German context, *Mittleuropa* denoted a concentric framework pitting the continental German-dominated center against the Eastern and Western peripheries (North and South became in this context less important, as the main dividing lines were vertical). A conceptual alternative, which sought to express this vertical dimension even more explicitly, was the notion of *Zwischeneuropa* coined by Albrecht Penck (1915), which was meant to be the spinal column of continental Europe, to be organized into a state federation under German leadership.

In Austria, the German-Austro-Hungarian “core” of Europe was constructed with relatively closed symbolic barriers toward the West, but with

a more dynamic Eastern border zone, which potentially also included Austria-Hungary and the Balkans (Hassinger 1917; see also chapter 12 of this volume). There was also an alternative Austrian voice which negated the existence of Naumann's *Mitteleuropa*, as is clear from the work of the Austrian cultural geographer Erwin Hanslik (1917), who accused Naumann and German scholarship in general of having no first-hand knowledge of the Slavic world. Instead the Austrian scholar projected a dividing line of Eastern and Western civilization, ranging from the Baltic to the Adriatic, and cutting the Habsburg Monarchy into two.

The concept of *Mitteleuropa* generated debates especially in those contexts that were most directly concerned with the reformulation of the German geopolitical orientation in terms of economic, military, and eventually political integration of the lands between Russia and Germany. In the Polish cultural space, it was primarily discussed in terms of a possible regional economic integration among the socialists, who had been engaged with the problem of nation-state versus imperial developmental models since the turn of the century (a problem reflected in the debate of Rosa Luxemburg and Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz). In Hungary, the strongest response came from the civic radicals around Oszkár Jászi, who read Naumann's proposal not in its original context, promoting a sociopolitical integration of Germany and the small nations in the zone of Austrian and German influence, but as a possible solution to the ardent nationality conflicts in Austria-Hungary, incorporating these nations into a federal scheme (*Középeurópa* 1919).

Naumann's conceptualization had considerable repercussions even in states that fought on the other side. Thus, for instance, the Romanian politicians and intellectuals arguing against entering the war on the side of the *Entente* based their argument on a geopolitical counter-position of Russia and Central Europe. This camp brought together Moldavian conservatives (who sympathized with Germany as a model of organic modernization and focused on regaining Bessarabia while being more open to compromise in the question of Transylvania) with populists and socialists, who looked at the Tsarist Empire as a retrograde autocratic state hindering progress all over Eastern Europe. This anti-interventionist position often turned vocally pro-German after the occupation of part of Romania by German troops in 1917, and cooperation was often framed in terms of integration into a common Central European civilizational and economic space (see Boia 2009).

In other East Central European contexts, however, Naumann's work evoked less positive reactions. Thus, predictably, Masaryk (1918) rejected this framework and offered a common regional narrative for the "small nations" between Germany and Russia instead. Turning to the Anglo-American ex-



perts and intellectual public, he referred to the concept of Central Europe as a tool of German domination, suggesting instead “New Europe.” Eventually, after the war, he started to use also the notion of Central Europe, although he kept to the basic idea of delimiting this geographical zone as that of small nations and thus excluding Germany from it altogether (Masaryk 1925).

### Interwar Multiplication: Between Nationalism and Transnationalism

After 1918, one can observe a proliferation of regional notions linked semantically to Central Europe. While there was a general drive to nationalization under the aegis of the agenda of national self-determination, there were also important discussions on transnational political or economic frameworks of (re)integration, and here Central Europe had a certain salience, especially in neutralizing the politically much more loaded Habsburg/imperial referential system. Due to the different local political and cultural contexts, however, morphologically there was a growing differentiation according to different national linguistic-geopolitical imageries and also according to different cross-national disciplinary cultures.

While in the German context *Mitteleuropa* was becoming less salient, there were other alternative notions, such as *Zwischeneuropa*, which was championed by Giseler Wirsing (1932), close to the *Die Tat* circle, who fused the ideas of Conservative Revolution with geopolitics. In contrast, the notion of Slavic Europe, used prominently by Czech and South Slavic scholars, to a certain extent overlapped with Central Europe, but had a very different geopolitical agenda, excluding the Germans. At the same time, Western descriptions of Central Europe still understood Germany as a constitutive part of it well into the 1940s. This can be seen in the geographical work of the prominent French specialist, Emmanuel de Martonne, who covered both Germany and its Eastern neighbors in his project (de Martonne 1930–31; see also chapter 12 in this volume).

Originally driven by political motives, the non-German part of Central Europe became the object of regional inquiries incorporating national cases (see, e.g., the works by R. W. Seton-Watson), anchoring political observations in a historical narrative. Importantly, the regional terminology was not stabilized, as can be seen from the titles of periodicals launched at this period, such as *L'Est Européen* in Warsaw, *L'Europe Centrale* in Prague, and *L'Europa Orientale* in Rome. The national and disciplinary frames also reinforced each other in creating divergent local usages—what a Hungarian or a Croat would refer to as Central Europe would be put under *Südostforschung* or *Ostforschung* in Germany.

The most important scholarly debate on the Central and/or Eastern European regional framework was in historiography. The Czech Slavist Jaroslav Bidlo (1927) was a proponent of Slavic comparatism, and also subscribed to the civilizational distinction of a Greco-Slavic Eastern Europe, shaped by Orthodoxy, and a Latin-German Western Europe giving birth to Catholicism and Protestantism, marked by dynamism and rationalism. Rejecting this taxonomy, the Polish historians Oskar Halecki and Marceli Handelsman suggested an Eastern European framework, which was supposed to integrate all the small nations between Russia and Germany, regardless of ethnic and linguistic kinship. The implication of their argument was obviously the rejection of Germany as the natural center of the region, on the one hand, and the rejection of Russia as the core of Eastern Europe, on the other. Halecki (1924, 1934) at the 1923 World Historical Congress in Brussels argued for an Eastern Europe consisting of Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus, while relegating Russia to the Eurasian space (thus explicitly following the Russian Eurasianists). Another criticism of Bidlo's analysis came from the Sudeten-German historian Josef Pfitzner, who rejected the exclusive Slavic focus of the regional discourse and talked of a shared historical region inhabited by Germans and Slavs (see also chapter 9 in this volume).

A particularly interesting conceptualization came from the Moravian local patriot and scion of an ennobled Jewish industrialist family, Victor von Bauer (1936). He argued for a specifically multiethnic post-Habsburg *Zentraleuropa*, stressing the importance of Jews as a modernizing factor and seeking to demarcate the region from the imperial German territories, arguing that Central European Germans had a very different character than those living in the Reich. Representing another ideological tradition, but also stressing multiethnicity as a key marker, the Slovak politician and political theorist Milan Hodža turned to the notion of Central Europe in the context of the agrarian regionalist project, stressing the common sociocultural features of these nations underlying his vision of peasant democracy—and the need to overcome economic nationalism, which prevented the development of a mutually advantageous division of labor in the region (Hodža 1936).

In Hungary, the Central European paradigm, which had a considerable impact on the left liberal (civic radical) intellectual circles in the 1910s, was challenged from different directions. Integral nationalists, who dominated the political establishment, kept to a geographical conceptualization (such as the “Carpathian Basin”), which stressed the concentric nature of the broader region around “Rump Hungary.” At the same time, the agrarian populists, who rejected the irredentist nationalism of the Horthy regime, generally preferred the concept of Eastern Europe. The populist perspective of “Eastern European peasant nations” had many faces. It could catalyze the somewhat

confused but definitely conciliatory vision of László Németh (1935), but it could also intersect with the paradigm of *Volksgeschichte*, which fed into a new version of radical ethnopolitics. At the same time, the Central European discourse did not entirely disappear and received a strong impetus from the periodical *Apollo*, which explicitly aimed at the creation of a “Central European humanism” and sought to bring together urban liberals, agrarian populists, social democrats, and also moderate conservatives on a common regionalist platform (Gál 2001). The Central European paradigm also provided a comparative framework for the conservative legal historian Ferenc Eckhart (1941), who placed the history of the medieval and early modern constitutional doctrine around the Crown of St. Stephen into a regional context.

A different conceptual usage characterized the transnational network of economic experts seeking to restore some sort of regional economic cooperation and mutual preference system in the territory fragmented by the protectionism of the new nation-states. A characteristic figure of this discourse, deploring the “Balkanization” of the region (*Balkanisierung Mitteleuropas*) is the Hungarian-Jewish Elemér Hantos, working with Austrian and German businessmen and experts within the framework of the *Mitteleuropäischer Wirtschaftstag* and later the Mitteleuropa-Institut, with branches in Vienna, Brno, and Budapest (Müller 2010). It is important to stress that, in the vision of Hantos and his colleagues, reconstructing the economic unity of *Mitteleuropa* was a step toward *Pan europa* that is a broader framework of economic and political integration. Consequently, their use of *Mitteleuropa* was rather flexible, basically referring to Germany and the lands of the former Habsburg Monarchy, but depending on the actual arrangement, they extended and restricted it in different directions.

While the radicalization of politics in the 1930s destroyed these plans of pragmatic reintegration of Central Europe, during World War II, in the context of the search for a more lasting model of regional coexistence than that of the post-World War I arrangement, which was based on the absolutization of the principle of national self-determination and nation-statehood, the supra-ethnic federalist discourse again came into play. It catalyzed a number of projects, some of which, such as that of Milan Hodža, used Central Europe as a key term (Hodža 1942). Similarly, the Polish-Jewish left-wing émigré Anatol Mühlstein (1942) published a programmatic text in the United States about setting up the United States of Central Europe, which would have included Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Austria, with the possible entrance of Greece, Bulgaria, and the Baltic states.

Simultaneously, the Foreign Research and Press Service, a British think tank headed by Arnold Toynbee, also came up with a number of policy papers discussing the reorganization of the region along federal lines in 1942–1943.

For some time, the idea was to set up two units as the guarantee of a sustainable postwar order, one in East Central Europe and another in Southeast Europe, but eventually these plans were dropped as it became increasingly clear that this zone would fall under Soviet control.

## The Decline of the Central European Conceptual Framework

As a consequence of the division of the continent into Soviet and Western spheres of interest, the salience of Central Europe quickly declined after 1945. Looking more closely, however, one finds various spatial notions, especially in the early postwar years, which can still be genealogically connected to this concept. An interesting case is the set of discourses stressing in-betweenness, designating the respective national context for a mediating role in-between the Western democracies and the Soviet model. This was particularly strong in Czech political discourse, promoting a kind of local democratic socialism that often used the metaphors of the “bridge” and the “center” in this context (Schulze-Wessel 1988; Bugge 1993; Brenner 2009). After 1948, this option was silenced and any local production of the discourse of in-betweenness was overwritten by a more inflexible binary opposition of socialist East and capitalist West.

Between 1945 and 1948, however, comparative regional historical research in the region underwent a short but unprecedented flourishing. An important trigger was the preparation for the peace treaty, which made research into the history of the region a priority. In the Hungarian case, a new generation of researchers with a good knowledge of the cultures and languages of the region emerged in the late 1930s, originally entrusted with the task of providing a response to the historical propaganda of the “Little Entente.” After the war, however, this group, including Domokos Kosáry, Zoltán I. Tóth, László Makkai, and László Hadrovics, authored a series of important works focusing on the traditions of coexistence in the region. Their *Revue d'Histoire Comparée* (1943–1948), which fused a regional comparatist agenda with an attempt to present the Hungarian perspective on the nationality problem, also represented a hub of international cooperation ranging from Paris to Warsaw. But even in this context, the notion of Central Europe was increasingly abandoned. It is indicative that István Bibó (1946) in his famous essay talked about the “misery of Eastern European small states,” proposing a historical reconstruction of the “failed” nation-state formation in the region, with the intention to return to the model of democratic nationalism.

Similarly, the Czech Josef Macůrek's (1946) comparative history of Eastern European historiography put forward a flexible regional framework based on the combination of socioeconomic and cultural factors. Importantly, his

understanding of Eastern Europe was remarkably inclusive, going beyond both the post-Habsburg Central European space and also the conventional Slavic framework.

The years of the climax of the Cold War witnessed a symbolic geographical reconfiguration of political discourse along a bipolar East–West divide: on the one hand, the countries falling into the Soviet sphere of interest were inserted into an Eastern European common space, overwriting the previous Central, Southeastern, Slavic, and other similar categories, while in the countries on the other side of the Iron Curtain, the West became almost the only geographical framework. This holds true even for Greek public discourse, which historically and geographically was rather distant from Western Europe. Simultaneously, one could also witness the disappearance of *Mitteleuropa* from German discourse—in the East due to its perceived “imperialistic” connotations, while in the West due to its anti-Westernism, which the new Euro-Atlantic integration policies wanted to obliterate.

As for the local historical production in the Stalinist and immediate post-Stalinist periods, the Eastern European paradigm became dominant. It usually stressed the economic and political backwardness of the region in comparison to Western capitalist development, a view based mainly on agrarian history. Using the Engelsian thesis of the *Zweite Leibeigenschaft*, characterizing the areas east of the Elbe, it created a common historical space conspicuously including both Prussia and Russia. Authors following this paradigm located a number of common features in the “distorted” socioeconomic development of these countries, at least until the advent of socialism, when all of a sudden they were supposed to have emerged as the vanguard of modernity.

The first serious historical model justifying this perspective was developed by the Hungarian Zsigmond Pál Pach (1964), who focused on early modern agrarian history. Gradually these local socioeconomic histories became integrated into a transnational research community dealing with social substructures of East European history, represented by Hugh Seton-Watson, and the theories of underdevelopment/center-periphery developed by Alexander Gerschenkron and Immanuel Wallerstein. In Hungary, the most sophisticated formulation of this theory of backwardness and of the center-periphery economic interaction can be found in the works of economic history by György Ránki and Iván T. Berend (1974), who worked in close intellectual contact with Gerschenkron and Wallerstein. Significantly, they gradually moved toward the notion of “East Central Europe.” The work of the Polish Marian Małowist and Witold Kula was in many ways comparable, focusing on the global distribution of labor and pointing to the historical roots of the backwardness of Eastern Europe (see Sosnowska 2005). From a different perspective, focusing on the comparative history of national movements, the

Hungarian Emil Niederhauser (1977; 2003) also framed his object of analysis in terms of a “broad” Eastern Europe, which also encompassed Southeastern Europe.

### **A Central European Utopia?**

The first signs of the revival of the Central European paradigm in the context of a new discourse of regionalization can be linked to the activities of émigré historians. Oskar Halecki (1950; 1952) turned back to the interwar conceptions but reshaped them after 1945 in the context of the Cold War, talking of East Central Europe and West Central Europe (which in his model overlapped with Germany). He stressed that a common East Central European history was rooted in a common geographical space, but at the same time he was against geographical determinism and also pointed out the dynamic relationship of different zones. He identified three subregions that structured the broader East Central European region: the Great Plain in the north, the Danubian Basin, and the Balkans.

The 1950s–60s also saw the intensification of global historical interest in the post-Habsburg cultural and intellectual heritage, manifested in such works as Robert Kann’s monograph (1950) on the Habsburg Monarchy as a multinational state, or the study on the history of the idea of Central Europe by Jacques Droz (1960). Another pioneering work exemplifying the rekindled interest in Habsburg and post-Habsburg cultural history was the path-breaking study by the Trieste-based literary scholar Claudio Magris (1963) on the “Habsburg myth.” In this book, Magris reconstructed the context of the emergence of a nostalgic modality of extolling the Monarchy as a land of coexistence and tolerance, especially in comparison to the aggressive homogenizing programs of the successor states in the interwar period.

Cultural history and comparative literature were two of the main resources of the reemerging Central Europeanist historiographical discourse. From the 1960s on, the Central European modernist canon could be revalorized in literary history and then in cultural history. A case in point is the pioneering work, repositioning of the Prague structuralist tradition, by the great survivor and communist fellow-traveler Jan Mukařovský. A key event in these terms was the recanonization of Franz Kafka as a Central European writer rooted in the Prague cultural context, which reached its symbolic high point at a 1963 conference on Kafka’s oeuvre organized by the reform communist intellectual Eduard Goldstücker (Goldstücker, Kaufman, and Reimann 1965). As the concept of alienation became a basic ideologeme of existentialism and revisionist Marxism, modernist writers and artists of the first three decades of the twentieth century, hitherto rejected as examples of bourgeois decadence,

were recontextualized in terms of a specific regional heritage. This was formulated in an especially cogent way by the most important Czech revisionist Marxist philosopher, Karel Kosík ([1969] 1995), whose symbolic geographical repositioning of Czech culture in the context of the crisis of 1968 was linked to his attempt to legitimize socialism with a human face, as against the “totalitarian” and “alien” Soviet repression, a train of thought which became a blueprint followed by authors like Milan Kundera as well, although without the reference to a specific socialist path.

In the case of Kundera, the most important ideological move was to relink the “tragedy of Central Europe” to the Western public sphere in the context of the general disenchantment with communist ideology after 1968. The appeal to the conscience of Western intellectuals not to forget the portion of Europe captured by Soviet tyranny could thus become a central part, a mobilizing myth, as it were, of an emerging cultural-political discourse on civil society, which conferred global significance on the Eastern European dissidents (Kundera 1984).

From the mid-1970s onwards, the question of Hungary’s symbolic geographical self-positioning also became an important issue in intellectual debates. Up to the 1970s, the Central European framework was marginal in Hungarian historical production and remained alive only in the works of émigré politicians and historians, who nourished some sort of sympathy for the plans of a Central European federation serving as a neutral buffer zone between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-American sphere of interest (see, e.g., Wagner 1971, a book of essays by Hungarian émigrés in which Central Europe is equated with the “Danubian nations”). However, with the increasing participation of Hungarian scientific institutions in the European academic “joint ventures,” and the emerging political program of harmonizing Hungary with the “Western democracies,” the concept of Central Europe once again came to the fore and shaped research projects that were previously at the margins of official cultural politics.

This was the case with the work of Péter Hanák, whose fascination with the everyday life and high culture of turn-of-the-century Budapest was revalorized in view of the growing respect for a common Austro-Hungarian heritage (the collection of his most important essays is Hanák 1988). His main contribution was to reintegrate the Hungarian half of the Habsburg Monarchy in its post-1867 form into its transnational cultural, political, and economic setting, documenting the breathtaking process of sociocultural modernization at the turn of the century, and thus challenging the latent nationalist presumptions of Stalinist historiography, which asserted the semicolonial position of Hungary within the Monarchy. He also explicitly criticized those authors (such as Gerschenkron) who saw a common Eastern European

feature in the fact that capitalism was imposed from above, by the state, on these societies. In contrast, he inserted Hungary into a Central European space dominated by a common urban culture borne mainly by the emerging German and Jewish bourgeoisie.

The gradual rediscovery of many intellectual paradigms of the pre-Communist periods created a plurality of approaches and discourses, and loaded the issue of historical regions with immediate relevance. The best known product of this atmosphere is arguably Jenő Szűcs's (1983) *Sketch on the Three Regions of Europe*. Since its appearance, the essay was hailed as a Central Europeanist manifesto, even though it was actually rooted in local debates on backwardness and the clash of national communist and antinationalist Marxist narratives of history in the 1960s, the so-called Erik Molnár debate. Rejecting the national communist narrative, Szűcs also challenged the geographical framework of Marxist economic history that divided Europe categorically between East and West. While Szűcs accepted the hypothesis of a profound structural difference between Western Europe in the traditional sense and Hungary, Bohemia, or Poland, he challenged the binary opposition of East and West, suggesting the existence of a transitional zone that displayed Western social and cultural phenomena in a more superficial manner, but that could still be clearly distinguished from the "Eastern" (that is, Russian) pattern of development.

First published in a samizdat publication dedicated to the memory of István Bibó, but consequently republished by the so-called official press as well, Szűcs's essay had enormous influence, launching a public debate on the place of Hungary in Europe that reverberated until the early 1990s. In the historical profession, the most interesting exchange of ideas on this issue took place between Péter Hanák and Szűcs himself (Szűcs and Hanák 1986). Arguing mainly from the perspective of cultural history, Hanák proposed a triangular model in which Central Europe, including Austria and Switzerland, would be equidistant from East and West. In turn, Szűcs insisted that the East Central European countries—that is, historical Bohemia, Hungary, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—were peripheries of the West. The importance of these discussions reached beyond professional historians, introducing the idea of historical divergence between Hungary and the Soviet-dominated Eastern camp to the general public.

A series of studies stemming from Polish historiography from the 1960s onwards also sought to place Poland into a Central European regional framework. Jerzy Kłoczowski and Aleksander Gieysztor have been concentrating on the Middle Ages, especially the processes of Christianization and state formation in the territories at the Eastern confines of the Holy Roman Empire. In their vision, these "newcomer" nations began with a considerable delay but



managed to assimilate the European sociocultural structures and eventually formed a peculiar type, which, its internal varieties notwithstanding, can be described as a common historical region. This narrative had an obvious political message as well: before 1989, the emphasis on common Western Christian spiritual roots and Western institutional traditions buttressed the argument against the “unnatural division” of Europe as a consequence of Yalta.

Another branch of Polish historians, including Józef Chlebowczyk (1980), analyzed the Central European experience through the lens of the problem of the national movements. Chlebowczyk defined East Central Europe in a very wide sense, referring to the zone between Russia and Germany, bordering the Baltic, Adriatic, Aegean, and Black Seas. It is indicative of Chlebowczyk's approach that, breaking with the Polish tradition of extrapolating from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the whole region, he considered the territories of the Habsburg Monarchy the core of the region.

In Czech historiography, the prominent dissident Jan Křen (1979) was among the first to revive interest in the Central European federalist heritage and also made important steps in creating a Czech-German transnational historical narrative. This vision influenced the key historical work of Czech samizdat culture in the eighties, which also criticized the Czech nation-building project from a regional and supra-ethnic perspective (Podiven 1991; published in excerpts in 1987–1988). An important development in this context was the founding of the journal *Střední Evropa* (Central Europe) in 1984. This represented one of the ideological subcultures of the opposition, trying to offer an alternative to the historiographical discourse of the former reform communist dissidents. The politically conservative circle around the journal revived some elements of political Catholicism, and had a more ambiguous opinion about the Masarykian heritage. Its protagonists turned back to those sources (among them Masaryk's main intellectual adversary, the positivist and conservative Josef Pekař) who were more favorable to the Habsburg heritage.

Literary studies also contributed to the growth of awareness of the culture of Central Europe. Responding to the internationalization of research transcending the borders of ideological blocs, the seventies also saw a number of research initiatives seeking to create an East Central European regional history of the Enlightenment. Among others, the series of conferences (*Les Lumières en Hongrie, en Europe centrale et en Europe orientale*), held in Mátrafüred between 1971 and 1984, brought together researchers from France and other Western countries with scholars from the “Eastern bloc”; the need to place these cultures on the map of international research prompted some sort of discursive regionalization. Representing another research hub, that of comparative literature, the Hungarian scholar Endre Bojtár (1986; 1993), a specialist in Baltic studies, was at the forefront of devising a transnational literary

history of Central and Eastern Europe. Significantly, he also included Russian developments in his analysis, but made it clear that he considered the Russian context rather different from those of Central Europe, mainly because the existence of an imperial state structure made the Russian imperial project incomparable to those “small cultures” that faced the “death of the nation” as a realistic danger in the nineteenth century.

By the 1980s, a number of international venues emerged, such as *Cross Currents*, a “yearbook of Central European culture” published between 1982 and 1993, which sought to gather various local discussions on the region as well as the representatives of the “Western” academic community interested in Central European cultures. Also, a political discourse of Central Europe-ism started to form on the other side of the Iron Curtain as well, seeking to recreate a regional framework going beyond the actual political divisions, as is exemplified by the work of the Austrian politician Erhard Busek and his colleague Emil Brix (1986).

Simultaneously, in West Germany a debate on the meaning and relevance of *Mittleuropa* intensified, linked to the reemergence of questions about the geopolitical and historical identity of Germany. While there were voices seeking to revive the Prussian state tradition, this raised serious concerns in view of the peaceful coexistence with the countries of the Soviet Bloc. Eventually, the overwhelming majority of the participants in this discussion opted for a symbolic geographical framework placing the *Bundesrepublik* firmly in Western Europe. At the same time, the discussion opened a symbolic space for arguments, like that of Karl Schlögel (1986), about the necessity of making German society conscious of the specifically Central European traditions of multiethnicity and cultural plurality, both in the sense of the German contribution to the destruction of this plurality during the Nazi period, and also because it offered a possible way out of the cultural and political deadlock created by the Cold War.

It is important to note, however, that beyond the more politically driven interest in each other (which made Central Europe a frequently used ideologue, alongside “civil society” and “antipolitics”), with a handful of exceptions there was a very limited interpenetration of the Western and East Central European historical canons, which is only partly explained by the lack of linguistic competence. One could rather say that the debates on Central Europe mostly ran parallel to each other in these countries.

## Transition and Conceptual Transformation: Moving Eastward

While the 1970s–80s saw an upsurge in use of the concept of Central Europe, this does not mean that it completely relegated the notion of Eastern Europe

to the background. A number of influential cultural and political histories were written that still sought to encompass different national pasts into an Eastern European regional master narrative shaped by the “center and periphery” theories, such as the book by Robin Okey (1982). This approach reached its climax in the work of two American-based scholars, Daniel Chirot (1989) and Andrew C. Janos (2000). Incidentally, both of them were dealing with Romania (although Janos worked also on Hungary), which in the 1970s was the focus of scholars interested in the problems of peripheral modernization. However, it is interesting to note that for them Eastern Europe and East Central Europe were not conflicting concepts, and they seemed to use the two notions more or less simultaneously.

In contrast, the most ambitious attempt to write a synthetic history of Central Europe in the context of the euphoria of the transition was Piotr S. Wandycz’s *The Price of Freedom* (1993). The Polish-American scholar combined Halecki’s approach to Central Europe as a territory in-between Eastern and Western Europe with theories of center/periphery relations. Accordingly, Wandycz described Central Europe as a “semi-periphery,” and identified a number of common traits that characterize the development of Central European nations, especially the Poles, the Czechs, and the Hungarians, whom he considered Central Europeans par excellence. These features included a delayed state formation in the Middle Ages; a reopening economic gap between Central and Western Europe in the sixteenth century; a divergence between intellectual, institutional, and socioeconomic development; a chronic gap between the elites and the masses; and the presence of an urban bourgeoisie that was ethnically different (mainly German and Jewish) from the titular nation.

One would have expected the events of 1989 to bring an unprecedented flourishing to the Central European paradigm of historiography in the countries where this paradigm reemerged in the opposition discourse in the 1980s. All the more so since the Marxist social historians who championed the “supranational” paradigm of Eastern European backwardness sometimes literally died out or became institutionally marginalized. The case, however, is much more ambiguous. In the context of the transition from state socialism, Central Europe for a moment seemed to be a central notion (although it was never hegemonic: the first framework that transcended the Cold War bloc logic—the Alps-Adria cooperation scheme—omitted it, for instance, while, interestingly, including Italy), but it soon lost its salience. It was definitely central to the creation and rhetoric of the Visegrad cooperation, but even though the framework survived, the internal tensions between these political elites soon undermined the common Central European self-conceptualization, as can be seen from the way the Czech prime minister of the time, Václav Klaus, repudiated it as a meaningful concept from the perspective of his country’s

Western integration. The mid-1990s also saw a powerful criticism of the Central European ideologeme coming from authors who pointed to the implicit exclusive potential of this regional notion, using such interpretative models as “Balkanism” or “nested orientalism” (see Bakić-Hayden 1995; Todorova 1997; see also chapter 7 in this volume). As a consequence, in the countries where it had been traditionally most important, the Central European debate was considerably toned down.

In Hungary, with the passing of the first euphoria and the appearance of serious political cracks between the countries, the idealist vision of Central Europe also became problematic. Rejecting the normative image of Central Europe characterizing the dissident discourse of the 1980s, Ignác Romsics, for instance, turned to the simultaneous use of a number of frameworks, from the Danubian Basin to East Central Europe, signaling a multiplicity of nation-centered and supranational perspectives (Romsics 1997).

As for the Polish context, the Lublin Institute of East Central Europe, organized and led by Jerzy Kłoczowski, emerged as the main venue for regional comparative research. Keeping to the traditional Polish understanding of East Central Europe, Kłoczowski’s institute used the Central European paradigm to integrate Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Belarusians into a common symbolic framework with Poland. Furthermore, the concept of Northeastern Europe, popularized mainly by the German historian Klaus Zernack, also provided an alternative transnational framework for Polish historians, linking them mostly to the Baltic region rather than to the Czechs and the Hungarians. Similarly, in the Czech context, Central Europe became less central to the cultural and historical discourse. Thus, the magnum opus of Jan Křen (2005) on the history of Central Europe can also be considered more the climax of a pre-1989 tradition than a new start for a Czech Central Europeanist historical school.

Interestingly enough, the “Central Europeanist” narrative fared much better in contexts where pre-1989 antecedents were scarce, such as Romania. This is exemplified by the interdisciplinary cultural project *A Treia Europă* (The Third Europe), based in Timișoara, a city with a multiethnic past in the traditionally multicultural Banat region (Babeți 1997). Drawing on the 1980s canonization of the Central European heritage, the group launching *A Treia Europă* constructed Central Europe as especially a literary phenomenon, and also sought to introduce this paradigm to Romanian public discourse with an underlying agenda of local identity-building.

All this fits into the broader process of “localizing” supranational regional frames, which became a common strategy for a number of local elites seeking to reshape their symbolic geographical relationship to the West and to their respective administrative centers (the most important Central Europeanist

examples are Vojvodina versus Belgrade, Banat versus Bucharest, Galicia versus Eastern Ukraine). Along these lines, a number of cities with a multiethnic past, such as Bratislava/Pozsony/Pressburg, Cluj/Kolozsvár/Klausenburg, Timișoara/Temesvár/Temeschwar, Chernivtsi/Cernăuți/Czernowitz, and Lviv/Lwów/Lemberg came to be described, both in the scholarly literature and in the local discourses of self-branding, as *pars pro toto* Central European, linking their multiethnic transnational microregion to a broader framework, usually tied to the Habsburg heritage most tangible in architecture (see, e.g., Andruchowytch and Stasiuk 2004).

## Conclusions

To sum up, one can establish a number of general trends that organize the dynamism of the conceptual transformation under scrutiny. One of the most important factors is the gradual disappearance of Germany from the Central European referential system by the post–World War II period, moving the center gradually to the East, as it were. Another trait is the strong propensity to historicization—that is, the attempt of most speakers to project back the actual regional framework to some past state of affairs. Third, there is no consensus at all on who is in and who is out; the geographical frame has been radically elastic depending on who is speaking. Fourth, Central Europe as a regional notion exemplifies the ambiguous coexistence of the national and the antinationalist frames of mind, characteristic of most constructions of mesoregional identity. It can challenge the nationalization of space but can also function as a sort of concentric vision legitimizing a particular nation-state building project. Similarly, the concept has both powerful inclusive and exclusive potentials: Central Europe was often used as a counter-concept of something else (originally more of the West, later of the East), but at the same time it also served the purpose of creating symbolic bonds between national frameworks that seemed to be in permanent conflict.

As for conceptual alternatives and variants, we have encountered a particularly rich set of notions, all linked to the symbolic center, such as Central, Middle, and “in-between.” We also found a number of specifications: the most common is East Central Europe (*Ostmitteleuropa*), sometimes also appearing as Central-Eastern, but occasionally morphing into North-Central. In certain cases, one can find debates between adherents of different specifications, such as the case of the Hungarian discussion, when Emil Niederhauser argued for Central-Eastern Europe against the East Central Europe of Hanák and Szűcs (see Gyáni 1988). One can also find nationalized regional notions, as with Danubian or Carpathian Europe in the Hungarian case, serving as a kind of minimalist Central Europe focused on Hungary. There are similar Austrian

and Polish tendencies as well, framing Central Europe as coextensive with the Habsburg Empire or the lands of the *Rzeczpospolita*, respectively.

As for the dynamics of externally produced notions, one can find a common trait of the gradual disappearance not only of Germany but also Switzerland and Northern Italy from the mainstream depictions of Central Europe, which became almost complete by the 1950s. In different national academic contexts, however, this process had different chronologies. Thus, for instance, French scholarship removed Germany from Central Europe later than Anglo-American scholarship. It is in this context that Droz wrote about *Europe Centrale balkanisée* in reference to the interwar period. As we can see, the Anglo-American cultural history of the 1960s–70s was extremely important in relaunching the notion, and this also conditioned the public discourse of Western Europe to be receptive to the new Central Europeanist cultural-political discourse of the 1980s. This also provides a rare instance of an ideological transfer going the other way, in the sense that, in this case, East Central European authors managed to shape the global discourse and, at least for a decade, emerge as active partners in reconceptualizing key notions of political reflection, such as “civil society.” This privileged moment, however, ended rather abruptly after 1989, when the transition script of “Westernization” subscribed to by most local actors led to quick disenchantment on the part of many observers, as is clear from Ralf Dahrendorf’s (1990) famous statement that the East Central European transition actually did not contribute any original idea to global political thought.

Last but not least, while the original counter-concept of Central Europe seemed to be primarily the West, or the West and the East together, in the 1970s–80s it became definitely the East. (This is true even though there was an implicit critical edge toward the West as well, which was blamed for “sacrificing” Central Europe to secure its own welfare). We can also see that these poles of conceptualization could be turned into adjacent notions, thus using Central Europe as a proxy of the West (or a “kidnapped West”). Other important counter-concepts are Russia and the Balkans. In the case of Russia, the attempt to incorporate it into a common regional framework led to the collapse of the Central European paradigm (taken up by “Eastern Europe”), while the Balkans could be rejected but also incorporated, as is usually the case with the intentionally loose concept of East Central Europe.

On the whole, compared to other mesoregional concepts, Central Europe has definitely been one of the most intensively used and discussed and it can be considered one of the paradigmatic mesoregional frameworks. With regard to the work of Halecki, it can also be argued that it was precisely this notion that launched the very discussion on historical regions. While it has been deconstructed from various directions during the last hundred years (by the ad-

herents of the Masarykian “New Europe” during and after the Great War, by the supporters of an Eastern European framework in the interwar agrarian populist and post–World War II Marxist intellectual contexts, or by those critics who accused the Central Europeanist paradigm championed by the anticommunist dissidents of using double standards to exclude Russia and the Balkans), it still proved to be rather flexible and prone to reappearing in various historical moments when the need to create some sort of common political and intellectual framework transcending the national framework became pressing.

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## Notes

1. On the *longue-durée* history of the notion, see Sinnhuber 1954; Droz 1960; Stirk 1994; Hadler 1996; Cede and Fleck 1996; Schultz 1997; Lendvai 1997; *Mittleuropa* 2008.

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## Chapter 9

# Eastern Europe

*Frithjof Benjamin Schenk*



### Where is “Eastern Europe”?

Locating Eastern Europe on contemporary mental maps of the continent is a difficult endeavor. First, we have to face the problem that the terms “Osteuropa,” “Eastern Europe,” “L’Europe orientale/l’Europe de l’Est,” “vostochnaia Evropa,” “Europa wschodnia,” etc., have different meanings and are not equally embedded in the various European languages. While we can find, for example, a lengthy entry on “Osteuropa” in the most recent on-line edition of the German *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* (2015), there is none on “Eastern Europe” in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* online (2015). “According to general *geographical* usage [my emphasis],” we learn from the German *Brockhaus*, “Osteuropa” comprises the “countries of the Eastern part of Europe, i.e., Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and the European part of Russia.” In the meantime, the encyclopedia emphasizes that the German term “Osteuropa” denotes in *popular* usage “all areas located eastwards of the (historical) German language border without regional and ethnical differentiation.” According to the United Nations Statistics Division, “Eastern Europe” encompasses the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (“Composition of ... groupings” 2015). In contrast to this definition, the *World Factbook* (2015) of the CIA treats the Russian Federation as a part of Central Asia, whereas Ukraine and Belarus are regarded as parts of Europe.

This short list, which could easily be prolonged, illustrates the extent to which mental maps depend both on geographical points of view and on competing regional concepts in different scholarly and political discourses. Even within one field of regional studies, such as, for example, “Eastern European

history,” one barely finds a consensus on where to draw the geographical boundaries of one’s own field of expertise. Whereas historians in the English-speaking world who study Eastern Europe are usually experts of the history of Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia, their German colleagues treat this part of the world mostly as belonging to East Central Europe (*Ostmitteleuropa*). Russia and the Soviet Union (sometimes the whole cultural sphere of Eastern Slavs and Orthodoxy) are regarded here as “proper Eastern Europe” (*Osteuropa im engeren Sinne*) (Zernack 1977; Kappeler 2001).

Contrary to most other concepts of European mesoregions, “Eastern Europe” has always been almost exclusively a term denoting an “other” and “foreign” geographical, political, and cultural space. This sphere is located “eastwards” of one’s “own” territory and often charged with ambivalent or negative attributes and stereotypes. Whereas in the contemporary German language “Osteuropa” usually denotes a political and cultural territory stretching eastwards from the border of the rivers Oder and Neisse and the Bohemian mountains, people in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary mostly claim to be inhabitants of Central, not Eastern, Europe. In Ukraine and Belarus, many people conceive of themselves as living not in Eastern Europe but *between* Western and Eastern Europe (Maxwell 2011). Further in “the East,” in Russia, philosophers and historians have for centuries been debating their country’s relationship with “the West” (*zapad*) (Danilevskii 1920). But Russia has never been conceptualized in these disputes about the national “self” as part of Eastern Europe (Neumann 1996). The Russian term *vostok* (East) has always been a signifier of “the Orient” (*Bol’shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* 1971). Thus their own country has been conceptualized on Russian mental maps since the nineteenth century variously as its own cultural space (for example in debates on the relationship of “Russia and Europe,” or in Eurasian ideology; see chapter 10 in this volume) as an integral part of the orthodox or Slavic world (Slavophiles) and as the embodiment of “progress” in global history (the Soviet Union as part of the Socialist world) (Thum 2003; Faraldo et al. 2008). “Eastern Europe” is apparently the only mesoregion on the mental maps of Europe without any significant potential or appeal as a concept of collective self-identification (see Orlinski 2006).

## The Genesis of the Concept

The idea to divide Europe into a Western and an Eastern hemisphere is a rather recent historical phenomenon. The traditional model that separated the continent into a civilized “South” and a barbarian “North” lost its predominance only at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries (Lemberg 1985). Until the dawn of the nineteenth century, British,

French, and German textbooks of political and physical geography, for example, presented Russia predominantly as a “Northern” (not as an Eastern European) country. Tsarist Russia “migrated” at the beginning of the nineteenth century on the mental maps of Europe from the “North” to the “East” of the continent. This cognitive dislocation reflected both a terminological shift and a “transformation of the political and ideological world view in large parts of Europe” (Lemberg 1985, 90). At the same time, the new geographical discourse on an East–West dichotomy in Europe was partly compatible with the traditional division of Christianity into “Western” (Catholic and Protestant) and “Oriental/Eastern” (Orthodox) churches (*ecclesiae occidentalis/orientalis*). The imagined legacy of the schism of 1054 has been stressed again and again in the discourse on Eastern Europe since the nineteenth century, most prominently in Russian religious philosophy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in Western debates on the traditions of Europe’s bipartite division during the Cold War, and most recently in Samuel Huntington’s theory of the “clash of civilizations” (Huntington 1996).

The term “Eastern Europe” (*östlicher Teil Europas*) was apparently used for the first time at the beginning of the eighteenth century in geographical literature (see chapter 12 in this volume). In 1730 it appears in the title of a book written by the Swedish officer Philip Johan von Strahlenberg (Tabbert), who, as a Russian prisoner of war, accompanied the German scholar Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt during his scientific expedition to Siberia in 1720–1727. Von Strahlenberg (1730) published his detailed travel report in Stockholm, labeling Siberia “das nord- und ostliche [*sic*] Teil von Europa und Asia.” Since von Strahlenberg’s book was also well received in the Russian academic world, the term “Eastern Europe” (*vostochnaia Evropa*) can also be found in Russian sources from the 1750s on (Miller 1750, 11). Apparently one of the first geographers to propose a division of Europe into a Northern (*Europe septentrionale*), a Southern (*Europe meridionale*), a Western, and an Eastern part (*Europe orientale*) was the French scholar Joseph Vaissette. In his *Géographie historique, ecclesiastique, et civile* (1755), the Benedictine monk suggested subsuming Poland, Great Russia, and the European parts of the Ottoman Empire (“Turquie d’Europe”) under the label “Europe orientale” (Vaissette 1755, 2ff., 106ff.). But the majority of Western scholars kept adhering to the traditional way of partitioning Europe into three mesoregions (“Nord,” “Midi,” “Milieu”) until the beginning of the nineteenth century (Adamovksy 2005, 599–600).

After the Congress of Vienna, French, Italian, and German geographers almost simultaneously tried to adopt their textbooks to the new political order of the continent. Both well-known scholars, such as the Danish–French geographer Conrad Malte-Brun or the Italian Adriano Balbi, and lesser-known fig-

ures, such as the German Johann Günther Friedrich Cannabich, contributed with their works to the regional subdivision of Europe. Cannabich (1817), for instance, suggested partitioning Europe into a Western and an Eastern hemisphere. Whereas Cannabich described Eastern Europe as a rather opaque mesoregion with vague boundaries, Malte-Brun suggested a clear-cut division of Europe into five mesoregions taking into account the new *political* borders of the continent. The founding father of modern geography in France suggested in his *Géographie universelle ancienne et moderne* (1816) a concept of Eastern Europe (*Europe orientale*) comprising exclusively the countries of Russia and Poland (Malte-Brun and Mentelle 1816, xxix–xxx). Later he sketched a slightly different Eastern Europe, subdivided into a “partie boréale et partie centrale” (European Russia, Poland, Republic of Cracow) and a “partie australe” (European part of the Ottoman Empire, Greece, Ionian Islands) (Malte-Brun 1830, 468–69).

Another important geographer contributing to the scholarly discourses on regional subdivision of Europe was Adriano Balbi. As early as 1817, he suggested substituting the traditional tripartite model with a bipolar one, differentiating between an “Occidental Europe” and a single “Oriental Europe” (Adamovsky 2005, 600). The publication of his *Abrégé de Géographie* (1833) made his new idea of subdividing Europe available to a broader international readership. He suggested a border dividing “Western” and “Eastern Europe” along a virtual line in the north–south direction, which crossed the “center of Europe,” situated to the west of Warsaw. “Eastern Europe,” located eastwards of this meridian, encompassed Russia and the Ottoman Empire, the Ionian Islands, Cracow, Greece, Serbia, Wallachia, and Moldova (Balbi 1840, 104). Balbi’s model was widely noticed both in Western and Eastern Europe. In 1833 a detailed review of the book appeared, for example, in the Russian journal *Teleskop* (Nadezhdin 1833).

In fact, the term “Eastern Europe” (*vostochnaia Evropa, vostochnaia chast’ Evropy*) also became an integral part of the geographical vocabulary in Russia in the early nineteenth century. But the term “vostochnaia Evropa” was used in Russian geographical literature of the 1830s and 1840s as a rather neutral signifier, denoting a spatial unity that was most often identical with the territory of the Tsarist Empire (Pavlovsk 1843, 5). Apart from this usage, the term “vostochnaia Evropa” also took on new meanings in the course of the nineteenth century, referring either to the territory of Orthodox Christianity (Savel’ev 1840) and/or Slavic civilization (Grech 1830, s.v. Pavel Iosif Shafarik) or to a spatial entity with a distinct historical development (that is, “Russia”) (Polevoi 1829, 22; Solov’ev 1870, 5, 52). This differentiation of the concept “Eastern Europe” in the Russian language coincided with parallel developments in regional discourses in the West.

Russia's shift on the mental maps of Europe from the "North" to the "East" of the continent at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century resulted first from an increasing "Orientalization" of Tsarist Russia by Western scholars, and second from a semantic reduction of the meaning of the term "North" and "Northern Europe," where Russia previously used to be located. Both German philology and the movement of "Scandinavianism" contributed to a redefinition of the regional concept "Norden," denominating now in the first place the countries of Scandinavia: Denmark, Sweden, and Norway (see Lemberg 1985, 64–66, as well as chapter 2 in this volume). In the meantime, the developing disciplines of Slavic philology and linguistics began to define the geographical range of Slavic languages in Europe as a distinct cultural and spatial unit. Johann Gottfried Herder can be regarded as an important *spiritus rector* of the idea of Slavic unity and of Eastern Europe as a predominantly Slavic space. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1792), Herder drafted a vision of one peaceful Slavic nation inhabiting a vast territory between the Baltic and the Adriatic Seas located east of Germanic (and Romanic) peoples (Herder 1792, 36ff.). This image had a strong impact on national and pan-national movements (pan-Slavism) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (for example, Danilevskii 1869; English transl. 2013).

The third group of scholars that substantially contributed to the development of the concept of Eastern Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were historians. One of the oldest history books with the term "östliches Europa" in its title was published in 1774 by the Swedish historian Johann Thunmann. In the introduction to his book, Thunmann juxtaposes the historical development of the "Western European peoples," on the one hand, and that of "Eastern Europe," on the other. As an indication of the different stages of historical development in both parts of the continent, he picks the progress of national historiography. Whereas in the Western part of the continent "Enlightenment has made significant steps toward perfection [of historical scholarship]," in "Eastern Europe [historiography] is in a different shape: Here it is an unploughed, wild and deserted field" waiting for cultivation (Thunmann 1774, 3–4).

This verdict is symptomatic of a specific normative discourse of Western scholars writing about historical developments in the Eastern part of Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. As Larry Wolff (1994) has argued, the concept of Eastern Europe was "invented" in the late eighteenth century by Western philosophers of the Enlightenment as a specific spatial entity located between a "civilized" Western Europe and a "barbarian" Asia, whose outstanding feature was its backwardness in comparison to an idealized West (see chapter 1 in this volume). According to Wolff, it was neither its geographical



location nor its ethnographic character that made a country or region “Eastern European” in the view of the Western philosophes: it was its location on an imagined time scale of universal historical “progress.” In this worldview, an idealized (liberal) West represented the highest level of civilization and historical development, whereas Eastern Europe still had a long way to go in order to catch up with this vanguard of humankind. While Asia, according to Wolff, was perceived by Western scholars of the eighteenth century as a sphere of eternal stagnation, Eastern Europe was accorded a potential for historical progress.

In a number of critical reviews of his book, Wolff was accused of using for his argument historical source material in which the term “Eastern Europe” does not appear (Confino 1994, 510; Lewis and Wigen 1997, 229; Adamovsky 2005, 592–94; Drace-Francis 2006, 61; Franzinetti 2008, 364). Moreover, some critics argued that not only Eastern Europe, but also other regions at the European periphery were ascribed in various discourses the attribute of comparative backwardness in comparison to an idealized (Western) “center” (Confino 1994, 507; Struck 2006). All this may be perfectly true. Nevertheless, Wolff’s thesis that Western scholars in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries invented “Eastern Europe” *avant le mot* as a space of historical backwardness and as a “counter-concept” of an idealized “progressive West” finds corroboration when analyzing the *usage* of the term “Eastern Europe” in Western historiography and political discourse of the late eighteenth and especially early nineteenth centuries.

Interestingly, Eastern Europe was labeled “backward” by representatives of both the conservative and the liberal political camps. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel is probably one of the most prominent authors of the former category. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1840), he promoted a tripartite regional division of Europe that would take into account the contribution of various peoples (and geographical regions) to the development of world history. Greece and Italy—that is, “Southern Europe”—had been the “theatre of world history” when the “Center and the North of Europe” were still “uncultivated.” Later the *Weltgeist* took residence in the “heart” or the “Center of Europe” (*Mittelpunkt Europas*) where France, Germany, and England are located. The “North-Eastern states of Europe”—“Poland, Russia and the Slavic Empires”—joined the “alignment of historical states” only at a “late stage.” Since that time “they have been establishing and cultivating constantly the connection [between Europe] and Asia” (Hegel 1986, 133). Hegel’s thesis that Eastern Europe was a latecomer in human history could be interpreted in two different ways. One option was to condemn this part of the continent as “backward,” “uncivilized,” “barbarian,” and “semi-Asiatic”; the other was to idealize the East as a land of the “future,” “salvation,” and

“spiritual renovation.” Whereas the former argument laid the foundation for Western liberalism’s critical discourse about Eastern Europe (that is, Tsarist Russia), the latter led to various forms of adulation and glorification of the East as the spiritual savior of a rotten West. Both discourses were fueled during the nineteenth century by authors from both Western and Eastern Europe.

One of the first scholars to use “Eastern European history” as an umbrella term for the analysis of the past of Poland and Russia was the German Ernst A. Herrmann. In his *History of the Russian State*, he defines the “Eastern affairs”—the developments in the “geographical sphere, where Russian power started taking root”—as the subject of Eastern European history (Herrmann 1860). Like many of his contemporaries, Herrmann treated Eastern European history almost synonymously with the history of Russian imperial rule. According to his analysis, Russia’s “Eastern-Asiatic features” had a strong influence on her historical development (Herrmann 1846, 712). Because of her “oriental-Slavic geographical [dis]position,” Russia was not able to develop any political regime other than despotism. Due to the adoption of Christianity, Russians were undoubtedly “superior to all other [Asian] peoples who are entrenched in the un-free religions of the Orient.” But “because of its distant and only superficial relationship with the peoples of the Occident, the Russian nation needs to attract the achievements, energy and potential of a higher developed intelligence [from the West] and—against its own will—to bow to the global dominance of Roman-Germanic education and knowledge” (Herrmann 1846, 712). In this short quotation, we can find in a nutshell all the features of the new, arrogant Western image of Eastern Europe as a backward historical space, longing for its “civilized” master from the West. Especially in German political thinking of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, this concept of Eastern Europe had a large influence.

In nineteenth-century French liberal historiography, Eastern Europe and Russia were considered almost identical spatial entities. After the Congress of Vienna of 1815 and the suppression of the Polish November uprising in 1830–31, Russia had become the antirevolutionary *gendarme* of Europe, a development observed by liberal circles in the West with great suspicion and fear (Gleason 1950). As Hans Lemberg has convincingly argued, negative attributes from Western discourses about the “Orient” were thus increasingly integrated into and projected upon popular images of Russia and Eastern Europe (Lemberg 1985, 68). The idea that Europe can be divided into a Western hemisphere of liberty and an Eastern space of despotism was a widespread conviction in French political debates in the first part of the nineteenth century (Cadot 1967; Adamovsky 2006). In 1822, for example, the French writer and ecclesiastical *fonctionnaire* Dominique Dufour de Pradt

(1759–1837) identified “a decreasing slope of liberty” in Europe (Dufour de Pradt 1822, 116). The perception of Eastern Europe as a backward sphere of despotism could also mix with ethnic definitions of the region. The French author and translator Ernest Charrière (1841–42, 167), for example, was convinced that there is a “Western race” (*race occidentale*) and an “Asiatic race” (*race asiatique*) differing substantially from each other. From his point of view, “proper Europe” (*l’Europe, telle que nous la concevons d’après nous*) ends at the river Oder and in the Julian Alps. On the Eastern side of this imagined frontier, there is a “different Europe” (*une autre Europe*), a “semi-asiatic Europe” forming a bridge between “the West,” and “the Asian barbary” (Charrière 1841–42, 170).

### “Eastern Europe” in International Historiographical Debates after World War I

Already in the late nineteenth century, only a very few Polish historians could agree with the Western idea that Russia and Poland must be regarded as parts of one historical mesoregion. In the era of nationalism and emerging national historiographies, transnational concepts were not very popular in Eastern Europe, for obvious reasons. Historians made strong efforts to draw distinctive borders between competing national subregions within Eastern Europe. Conservative Catholic historians like Franciszek Duchński, Wincenty Lutosławski, or Feliks Koneczny emphasized the idea that Russia was Poland’s civilizational “Other,” and that their country should be regarded as an integral part of the cultural sphere of “Latin (i.e., Catholic) civilization” (Wise 2011). From their point of view, Poland’s historical mission has always been to protect Europe from its Asian enemies, such as the Mongols, Turks, and Russians (*antemurale christianitatis*). In this context, the Russian suppression of the January uprising in 1863 was conceptualized as a new Mongol (Asian or “Turanian”) invasion into the heartland of Western civilization (Wise 2011, 75).

After World War I and the emergence of new independent nation-states on the territory of the former Russian, Habsburg, German, and Ottoman Empires, the question of where “Eastern Europe” might be located and how to define the field of expertise of “Eastern European history” became topics of European scholarly debate (see chapter 11 in this volume). It was the Polish historian Oskar Halecki who first raised this issue at the fifth International Congress of Historical Sciences in Brussels in 1923 (Arnason 2010, 146–49). In his talk Halecki argued that Eastern Europe must not be considered as a uniform but as a subdivided historical mesoregion (Halecki 1924). The territory beyond Germany’s eastern border might be called “Eastern Europe,”

according to Halecki, only in a “geographical sense.” In terms of cultural belonging, “a large part, which is colloquially called Eastern Europe (Europe orientale), has indisputably always appeared as a domain of *Western* civilization (civilisation *occidentale*)” (Halecki 1924, 76–77, my emphasis; see also chapter 8 in this volume).

Halecki’s mission was obviously to disentangle the histories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and of Tsarist Russia on the maps of Western political thought and historiography. Whereas Poland and the realm of the Empire of Kiev, from his point of view, had formed a historical spatial unity since the ninth and tenth centuries, this “New Europe” (*Neu-Europa*) (as he called it later) (Halecki 1935, 8) fell apart when the principality of Moscow ascended as a new political center in the twelfth century, and when the Russian territory was conquered by the Tatars in the thirteenth century. Since then, Eastern Europe had been divided into two “distinct parts” (Halecki 1924, 81). The emerging state of Moscow, Halecki argued, became “definitively a separate world” (83). Halecki, whose regional concept of Eastern Europe had a very strong impact on historical scholarship both in Central Europe and the West (Zernack 1977, Conze 1993), kept on writing and publishing on this topic in the 1930s and—after his emigration to the United States (1940)—in the 1950s (Halecki 1935; 1950; 1952). In his later writings, he pointed out that since the thirteenth century Russia must not be regarded as part of European history at all (Halecki 1950; Okey 1992, 107). After the rule of the Tatars and Russian autocracy, it was the regime of Bolshevism that had finally alienated this part of the world from Western Civilization and its “Eastern borderlands”—that is, East Central Europe (Halecki 1935, 18; 1952).

Apart from Halecki’s model, which was supported (with some modifications) by the German Josef Pfitzner, among others, at the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Warsaw in 1933 (Pfitzner 1934), Eastern Europe could still be conceptualized in a different way in scholarly debates after World War I. For instance, the Czech historian Jaroslav Bidlo, who also participated in the Warsaw conference in 1933, suggested a model of Eastern Europe as a space embodying a distinct civilization (Bidlo 1934; 1935). Bidlo, who was influenced by Russian Slavophilism and the writings of the German religious philosopher Ernst Troeltsch (1922), draw a distinct line between the “Western” (Romano-Germanic) and the Byzantine-Slavic *Kulturkreis*, stressing the cultural differences between the civilizations of Orthodox and Western Christianity. Like Halecki, Bidlo regarded Poles, Czechs, and Slovenes as part of the Western world, though in his case the key factor was their affiliation with the Catholic and Protestant churches (Halecki 1935, 18). From Bidlo’s point of view, Western and Eastern Europe had embarked on different paths of historical development not only in the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries, but already in the year 330, when Constantinople was founded and Western and Eastern Christianity started drifting apart.

### **Eastern Europe as a Space of German Influence and Domination**

In no other European country did the concept of Eastern Europe have such an impact on the development of respective regional studies and new academic subdisciplines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than in the German-speaking countries. In 1841, the first chair of Slavic studies was installed at the University of Breslau (today's Wrocław). During the next decades, Slavic studies became part of the curriculum also at the universities of Prague, Vienna, Leipzig, Berlin, Munich, and Königsberg. After Theodor Schiemann had been nominated the first professor of "Osteuropäische Geschichte" at the University of Berlin in 1892, the first seminary of East European history was inaugurated there in 1902 (Kappeler 2001, 221–44). This decision was primarily motivated by contemporary politics, as it was some years later at the University of Vienna. Due to increasing tensions with the Russian Empire in the age of imperialism, there was an urgent need for specialists in Russian affairs in the German and Austrian capitals.

After the disillusionment with the expansionist dreams of an enlarged German empire in Eastern Europe (*Land Ober-Ost*), and after the loss of a large part of Western Prussia, the province of Posen, and Upper Silesia to Poland, the concept of Eastern Europe underwent a significant transformation in scholarly discourses in post-World War I Germany. Representatives of the so-called *Ostforschung* began systematically to conceptualize Central Europe as a "sub-Germanic space" (Beyrau 2012). *Ostforschung* (research on the East) was an umbrella term denoting a variety of academic disciplines and institutions doing research on the history, economy, ethnography, geography, culture, and societies of Germany's Eastern neighbors. The common ground of this kind of interdisciplinary research—apart from a clear anti-Polish stance—was the assumption that Eastern Europe had been historically, and would be in the future, a sphere of German influence. Even if only a few researchers were later directly involved in the preparation of plans for ethnic cleansing and the Holocaust, there is little doubt that *Ostforschung* had a strong impact on contemporary political visions of German expansion into Eastern Europe and on respective National Socialist (NS) plans of national and racial segregation in Central and Eastern Europe after 1939 (Klessmann 1985; Burleigh 1988).

After Germany's attacks on Poland and the Soviet Union in 1939 and 1941, Eastern Europe was conceptualized by numerous German scholars as a

backward space that needed to be subjugated, exploited, and “liberated” from “Jewish domination.” In June 1942 the German agronomist Konrad Meyer provided Heinrich Himmler with a memorandum proposing a systematic social reconfiguration of the recently conquered territories of Poland and the Soviet Union. According to the *Generalplan-Ost*, twenty-five million ethnic Germans should take residence in this newly available “living space” (*Lebensraum*), whereas the original Slavic and Jewish populations were to be resettled, expelled, or killed (Rössler 1993; Herb 1997). The “space of the East” (*Ostraum*) had to be arranged in a “proper order” by German settlers. They should help the economically “useful elements” among the local population to develop this backward and “empty” land. Even if the Generalplan-Ost was not fully implemented due to the development of the war, its murderous effects on the societies of Poland and the Soviet Union are too well known. The authors of this scholarly vision were not directly involved in actions of deportation, resettlement, and murder. But they produced a “scientific” blueprint for regional “development” of “the East” that made the NS perpetrators feel that their cruel deeds served a larger rational plan promising Germany a “bright future.”

Apart from this brutal vision of a “backward” and “barbarous” Eastern Europe, waiting to be subjugated by its German “masters,” the “European East” (*europäischer Osten*) has also been perceived and conceptualized in German philosophical and political thought since the late nineteenth century in a significantly different way. Since the Romantic era, conservative political thinkers have been idealizing Russia, and in a more general sense the “European East,” as a stronghold of Christian values and political stability (Koenen 2005, Thum 2006). When the Western way of life came under rising criticism at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, philosophers like Oswald Spengler praised the Orthodox East as a counter-concept to the rotten West (*Abendland*) (Spengler 1922). Spengler and other adherents of Russian civilization were deeply influenced by the ideology of Slavophilism, praising Orthodox Christianity and Orthodox culture in general as alternatives to Western cultural models. When, for example, the German scholar Walter Schubart (1938) published his book *Europe and the Soul of the East*, he predicted the decline and self-destruction of the “Faustian-Promethean” West and praised the dawn of a “new man” in “the East,” a man who had an “Eastern soul” and who was a product of both Russian-Orthodox traditions and the revolutionary spirit of October 1917.

### “Eastern Europe” as a Concept during the Cold War Era

After Germany’s defeat in World War II and the expansion of the Soviet sphere of interest toward the West, the imagined borders of Eastern Europe

on the mental map of the continent shifted significantly once again. In his famous speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March 1946, Winston Churchill described an imagined line “from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic” as an “Iron Curtain” descending across the continent (Churchill 1981, 881). This new border divided “the free democratic world” in the West from a “Soviet sphere” in the East. Echoing the spirit of Churchill’s Iron Curtain Speech and the ideological master narrative of “the West,” the British historian Arnold Toynbee warned the listeners of the BBC in 1952 of the “constant [Russian] threat from the thirteenth century till 1945” and proclaimed, “We do not want to see the Russian brand of tyranny spread.” (Toynbee 1953, 7; 1947, 203) Clearly aiming at “Orientalizing” the Soviet Union under Stalin, the American-German sociologist Karl August Wittfogel, in his influential study *Oriental Despotism* (1957), presented Russia alongside China and ancient Egypt as a political order of a peculiar kind.

Churchill’s address was received in both policy and public arenas in the United States with great enthusiasm. Stalin, on the contrary, harshly rebutted the Iron Curtain speech, accusing the United States and their allies of being “little different from Hitler” (Engermann 2010, 35). According to communist ideology, fascism was the logical outcome of capitalism. Consequently, Soviet propaganda saw the United States as moving on the path toward fascism most recently trodden by Germany (Engermann 2010, 31). From the Soviet point of view, it was the West that was threatening freedom and peace in Europe, a continent that had been recently liberated from fascism in the Great Patriotic War by the Red Army. From this perspective it is not surprising that some years later the Berlin Wall was labeled in official GDR terminology as the “bulwark against fascism.”

While analyzing and describing the new bipolar world order, Western scholars deliberately followed prevailing traditions of the mental West-East divide of Europe. In Western political discourse of the Cold War era, the terms “Soviet/Communist Bloc,” “countries of the Warsaw Pact Treaty,” “Eastern Bloc,” and “Eastern Europe” were used almost synonymously. The term “Eastern Europe” was attributed a predominantly political meaning in Western languages after World War II. In many Western countries, most notably in the United States, between the end of World War II and the 1960s huge investments were made both by governmental and nongovernmental agencies in order to build up new academic institutions that should produce urgently needed knowledge about the new enemy in the (communist) “East” (Engermann 2009). Likewise, in many countries in Western Europe, most notably in West Germany, joint research on a politically defined Eastern Europe reaching from the GDR in the West to the People’s Republic of China in the East mushroomed during the Cold War years (Oberländer 1992; Unger 2007; Kleindienst 2009).

On the other side of the Iron Curtain, in the meantime, the “capitalist West” became the constituting Other of the Socialist bloc. But the concept of Eastern Europe was only rarely accepted as terminology of self-denomination in the political discourse of the Soviet Union or the Socialist bloc. One of the few examples of this practice is the official *Short Course* (*Kratkii kurs*) on the history of the Communist Party of the USSR written by Stalin in 1938 and revised after World War II (Commission of the Central Committee 1939). In the chapter on “dialectical and historical materialism” (4.2), one reads that “in the space of three thousand years three different social systems have been successively superseded in Europe: the primitive communal system, the slave system and the feudal system. In the eastern part of Europe [v vostochnoi chasti Evropy], in the USSR., even four social systems have been superseded” (History of the Communist Party 1939, 118). Apart from this example, neither “Eastern Europe” nor “the East” were used as concepts of collective identity after World War II in official propaganda in the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries of Central Europe. Instead, the commonwealth of Socialist countries was labeled officially either “COMECON-states,” “states of the Warsaw Treaty Organization,” or just “Progressive Bloc” (Péteri 2010, 5–6). At the same time, renewed nineteenth-century images of Slavic unity (Slavophil Bolshevism) (Radchenko 2011, 13–15) or historical narratives stressing the long tradition of Eastern European (Slavic-Baltic) alliances against the Teutonic “Drang nach Osten” were officially promoted in the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

Whereas we can hardly find any usage of the term “Eastern Europe” in the official political discourse of the “Socialist bloc,” there were, nevertheless, cautious attempts to attach a deeper historical meaning to the term in the academic field. One example is the Hungarian historian Emil Niederhauser, who in 1958, from a Marxist perspective, made a plea to perceive and conceptualize “Eastern Europe” as a distinct historical region with common structural features (Niederhauser 1958; 2003). This area, reaching from the Western border of “today’s Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia” to the “European part of the zone of Russian settlement,” had been, according to Niederhauser, strongly influenced since the Middle Ages by similar historical developments: Eastern Europe might be characterized first as a realm of Slavic settlement and—even more importantly—as a sphere of belated historical development. “Historical backwardness is a very significant feature of Eastern European development,” claimed Niederhauser (1958, 360). Apparently this way of historical reasoning and thinking had adherents in the countries of the Socialist bloc until the 1980s. Iván T. Berend, another Hungarian historian, claimed as late as 1986 that “Eastern Europe has evolved not in four decades but over the centuries” (Berend 1986).



In Western Europe, too, the idea that the countries of the Socialist bloc had a century-old common history was very popular after 1945. Nevertheless, a consensus concerning where to draw the boundaries of a historical mesoregion "Eastern Europe" and how to define its structural specificities was hard to find. On the one hand, there were proponents of the concept of Eastern Europe as a space of "backwardness," reaching from Poland in the West to the Soviet Union in the East (Chirot 1989). Apart from this rather vague definition, we can find a competing model of Eastern Europe in the English academic discourse, referring to those countries located between Germany and Russia that gained independence shortly before or after World War I (Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia) (Kaser and Radice 1985). This definition of Eastern Europe as an area of newly (or re)established nation-states after the fall of the empires of the Romanovs, Habsburgs, Hohenzollerns, and Ottomans is still very popular in English-speaking academic discourse today (Held 1992; Berglund and Aarebrot 1997).

In West-German historiography, the tradition of *Ostforschung*, stressing the entanglement of East European and German history and portraying Eastern Europe as a space of German destiny, could be felt until the 1990s (see, e.g., the series *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas* [Boockmann, Buchholz, and Conze 1992–2002]). One example of this is the German sociologist and theorist of nationalism Eugen Lemberg, who in 1950 published a collection of lectures on "Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union" (Lemberg 1950). "Eastern Europe" is presented here as a counter-concept to "the West" (*Abendland*), a space with vague boundaries (either space "behind the Iron Curtain" or the USSR) and populated by "Eastern Europeans" (*Osteuropäer*). This type, writes Lemberg, of the "man of the East" (*Mensch des Ostens*) has been influenced neither by the philosophy of the Western Middle Ages nor by the Renaissance or the Enlightenment. He was not trained in logical and rational thinking and is not emancipated. Here [i.e., in Eastern Europe] the individual is not standing in the center of the world, [the individual] is not the origin of reasoning. The individual is not as important as it is in the West. Due to this fact we can find an astonishing readiness to die among Eastern Europeans" (Lemberg 1950, 18).

Since the 1960s and 1970s, a new generation of German scholars has made a strong effort to give a new, scientific meaning to the notion of Eastern Europe in the academic discourse. Most prominently, the historian Klaus Zernack (1977, 31–66) presented Eastern Europe as a historical mesoregion comprising four subregions: "Eastern Central Europe" (*Ostmitteleuropa*), "Southeastern Europe" (*Südosteuropa*), "Northeastern Europe" (*Nordosteuropa*) and "Russia/Eastern Europe in the narrower sense" (*Osteuropa im en-*

*geren Sinne*). Eastern Europe has a double meaning in Zernack's definition. In the first and broader sense, it encompasses the whole area of Halecki's "new Europe"—that is, those regions beyond the Eastern border of the empire of Charlemagne, which, after the ninth century, became objects of Christianization and state/nation-building. "Eastern Europe" is understood here as a dynamic mesoregion, a "Europe-in-the-making," or a region "growing into Europe" (Zernack 1977: 30). On the other hand, "Eastern Europe in a narrower sense" is identical with Russia or a geographical and political space that had been influenced for centuries by Russian Orthodoxy, Russian language, and Russian imperial rule (Zernack 1977, 59–61).

In the 1980s, a number of outstanding intellectuals from Central Europe fundamentally challenged the imagined bipolar division of Europe into a Western and an Eastern bloc. Intellectuals from Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia refused to accept the idea that their countries should now belong to a politically and ideologically defined Eastern Europe. Most prominently, in his famous essay of 1984 the Czech writer Milan Kundera bemoaned the "tragedy of Central Europe," making a strong plea to mentally disassociate Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, and the other people of this "kidnapped Occident" from Russia and the Soviet Union (Kundera 1984; see also chapter 8 in this volume). In the intellectual debate triggered by Kundera and other intellectuals, "Eastern Europe," and most prominently Russia, served as Central Europe's constituting Other (Neumann 1993). Stressing the legacy of the schism of 1054, Kundera wrote, "'Geographic Europe' (extending from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains) was always divided into two halves which evolved separately: one tied to ancient Rome and the Catholic Church, the other anchored in Byzantium and the Orthodox Church. After 1945, the border between the two Europes shifted several hundred kilometers to the west, and several nations that had always considered themselves to be Western woke up to discover that they were now in the East" (Kundera 1984, 33). Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary were, from Kundera's perspective, undoubtedly part of "the West": "On the eastern border of the West—more than anywhere else—Russia is seen not just as one more European power but as an *other* civilization" (34). The "totalitarian Russian civilization is the radical negation of the modern West" (37).

Alongside the debate among philosophers and writers, Central European historians, most prominently the Hungarian Jenő Szűcs in the 1980s, promoted the idea of a tripartite Europe consisting of a Western, a Central, and an Eastern historical mesoregion (Szűcs 1988; idem 1990). Thus he followed the paths trodden by Polish, Czech, and Hungarian intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, like Halecki, István Bibó, and others. Focusing on historical structures of *longue durée* from the Middle Ages to

modernity, Szűcs developed a scheme of five European mesoregions: Scandinavian Northern Europe, Mediterranean Southern Europe, Western Europe, Central Europe, and Eastern Europe. Focusing on the latter three entities, he portrayed Eastern Europe as the continent's most "non-Western" historical mesoregion. Here neither the differentiation of state and society nor the division of ecclesiastical and governmental powers took place. After the partition of Poland and Russia's expansion to the West in the late eighteenth century, "the homogeneous entity of Eastern Europe [from the White Sea in the North to the Black and the Caspian Seas of the South, from the lands of Poland in the West to the Ural Mountains in the East] had finally taken shape (in order to merge immediately with the term 'Russia')" (Szűcs 1990, 16–17). The historical mesoregion of Central Europe, which Szűcs was most interested in, was attributed a "middle position" between the "Western and the Eastern model" (see chapter 8 in this volume).

### **Epilogue: Remapping Eastern Europe after 1989/1991**

After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the concept of Eastern Europe experienced yet another fundamental change in its long history. Joining NATO and the European Union between 1999 and 2004, the countries of Central Europe succeeded in escaping a politically defined Eastern Europe. This shift in the geopolitical order of Europe did not leave mental maps in Western countries untouched. Academic institutions that had studied the history and social developments of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for decades now experienced a deep crisis of identity (Creuzberger 2000). As a consequence, both in the United States and in Western Europe governmental funding was substantially relocated from interdisciplinary area studies on Eastern Europe to other areas of research. Meanwhile, the breakup of the communist bloc in 1989 pushed the Russian and the East European academic fields apart. A large number of research centers and academic journals that previously focused on Eastern Europe and the countries of the Soviet bloc now are interested in "Eurasian studies" (van Hagen 2004; see also chapter 10 in this volume). Nevertheless, the notion of Eastern Europe has not disappeared from our mental maps. It has survived for example in the idea of a cultural sphere of "orthodoxy," which Samuel Huntington has described as one of the world's pertinent and competing "civilizations" (Huntington 1993; 1996). In the academic field, Eastern Europe has been newly conceptualized as a space of Jewish history and living area of Eastern European Jews (The YIVO Encyclopedia). Moreover, Eastern Europe can still be regarded as a highly important Other in debates of collective identity in Central Europe, for example in Poland (Marung

2010). Last but not least, the notion of Eastern Europe has itself become an object of historical analysis in the last decades, both in Western and in Eastern Europe (Wolff 1994; Neumann 1996; Schenk 2002 and 2013). In fact, this short overview of the emergence, usages, and various meanings of the term “Eastern Europe” can be regarded as part of this most recent shift in the concept’s long and multifaceted history.

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## Chapter 10

# Eurasia

*Mark Bassin*



The notion of a geographical entity called “Eurasia” was first articulated in the nineteenth century. Lexically, the term is a combination of “Europe” and “Asia,” and it was originally formulated to refer to the greater territorial land-mass that contained these latter two entities. Yet despite the fact that, from a strictly scientific standpoint, Eurasia had a better-founded claim to the status of continent than either Europe or Asia proper, the latter two proved to be far too loaded with cultural-historical, political, and ideological significations to be overcome or replaced very easily. The result was that Eurasia as a continental concept remained on the perceptual margins, not widely used, and relevant only in certain specialized usages. Although these usages have substantially broadened and multiplied since the 1980s, “Eurasia” still remains an exotic and vague term. Nevertheless, the present chapter will argue that the various articulations and deployments of “Eurasia” have played a significant role in shaping the perceptual metageographies through which we conceptualize global spaces and imbue them with subjective meaning and purpose (Lewis and Wigen 1997; Korhonen 2011).

### The Origins of Eurasia

The idea of the continents was first formulated by ancient Greek geographers, who understood them as major landmasses set apart by bodies of water. They identified the continents of Africa, Europe, and Asia, and believed that the latter two were separated by a river, Tanais, which was supposed to flow southwards from headwaters in the Arctic to empty into the Sea of Azov (Parker 1960, 278; Tozer 1964, 67–69; Bassin 1991b, 2). The fact that there was no river Tanais as the Greeks imagined it and that Europe and Asia were

in fact territorially contiguous became increasingly apparent from the early modern period. By the nineteenth century, the point could no longer be ignored, and it became increasingly common for natural scientists to point out that physiographically Europe represented not a continent but “merely” an extrusion or peninsula at the westernmost extremity of the Asiatic landmass (e.g., Krause 1819, 251–62; Humboldt 1845–47, I: 308, 350–51; Hahn 1881, 83–84;). Indeed, the geomorphologist Oskar Peschel remarked that he could tolerate the continued designation of Europe as a continent not as scientific fact but only as a “courtesy” (Peschel 1870, 153, 167).

This skepticism culminated in the 1880s, when the Austrian geologist Eduard Suess declared that the landmass shared by Europe and Asia properly represented a single unified geographical continent, which he christened *Eur-asien*, or Eurasia. Suess’s scientific arguments were based on historical reconstructions of the geological evolution and tectonic movement of the earth’s crust (Suess 1908–09, vol. 1, 768–74; Greene 1982, 144–91). This discovery of a new continental landmass did not undermine the metageographical legitimacy and significance of Europe and Asia, as already noted. It did however allow questions about their continental status to be raised, questions which took on a direct relevance for certain nineteenth- and twentieth-century discourses. It was in these discourses that the ideological potential of the novel concept of Eurasia first became apparent.

## The Discovery of a Middle World

Since the Petrine revolution of the early eighteenth century, the identity of Russia as a European empire enjoyed the status of an official dogma (Groh 1961; Neumann 1996; Bassin 2006). It was one of the chief ideologues of this revolution, Vasilii Tatishchev, who in the 1730s was the first to propose the Ural mountain range to replace the apocryphal Tanais as the genuine Europe–Asia boundary. This new perspective provided a vital natural-geographical justification for Russia’s new Eurocentric perspective—and established a cardinal metageographical landmark that endures to the present day. The core historical territories of the Russian nation west of the Urals were thus located securely in Europe, while the Russian “colony” of Siberia to the east was consigned to Asia (Tatishchev 1950; 1979; Ditmar 1958; Bassin 1991a). With the emergence of a nationalist movement in the course of the nineteenth century, however, these assumptions about Russia’s natural European identity came under increasing scrutiny. As the new ideas about a single Euro-Asian landmass began to circulate in Russia, they quickly attracted the nationalists’ attention (*Russkii Entsiklopedicheski Slovar* 1874, 599; A[nuchin] 1894; “Evraziia” 1905).

In his manifesto *Russia and Europe*—one of the most important nineteenth-century statements of Russian nationalism—Nikolai Danilevskii embraced the new geographical picture of Euro-Asiatic unity, taking particular delight in its explicit demotion of the status of Europe as an independent continent. These points were repeated three decades later by Vladimir Lamanskii, who began his own tract, *The Three Worlds of the Asiatic-European Continent*, with the following words: “Properly speaking, Europe is a peninsula of Asia.” Together, he asserted, the two comprise a single unified “Asian-European continent” (Lamanskii [1892] 1916, 1–2; Danilevskii [1871] 1895, 58–59). This new picture of geographical cohesion meant that Tatishchev’s identification of the Ural mountains as a natural boundary separating Europe and Asia was a patent fiction (Danilevskii [1871] 1895, 56–57). Beyond the point about the natural unity of the greater Eurasian continent, however, these nationalists were much more interested in the perceptual repartitioning of Eurasia’s interior space that this unity made possible, and they ultimately developed an entirely new geographical vision for Russia based on it (Ulunian 2000). In this vision, the notions of Europe and Asia were retained, but the traditional bipartite arrangement was replaced with a tripartite scheme, in which a third subcontinental region was inserted in between to create the “three worlds” referred to by Lamanskii. Like the geological concept of Eurasia itself, this middle zone was described as an objective natural-geographical region, formed by physical features in the natural environment. These were the vast lowland regions on either side of the Ural Mountains: the East European plain to the west and the West Siberian plain to the east. The nationalists maintained that these represented two adjacent sections of a single cohesive lowland space, running from the borderlands on the western reaches of the empire all the way to the Yenisei River and the Altai Mountains in Siberia. The essential natural unity of this landmass was not disrupted by the Ural Mountains or any other topographic feature (Danilevskii [1871] 1895, 21–22, 133, 531–32; Lamanskii [1892] 1916, 9, 17–20; Lamanskii 1871, 42).

In this way, the natural-geographical idea of Eurasia as a continent made it possible to begin to envision a new demarcation of Russian national space as a differentiated and autonomous geographical unit within it. The parameters of this new unit, however, remained highly imprecise. It was clearly less than the Russian empire in toto, large parts of which—in the Far East and Central Asia or Turkestan—continued to be seen as Asian colonial territories external to the genuine cultural-historical space of the Russian middle world (Danilevskii [1871] 1895, 133; Lamanskii [1892] 1916, 12, 15–17, 48, 50–51; Ulunian 2000, 66–67). The middle-world idea was reformulated during World War I by Veniamin Semenov-Tian-Shanskii (1915), a noted geographer and close associate of Lamanskii. Semenov-Tian-Shanskii followed his predecessors in

rejecting the “artificial” division of the country into European and Asiatic sections along the Ural Mountains, arguing that Russia needed to overcome this bifurcation through an ambitious program of integrated industrial and demographic development of what he called the “geographical center” of the country. Like Danilevskii, Semenov-Tian-Shanskii left the precise boundaries of his middle world unspecified; unlike his predecessor, however, he gave this region a name: *rusaskaia Evraziia*, or Russian Eurasia (Semenov-Tian-Shanskii [1917] 2008, 146–47; Wiederkehr 2007, 36n).

### The Dialectics of Eurasian Space

Around the same time that Lamanskii and Semenov-Tian-Shanskii were busy re-envisioning Russia’s place a newly-conceived “Asian-European continent,” the notion of Eurasia made its fateful appearance in fin-de-siècle Anglo-American geopolitical discourses. The latter were stimulated by the contest between the imperial Great Powers, in particular the so-called “Great Game” competition for territorial advantage in Asia. In these discourses, the contending expansionist ambitions of the day were essentialized as expressions of age-old rivalries between land- and sea-based power, continental and maritime states (Mahan 1890; Schmitt [1942] 1981; Stevens 2009; Connery 2001; Iliopoulos 2009; Laak 2000). From the standpoint of maritime Western powers, continentality per se was a geostrategic menace, and insofar as the Russian empire was the most continental power of all, it correspondingly represented the greatest menace. Writing in 1900, the American admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan pointed out that the Russian empire’s unique territorial contiguity gifted it “a pre-eminence which approaches exclusiveness,” with immense strategic advantages for its further expansion across Asia (Mahan 1900, 24–26, 47; Spang 2013, 225).

The geopolitical vision developed by the British political geographer and parliamentarian Halford Mackinder was to prove far more significant. As with the Russians, for Mackinder the prospect of a geographically cohesive Eurasian continent enabled a radical revisioning and repartitioning of its internal geographical space (Parker 1982; Blouet 1987; 2005; Kennedy 1983; Kearns 2009). Mackinder (1904: 429, 431; 1919, 95–96) accepted the traditional bifurcation of the “continuous land-mass of Euro-Asia” but argued that this bifurcation was not between Europe and Asia per se, but rather corresponded to the land-sea juxtaposition just described (see also Coones 2005, 68). On the one hand was Eurasia’s (continental) “central area” or “core,” and on the other its (maritime) “marginal lands.” The former represented “a great continuous patch in the north and center of the [Eurasian] continent,” comprising the basins of the Volga, Ural, Ob, Irtysh, Yenisei, Lena, Syr Darya,

and Amu Darya rivers. This massive zone was defined by two geographical characteristics. First, it was drained exclusively by rivers flowing either into closed inland seas (Caspian and Aral) or the ice-bound waters of the Arctic, a geographical configuration that provided a highly-effective natural shield rendering the region invulnerable to incursion from the world's oceans. Second, Mackinder (1943, 598) echoed the Russians in describing this region as the "widest lowland plain on the face of the globe," which in earlier historical periods had provided a natural arena for the emergence and flourishing of great armies of mounted nomad warriors. Mackinder (1904, 429; 1919: 96ff.) called this core region the "Heartland" or "pivot region." Arranged in a rough continuous arc around it, to the west, south, and east, were the so-called marginal lands of the Eurasian continent: Europe, Arabia, India, and China. Mackinder referred to these collectively as the "Inner Crescent." Together, the Heartland and Inner Crescent comprised the totality of the greater Eurasian continent, and formed what he called the "World-Island." The remaining regions of the globe—North and South America, sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and the insular states of Britain and Japan—represented a maritime "Outer Crescent" (Mackinder 1904, 433).

Over two millennia, Mackinder maintained, Eurasian history had been conditioned by the land-sea dialectic between its two component zones. The maritime civilizations of the Inner Crescent were repeatedly subjected to destructive incursions by land-based nomadic armies (Mackinder 1904, 423, 426–27), a struggle that came to an end only in the early modern period when the ascendant maritime powers of the West were finally able to establish the supremacy of the sea over "Euro-Asiatic landpower" (Mackinder 1904, 433). In the present day, however, Mackinder—contrary to Mahan and others—believed that this predominance was being challenged by the reassertion of land-based power from the Pivot Region. Eurasia's Heartland—richly endowed with natural and population resources—enjoyed the decisive geo-strategic advantage of continentality, protecting it effectively from external maritime intervention. Mackinder reckoned that if a land-based power could organize these still-undeveloped spaces effectively by building a modern transport infrastructure and fostering settlement, agriculture, and industry, the Eurasian Heartland could become an invincible bastion which no combination of sea power could challenge.

It was even conceivable, he reasoned further, that the natural opposition between maritime and land-based power across greater Eurasia could in future be neutralized through some sort of combination of the Heartland and Inner Crescent to create a single trans-Eurasian power. Such an entity would not only enjoy the strategic advantages of continentality but could additionally deploy the resources of the Heartland for the massive development of

naval forces along Eurasia's maritime margins. In time, such a conglomerate power would become truly invulnerable to any external intervention from the powers of the Outer Crescent. In this case, he observed in 1904, "the empire of the world would then be in sight" (Mackinder 1904, 436; 1919, 91–92). Fifteen years later, he summarized the danger programmatically in a famous geopolitical dictum:

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;  
Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;  
Who rules the World-Island controls the world. (Mackinder 1919, 194)

With all this, Mackinder had launched two radically new ideas. On the one hand was the notion that the continental landmass of greater Eurasia had the potential to operate as a consolidated strategic actor powered by an irrepressible geopolitical synergy between its two principal parts. On the other was the implication that such a Eurasian conglomerate would be no mere Great Power, but could combine its land- and sea-based resources to achieve world domination. At the turn of the century Mackinder—impressed by and apprehensive about Russia's completion of the Trans-Siberian railway in 1902—believed that the latter might emerge as the leading agent of such a strategic consolidation. At the end of World War I, however, he reassigned the role of geopolitical "organizer" of Eurasian space to Germany, which he believed capable of quickly reemerging after its defeat in 1918 (Mackinder 1919, 212). The imperative, therefore, was a postwar arrangement that would prevent a German-Russian amalgamation—a challenge met by the Treaty of Versailles with the establishment of a *cordon sanitaire* of independent states across Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Mediterranean (Mackinder 1919, 193–94, 204–8).

## The Russian Middle World Becomes Eurasia

The dislocations of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 accelerated the engagement of Russian nationalist discourse with the Eurasia concept. This was apparent most significantly in a political and cultural movement developed by émigré Russian nationalists in the early 1920s. These nationalists shared the hostility to Europe of their nineteenth-century predecessors and similarly believed that the Petrine notion of Russia as a European country was based on bogus geographical assumptions. Indeed, they advertised the importance of the new ideas about Eurasian space in the very name they gave to their movement: *evraziistvo*, or Eurasianism (Böss 1961; Laruelle 2008; Wiederkehr 2007; Shlapentokh 2007; Bassin et. al. 2015). In the writings of Petr Savitskii—a brilliant economic geographer and one of Eurasianism's princi-

pal exponents—the geographical arguments of the Pan-Slavs were repeated virtually point by point. Because Europe was not a physical-geographical continent distinct from Asia, there was no geographical or natural division that divided Russia into European and Asian parts, at the Urals or indeed anywhere else (Savitskii 1927, 27). Rather, Russia represented a cohesive and self-contained continental zone between Europe and Asia, a “special and integral geographical world” (Savitskii 1927, 25–26).

Yet where the nationalists of the nineteenth century had viewed the Russian middle world as a component part of a greater Eurasian landmass, the Eurasianists appropriated the term *Evrāziia* for exclusive reference to Russia alone, and Semenov-Tian-Shanskii’s “Russian Eurasia” (*russkaia Evraziia*) was reformulated as “Russia-Eurasia” (*Rossia-Evrāziia*) (*Evrāziistvo* 1926; Tsymburskii 1998: 8–9). The geographical boundaries of this Russian-Eurasian middle world, moreover, were significantly expanded to become more-or-less congruent with the political boundaries of the late-imperial Russian and—from the mid-1920s—Soviet states. This was a substantial departure from Danilevskii and his contemporaries, and Savitskii and the Eurasianists supported it with an argument for the geographical unity of Russia-Eurasia which drew on the research into natural or ecological zones in Russia by the nineteenth-century soil scientist V. V. Dokuchaev (1899; 1904; see also Savitskii 1927, 52). This biogeographical approach meant, among other things, that Turkestan, which had been excluded from the nineteenth-century vision of middle-world Russia, was now explicitly included.

This new geographical picture of Russia as Eurasia provided the basis for a radical reinterpretation of Russian civilization *tout court*. The latter now represented an autonomous historical, political, and cultural complex, which had developed out of a protracted period of homogenization with the other peoples of the Eurasian “melting pot” (*assimiliatsionnyi kotel*) (Chkhaidze 1931, 113). The Eurasianists identified a broad spectrum of affinities that marked the blending of these groups into a single entity, from a shared historical heritage—what Nikolai Trubetskoi called the “legacy of Genghis Khan”—to common patterns of folk culture, philological borrowings, and ethnographic affinities (Trubetskoi 1925; Chkhaidze 1931, 113). The product was a new vision of Russia as a geohistorical, geopolitical, and geocultural entity, for which Savitskii invented an entirely new term: *mestorazvitie* or “topogenesis” (Savitskii 1927, 28–33).

To an extent, Russian Eurasianism was endorsed the same maritime-continental dialectic that animated the Anglo-American geopolitical imagination, in particular that of Mackinder (Savitskii 1921, 9; 1922, 355; Tsymburskii 1998, 10–11; Chinyaeva 2001, 206–8; Bassin and Aksenov 2006; Wiederkehr 2007, 80–81, 83; Bassin 2010). Thus, Russia-Eurasia was seen



as a “state-continent” (*gosudarstvo-materik*) and a continental “world unto itself” (*mir-v-sebe*) that remained completely “closed” (*zamknutyi*) to maritime influences from without (Savitskii 1927, 33ff, 49–51, 53–57; Alekseev [1931] 1998, 408–13; *Evrasiistvo* 1926, 110). But the Eurasianists had no idea of geopolitical synergy across the greater continent, and lacked any Mackinderian appreciation of greater Eurasia’s world-hegemonic potential. Very much to the contrary, their Eurasianism was a doctrine of political and economic isolationism, and it remained manifestly uninterested in any Great-Power imperial advantage beyond Russia’s borders. Indeed, the thinking of the Eurasianists was more influenced by interwar *étatist* theories of self-sufficiency and state autarchy: German ideas about *Mitteleuropa*, but also the Stalinist doctrine of “socialism in a single country.” The imperative for Russia-Eurasia, consequently, was not further imperial expansion but rather national integration and retrenchment within Russia-Eurasia’s vast, but clearly delimited, continental space (Savitskii 1921; 1932).

### A Eurasian Kontinentalblock

Mackinder’s speculations about land and sea power and the geopolitical dynamics of Eurasian space resonated in Germany as well, but they did so in an inverted manner. Where Mackinder feared the rise of a greater Eurasian conglomerate, the Germans were apprehensive of the danger of maritime encirclement and encroachment by their rivals Britain and the United States (Ratzel 1900). The sense of geostrategic vulnerability was kept very much alive in the interwar period, stimulated among others by the exhortations of the Bavarian geopolitician Karl Haushofer. Haushofer made no secret of his admiration for Mackinder’s analyses of Eurasian geopolitics (Jacobsen 1979), but the political conclusions he drew were precisely the opposite. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, he vigorously advocated the adoption of an *Überkontinentalpolitik*, or “Eurasian supercontinental politics,” dedicated precisely to the consolidation of the greater Eurasian continent into the *Eurasienblock* or single power unit (Haushofer 1925, 87; 1979, 629; Spang 2013, 341, 352–53; Ostrovsky n.d., 14–15) that Mackinder had warned against. The core of this bloc would be formed by its two “spatially strongest (*raumstärksten*) peoples,” Germany and Russia (Haushofer [1940] 1979, 622; Rukavitsyn 2008, 115–16; Spang 1999). Such a combination would provide *Raumtiefe*, or “depth-in-space,” enabling Germany’s “liberation” from the “anaconda politics” of maritime encirclement by Britain and the United States (Haushofer [1940] 1979, 629–30; Schnitzer 1955, 414). After 1933, the vision of a continental Eurasian block was taken up by the Nazi leadership (Koch 1983, 894, 911–12), and was a key factor in the conclusion of both the nonaggression pact

with the USSR of August 1939 as well as the Tripartite alliance (Berlin Pact) with Italy and Japan the following September.

Haushofer and many others understandably viewed the German invasion of the USSR in the summer of 1941 as a fatal betrayal of an *Überkontinentalpolitik*. Historians have suggested, however, that Hitler's aggression was in fact aimed at the consolidation of the Eurasian continent in a different form: not as an alliance between partners but as a continental empire (*Kontinentalimperium*) dominated by Germany alone. Hitler not only accepted the geopolitical reasoning that Germany's maritime enemies could be resisted only through the creation of a Eurasian land empire (Michaelis 1972, 340), but effectively embraced Mackinder's conclusions regarding the potential for global domination that German control of the Heartland could provide. "The struggle for world hegemony," he declared in September 1941, would be decided in favor of a German-dominated Europe "by the possession of Russian space" (Michaelis 1972, 350–51; Hillgruber 1980, 345; Hauner 1991, 270). Hitler's disagreement with his diplomats and geopoliticians related not to the geopolitical dynamics of Eurasia but rather to the Führer's confidence that the racial superiority of the German people combined with the ideological superiority of National Socialism would enable German forces to challenge Russian domination over these spaces and impose their own control instead (Michaelis 1972, 340).

## Eurasia in American Cold War Discourses

The Nazi drive to establish a continental Eurasian empire served to bring the prospect of Eurasia sharply to the attention of the Americans, who up to that point had showed very little interest. Mackinder's work itself was belatedly discovered (Mackinder 1942; 1943) and his ideas were further developed by Nicholas Spykman, a political scientist at Yale. Spykman repeated the essential contours of Mackinder's bifurcation of the geopolitical map of Eurasia, but he renamed Mackinder's "Inner Crescent" the Eurasian "Rimland" and argued that it represented at once Eurasia's most vulnerable and its most vital zone (Spykman 1944, 35–44). After the war, he maintained, the Rimland would be the arena for the coming struggle over control of the greater Eurasian continent, a struggle that would be waged between the powers of the Heartland and the Outer Crescent. His rephrasing of Mackinder—"Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia / Who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world"—was intended to point the way clearly to the interventionist role that the United States would be called upon to play in this geopolitical contest. Like Mackinder, Spykman was preoccupied above all with the hegemonic power potential of a united and hostile Eurasian

continent, and the latter's recommendation echoed that of the former: the domination of a single power over the Eurasian continent must be prevented by reestablishing a balance of power across it (Spykman 1944, 60–61; 1942, 460–61).

In this way, the exotic concept of Eurasia had by war's end acquired a central operational significance for the Americans, and it was to figure fundamentally in their strategic thinking throughout the postwar period (Lefler 1984, 356n; Harper 1994, 40–42, 50). For the influential diplomat and scholar George Kennan, the greatest global threat to American security was precisely the geostrategic consolidation of the Eurasian continent described by Mackinder and Spykman. "[I]t is essential to us," he maintained, "that no single Continental land power should come to dominate the entire Eurasian land mass." Should "the powers of the [Eurasian] interior ... conquer the seafaring fringes of the [entire] land mass [and] become a great sea power as well as land power," the resulting entity would inevitably initiate a process of "overseas expansion hostile to ourselves" (Kennan 1952, 10–11). The only way to prevent this, Kennan famously insisted, was for the United States to resist the USSR on every front through a policy of "long-term, patient but firm and vigilant *containment* of Russian expansive tendencies" (Mr. X [Kennan] 1947, 575). Writing at the same time as Kennan, George Orwell gave this enemy Eurasia a demonic public face in his dystopic novel *1984*, behind which the Mackinderian inspiration was unmistakable. "Protected by its vast land spaces," Orwell's Eurasia was home to hordes of unspeakably brutal soldiers, with "monstrous figures" and "expressionless Mongolian faces" (Orwell 2013, 131, 172, 216).

The policy of containment, organized around the specter of Eurasia as a hostile continent-hegemon dominated by the Soviet Union, provided the basic framework for American—and by extension Western—grand strategy for the ensuing four decades. The day-to-day practice of containment varied significantly over time, but the basic orientation remained essentially unchanged right down to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thus, the national security strategy statements prepared by the Reagan White House in the late 1980s repeatedly emphasized the centrality of Eurasia to American interests, and indeed in terms that were transparently Mackinderian ( "National Security Strategy" 1987, 4, 27, 28, 30, 38; "National Security Strategy" 1988, 8, 19, 20; Walt 1989, 13, 33). Zbigniew Brzezinski, who served as National Security Advisor from 1977 to 1981, declared that the "struggle for Eurasia" was the central priority in the contest between the Soviet Union and the United States, and that the primary challenge for the United States was to "prevent Eurasia's domination by one power." The only way to avoid this, he admonished, was to block Soviet expansionism through a renewed program of con-

tainment (Brzezinski 1986, 30–31, 41–52, 215, 230, 146, 259; Kearns 2009, 225–29).

## Eurasia after Communism

The end of the Cold War witnessed the abrupt collapse of the bipolar contest of superpowers. The profound geopolitical transformations which this engendered served to accelerate a fundamental epistemological shift that was already taking place in the way that the traditional concepts of Europe and Asia were understood. As we have pointed out, the reality of a geographically unified greater Eurasian continent had never really undermined older ideas about its component parts Europe and Asia. Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, however, the traditional valorization of Europe and Asia began to be critically scrutinized, with Edward Said and others now rejecting it as a biased and even contrived metageographical discourse that needed to be deconstructed and rethought (Said 1978; Wolff 1994; Todorova 1997; Lewis and Wigen 1997). The emergence of former colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas as dynamic new arenas of development and modernity, moreover, provided a completely novel context for the revalorization of these regions and their patterns of interactions with other parts of the world. Taken together, these circumstances created what was effectively a perfect storm for the reconceptualization of the notion of Eurasia. The results have been striking, as a hitherto exotic but obscure designation quickly became a popular toponym of choice. “Suddenly,” one observer remarked with some astonishment, “Eurasia is everywhere” (Kotkin 2007, 487).

To be sure, the Cold War specter of Eurasia as a geopolitical hegemon did not disappear immediately. Mackinder’s and Spykman’s works were reissued in fresh editions, and there was considerable interest in keeping their legacy alive (Mackinder 1996; Spykman 2007; Megoran 2004; Megoran et al. 2005; Hess 2004, 105; Sengupta 2009; Petersen 2010; 2011, 157; Kaplan 2012). But even Zbigniew Brzezinski was now constrained to concede that with the passing of the Cold War, the old Mackinderian prospect of Eurasia’s consolidation under a single power had become illusory. “[T]he new reality is that no one power can any longer seek—in Mackinder’s words—to ‘rule’ Eurasia and thus to ‘command’ the world.” In the world of today, he concluded, Eurasia is simply “too big to be politically one” (Brzezinski 2012, 130–31; see also Brzezinski 1997, 31; 2000; Kaplan 2009, 101; “Interview: Zbigniew Brzezinski” 2012).

While the potency of greater Eurasia as a hegemonic World-Island has waned, however, the dynamism of an inner-continental core region has been rediscovered, and it is for the most part in this latter sense that the term Eur-

asia found its new popularity after 1989. This process began in earnest in the former Soviet Union. Classical Eurasianism had been denounced as a “bourgeois nationalism” in the USSR, and “Eurasia” was used exclusively in reference to the greater continental entity comprising Europe and Asia (Vakhrameev and Meien 1970). While a very few disaffected Soviet intellectuals, most notably the historian and geographer Lev Gumilev, remained ideologically committed to the Eurasianist legacy (Gumilev 1993a; 1993b; Bassin 2007; 2009; 2016), it was only with the dislocation and turbulence of the 1990s that the interwar vision of Russia-Eurasia began to attract serious attention. Once again it appealed to nationalist tendencies, in this case those seeking a new vision of Russia no longer reliant on Marxist rationales but which retained a clear sense of the country’s greatness and geopolitical power. Like the classical Eurasianists, the “neo-Eurasianists” refused to accept the geopolitical fragmentation of the Soviet state and sought a legitimizing rationale for its reassembly (Kerr 1995; Bassin 2008). The original notion of Russia as Eurasia—a cohesive middle continent between Europe and Asia, whose member nations shared the same unique civilizational identity—seemed ideally suited for these purposes. From the outset, the most important prophet of neo-Eurasianism has been Aleksandr Dugin, a prolific writer and political commentator who came ideologically from the radical right. Dugin enthusiastically promoted the legacy of classical Eurasianism, and called for the reestablishment of the Russian imperial and Soviet states in the form of a mighty Eurasian empire (Dunlop 2001; Kipp 2002; Höllwerth 2007).

Eurasianism has also been taken up in various other parts of the former Soviet Union, most significantly in the newly-independent state of Kazakhstan. There, President Nursultan Nazarbaev shares the vision of Eurasia as a civilizational zone distinct from Europe and Asia, encompassing the territories and peoples of the former Soviet Union, and he also supports their recombination into some sort of common economic and political entity (Nazarbaev 1995; 1996; *Evrasiistvo i Kazakhstan* 2003). As a result of his efforts over many years, an initial treaty for the establishment of a “Eurasian Economic Community” was signed between Kazakhstan, Belarus, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in 2000, and ten years later a customs union was formed between the first three. Campaigning for a third presidential term in the autumn of 2011, Vladimir Putin declared that the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union would represent the major foreign-policy priority of his administration (Clover et al. 2011; Putin 2011). While the ultimate success of this complicated project remains highly uncertain, Putin’s endorsement served to normalize and officially legitimize the concept of Eurasia as a reference for the collective nations of the former Soviet Union (Ersen 2004; Markedonov 2012; Pryce 2013). Beyond the former Soviet Union, moreover, the

ideas of Eurasia and Eurasianism have been used in nationalist discourses in Turkey, as part of the perceptual repositioning of the country between the West, Russia, and Asia after the Cold War (Kotkin 2007, 495–96; Laruelle 2008, 188–201; Ersen 2013).

The dissolution of the Soviet Union also led to a sort of parallel discovery of Eurasia in the West, where the term is used most commonly in reference to the Eurasia of the Eurasianists: the vast middle zone comprising the traditional spaces of the Russian and Soviet empires. In contrast to Russia, however, the new Western—above all American—interest was sparked not by nationalist revanchism but by an entirely practical quandary. After 1991, the term “Soviet” could no longer be used in those myriad governmental and educational institutions that had divisions or programs organized on the basis of the Soviet structure but—unlike the peoples of the USSR itself—did not necessarily want to break into separate entities. For many, the most elegant solution was the untried and exotic toponym “Eurasia.” The general unfamiliarity of the term was not a problem—indeed, it was precisely the absence of any preconceptions on the part of Western audiences about where or what Eurasia actually was that made it so useful for this new purpose. The United States government adjusted its own use of the term accordingly, and from the early 1990s used “Eurasia” in specific reference to the former Soviet Union (“National Security Strategy” 1993 and 2006).

“Eurasia” has also been taken up by Western academics who believe that this unconventional toponym can help transcend restricting metageographical categorizations: not only Europe and Asia, but even more general associations of East and West, North and South. Heralded by some as a bright new “paradigm,” by others as an equally promising “anti-paradigm,” the transnational concept of Eurasia appears to some to enable a better integrated and more evenly balanced perspective with which to frame the historical or contemporary study of the peoples and regions of the former Soviet Union, or even of the entire postcommunist second world (Von Hagen 2004; Spivak et al. 2006; Suchland 2011). The awkward circumstance that in Russia itself the same term has clear revanchist and neo-imperial undertones is recognized, but for many this does not disqualify “Eurasia” for their own purposes of a liberal, inclusive, and forward-looking revisionism (Sinor 1997, 81–87; Von Hagen 2004, 455–56; Bassin 2004; Onyshkevych et al. 2007; Starr 2008; Vinokurov and Libman 2012).

The inherent specificity of this sense of “Eurasia” resonates with yet another contemporary deployment of the term, which uses “Eurasia” in reference to some sort of central zone of the greater Eurasian continent that is not congruent with Russia. Often called “Central Eurasia” or “Inner Eurasia,” this particular metageography is broadly appealing, among others for the

tradition of “Inner Asia” studies that developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Stein 1928; Lattimore 1940). There are echoes of Mackinder’s Heartland–Inner Crescent juxtaposition in the geographical contrast between “Central Eurasia” as an innercontinental region of vast lowlands on the one hand, opposed to an outlying “crust of civilization” or “Outer Eurasia” on the other (Christian 1994, 176–83; Sinor 1997, 2, 5). Central Eurasia’s historical experience is seen in Mackinderian terms as a record of historical interactions of the sedentary agrarian societies of the margins with the pastoral nomads at its center (Christian 1998; Perdue 2005; Kotkin 2007, 503n, 511n; Beckwith 2009). Beyond this, “Central Eurasia” is also widely used in reference to the contemporary world. The abundant energy and other mineral resources of the Caucasus and Central Asia serve to attract global attention to this geostrategic but politically highly unstable region (Starr 2008, 5; Pantucci and Petersen 201;). In what is frequently called a “new Great Game,” a burgeoning literature explores the rivalries developing among powers large and small, far and near, for access and influence to this “Eurasia” (Rubinstein and Smolansky 1995; Fairbanks et al. 2001; Weisbrode 2001; Edwards 2003; Amineh and Houweling 2005; Freire and Kanet 2010; Hermann and Linn 2011).

Finally, in what is perhaps Eurasia’s most genuinely radical resignification, the term is now used analytically in literal reference to the entire continent of Asia plus Europe. Practitioners of “world” or “global” or “big” history have promoted the need to view greater Eurasia in this way as a single physical entity. In particular, this geospatial shift of focus has an instrumental function within the epistemology of the world history project, by helping to transcend the limitations of national or imperial boundaries and recognize *longue durée* patterns of social and commercial interaction across global spaces (Kalivas and Martin 2008). In some cases, this perspective treats Eurasia essentially as a network or system of linkages (Dale 1994; Bentley 1998; Abu-Lughod 1998; Lieberman 1999; Gann 2003), while elsewhere greater Eurasia is considered as a cohesive historical-geographical entity—a “Eurasian ecumenical whole,” as William McNeill (1964; 1987; 1995) puts it—characterized by an enduring historical distinctiveness and a special role in global history. The importance of environmental conditions continues to be emphasized, but rather than bifurcating the continent as before these are now seen as unifying factors (Diamond 1997; Landes 1998). This notion of greater Eurasian unity is then projected onto the present and future in a body of literature dealing with the twenty-first-century economic integration of the “Eurasian ‘super-continent,’” stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean (Stokhof et al. 2004; Linn and Tiomkin 2005; Linn and Tiomkin 2006; Cho 2007; Roessler 2009; Vinokurov and Libman 2012).

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**Part II**

# **Disciplinary Traditions of Regionalization**





## Chapter 11

# European History

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While the “spatial turn” inspired whole historical subdisciplines such as medieval history, history of towns, and even regional history, it had no immediate impact on the field of European history, at least not on synthesizing works like single- or multivolume histories of Europe. Why is that so, and why at a time when other disciplines, such as, for example, historical sociology, display an intense interest in the regional dimensions of Europe, which they perceive as being constituent for Europeanness? The sociologist Johann P. Arnason (2005, 387) stated, “Regional divisions have probably been more salient and their meaning more contested in Europe than in any other part of the world. The debate on this subject is complementary to the ongoing dispute of European exceptionalism, seen as a macro-regional or civilizational feature, and it is not more likely to be settled in definitive terms.”

In Arnason’s view, in a historical perspective the mesoregional structure of Europe is one of the unique characteristics of the half-continent in comparison with other parts of Eurasia and the world—a view shared by other sociologists, such as Gerard Delanty (2013, 195–214), as well as by social anthropologists, such as Christian Giordano (2003). The latter perceives “Europe as a system of historical regions: Center, peripheries and external regions” (121) and lists, as does Delanty, “Northwestern Europe,” “Mediterranean Europe,” “Central-Eastern Europe,” “Southeastern Europe,” and “Eastern Europe” (Giordano 2003, 123–30; Delanty 2012, 9). The historicity of this mesoregional structure, according to Giordano, explains Europe’s “present socio-economic gradient” (Giordano 2003, 130). Accordingly, one would assume that historians in particular would pay attention to this specific feature of Europe’s past and present.

## Regionalization Patterns in the Historiography on Europe

In post-1945 general histories of Europe, be they monographs or collective works in one or several volumes, a focus on the historicity of its mesoregional structure is rare. Here, the presumption that historians tend to be much more explicit about the periodization patterns they apply while adopting regionalization patterns either implicitly or even without giving the issue much thought proves to be true. Obviously, historians of Europe on the one hand have a disposition to perceive “Europe” as a self-defining macroregion, while on the other they traditionally subdivide it into political units, be they empires, nations, or states. Under certain conditions, the latter are subdivided further into subnational units—that is, microregions such as “Thrace” or “Silesia.” And sometimes “Europe” is put into the context of megaregions—that is, larger units of historical analysis, such as a “European World Economy,” an “Atlantic World,” even “*the* World.” Very rarely, however, is an intermediary level between “state” and “Europe” inserted, and accordingly explicit concepts of mesoregionalizing the half-continent in historical terms—grouping societies, nations, states, etc. together—are the exception in histories of Europe.

This does not, of course, mean that the authors of this type of historiography do not mesoregionalize at all. On the contrary, in defining their macroregion “Europe,” they also tend to delineate its external borders and thereby separate it from other regions. In this context, three main concepts of “Europe” are usually present: first, the nineteenth-century Rankean concept of “*Kulturkreise*,”—Greek, Roman-Germanic, or Slavic (non)“civilizations”—is still applied in identifying a civilizational unit consisting in most instances of “Western,” “Southern,” “Northern,” and (East-)Central Europe,” yet without further distinguishing them. Second (and less frequently), a somewhat wider “Europe” is constructed, which includes the Balkans, yet excludes Russia, Turkey, and the Caucasus. And third, a geographical “Europe” “from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains” is configured. More often than not, the narrowing down applied in versions one and two is not indicated in book titles. Accordingly, the Austrian historian Gerald Stourzh, in his introduction to a seminal collection of articles on “approaches to a historiography of Europe,” criticizes “a fuzzily sliding terminology which on one occasion talks of ‘Europe’ and on another one of Western Europe” (Stourzh 2002, xvii).

An analytical tool that can function as the missing link between the levels of “state” and “Europe” is the concept of historical mesoregions. The German expert on Balkan history Holm Sundhaussen (2005, 16–17) has defined such a historical mesoregion (*Geschichtsregion*): “With regard to Europe, spaces or regions are concerned which are smaller than the continent, yet ex-

ceed in general the borders of contemporary states, i.e., spaces of a mid-level dimension, that is meso-regions. This sizing (smaller than the continent, yet larger than a contemporary state) may appear arbitrary, but has its explanation in the aim to structure Europe or its history in a readily comprehensible way along similarities and difference that have developed over long periods.” I myself have described the concept of historical mesoregions as “a historiographical method of transnational comparison with the potential for a middle range theory as well as a research strategy with built-in control mechanisms arising from a solid founding in the sources and comparison” (Troebst 2003; 2012). This method can be put in a nutshell in the following way:

The historical mesoregion is an investigative framework in the cultural sciences; it is a heuristic artifice that creates nonterritorialized units, connected by time, which cross the boundaries of state, society, nation, and civilization. Mesohistorical regions provide a working hypothesis for a comparative analysis that aims to identify and delineate specific clusters of structural characteristics over long periods. The various combinations of characteristics, rather than the individual characteristics themselves, are unique and thus cluster-specific. Thus, clusters that cover large areas during a specific epoch can be referred to as historical mesoregions. They are “fluctuating zones with fluid borders” (Strohmeyer 1999, 47), which can be structured into centers and peripheries accordingly. Here, too, the specific is unimaginable without the surroundings; one historical mesoregion can only be understood in the context of others. Correspondingly, relationism and the dependence on relationships complement the internal structure of a historical mesoregion (Troebst 2012). This approach has at least two advantages: it provides a framework for comparisons which tell us something about the specificity of Europe’s subdivisions—and thereby about Europe as such—and in didactic and mnemonic terms it reduces the complexity of a vast subject matter.

The omission of a mesoregional level by historians of Europe contrasts with the practice of other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, and even in natural sciences. This goes not only for sociologists such as Arnaon and Delanty or social anthropologists such as Giordano, but also for economists, demographers, or political scientists who frequently come up with ad hoc regionalizations like the “Blue Banana,” the “European Coal Belt,” the “Western Balkans,” or divisions of Europe according to marriage patterns, dietary habits, or types of welfare states. And weather reports feature not only West, North, East, Central, and South Europe, but also Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast Europe, as well as mesoregions such as Scandinavia, the Alpine region, or the British Isles. In doing so, meteorologists rely heavily on the concepts of geographers. In mesoregionalizing Europe, the latter operate, however, not only with geomorphological categories but

also with self-constructed and historically defined anthropomorphological “culture areas,” thereby making ample, though somewhat arbitrary, use of historiography. For example, the Austrian geographer Peter Jordan’s (2005, 167–70) “macro-division of Europe according to criteria of culture areas and without taking into account current state borders” highlights “Southern Europe,” “Western Europe,” “Northern Europe,” “Eastern Europe,” “Central Europe,” and “Southeastern Europe” as “Kulturräume Europas.” A more sophisticated example is the discussion of Europe’s internal divisions in a recent handbook by German geographers who emphasize the constructedness and ideological connotation of “culture areas” in Europe (Gebhardt, Glaser, and Lentz 2013, 17–24). In doing so, they refer to the work of Hans-Dietrich Schultz (2013), who is the author of the influential dictum “Räume sind nicht, Räume werden gemacht” (Spaces are not simply there, but constructed; 1997).

In their historicizing approach to a mesoregionalization of Europe, geographers rely not only on the concept of *Kulturkreise* or *Kulturräume*, but also on schools and traditions in European historiography that do indeed apply mesoregional concepts, but whose research results do not usually figure in general histories of Europe. Here, at least three lines of thought can be identified:

At the end of the nineteenth century, in imperial Germany and the Habsburg Empire a historical subdiscipline of *Osteuropäische Geschichte* (Eastern European History) was institutionalized for political reasons—that is, due to the rivalry with Tsarist Russia. “Osteuropa,” at the time identified with the European parts of the Russian Empire, was defined as a historical mesoregion of its own (Voigt 1994; Troebst 2013). In the interwar period, this new framing corresponded to an international discussion of historians from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany on the two competing concepts of “Slavdom” and “Eastern Europe.” The most visible participant was Oskar Halecki (Wandycz 1992). In Cold-War West Germany, adjacent mesoregions such as “East Central Europe,” “Southeastern Europe,” and “Baltic Sea Region”/“Northeastern Europe,” as well as a narrower “Eastern Europe” (meaning the East Slavic-speaking lands of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus under Soviet rule) were defined (Zernack 1977, 31–66).

While Braudel’s famous *La Méditerranée* is still considered by historians a classic work on the sixteenth century, as well as a new approach in writing the history of a European periphery, a specific “European” feature of the book is usually overlooked: in addition to defining “his” Mediterranean as a historical mesoregion *sui generis*, here Braudel also mesoregionalizes *all* of Europe. This goes not only for the two other maritime “worlds” or seascapes—the Baltic and the Black Sea—but also for what he calls the “isthmuses of Europe”—the “Russian,” “Polish,” “German,” and “French isthmus” (Braudel 1949; 1966,

188–224; see also chapter 4 in this volume). In doing so, Braudel comes up with a model of historical mesoregions of Europe that may not be of universal validity, but is apt for the whole modern period.

In 1950, Halecki published his seminal study, *The Limits and Divisions of European History*, the first attempt at a thorough mesoregionalization of Europe by historical, religious, and cultural criteria (Halecki 1950). Despite the notion of “limits” in his title, Halecki did not waste much time or energy on the perennial question of where Europe ends—on the ancient river Tanais (today’s Don), at the Ural mountain range, or elsewhere—but concentrated instead on its internal divisions, its historical mesoregions. Like others before him, he basically identified two such regions for the centuries prior to the year AD 1000—a Christian South and a pagan North. For the medieval and modern periods, however, he outlined three mesoregions: “Western,” “Central,” and “Eastern Europe,” with the “Central” one being subdivided into “West-Central” and “East-Central” halves. In 1983, following in the footsteps of Halecki and Braudel, the Hungarian historian Jenő Szűcs (1983a; 1983b) came up with a neo-Marxist mesoregional concept based on social and economic development and consisting of three core components—“Western Europe,” “East-Central Europe,” and “Eastern Europe” (plus Scandinavian and Mediterranean peripheries). It was no coincidence that the French translation of Szűcs’s essay appeared with a preface by Braudel (Braudel 1985). In contrast to Halecki, however, who stressed the similarities between his “West-Central” and “East-Central Europe,” Szűcs underlined the structural differences between his own “East-Central Europe” and both Western Europe and Russia, a.k.a. Eastern Europe. Similar tripartite models of European history were developed by Polish historians (Samsonowicz 2000; Kula 1983; Topolski 1977; Małowist 1973; see also Sosnowska 2004). Yet while at least the first two of these mesoregionalizing approaches resulted in a large number of studies carrying these concepts further, they were barely reflected in that part of international historiography which dealt with the history of Europe as a whole.

Over the last two decades, the writing of the history of Europe has become the object of detailed historiographic analyses: Susan Rößner (2009) and Bernard Eric Jensen (2002) have surveyed twentieth-century German, British, Dutch, and Danish histories and historiographies of Europe, while Heinz Duchhardt and colleagues (2006–07) have presented a three-volume prosopographic study of what they call “historians of Europe.” On the other hand, the post-1945 part of the five-volume *Oxford History of Historical Writing* does not contain a chapter on European historical writing—despite the fact that it comprises detailed chapters on African and Arab historiographies (Schneider and Woolfe 2011). However, Wolfgang Schmale’s (2004; 2009;

2010; 2015) thorough reports on new publications on the history of Europe fill this gap to a large degree (see also Kroll 2007).

## Multivolume Histories of Europe

In general, reference works on European history, here meaning, first of all, multivolume histories of Europe, mesoregionalize, if at all, only formally by using (usually undefined) mesoregional terms to bring national cases under one regional roof—for example, “Scandinavia”/“Scandinavian states” or “the Balkans”/“Balkan states.” A classic example is the authoritative six-volume “Handbook of European Economic and Social History,” whose volumes all have chapters on “Northern Europe,” “Western Europe,” “Southern Europe,” “Central Europe,” “Eastern Europe,” and “Southeastern Europe,” consisting, however, of subchapters dealing exclusively with national cases (Fischer et al. 1980–93). The same goes for Theodor Schieder’s (1968–87) seminal seven-volume “Handbook of European History,” even though in his preface the editor refers to Halecki’s *Limits and Divisions* (Schieder 1976, 15), and despite the fact that the volume on the Middle Ages contains a chapter on “große Räume” (large spaces) and “Regionen” of Europe (Seibt 1987, 6–38). It’s also true of a decidedly Eurocentric six-volume “Propyläen History of Europe” written by conservative German historians such as Hellmut Diwald, Ernst Walter Zeeden, and again Schieder (Mitte et al. 1975–78). But more recent multivolume German-language histories of Europe, such as a ten-volume “Handbook of the History of Europe” edited by Peter Blickle (2002–12; see also Schmale 2013), or a ten-volume “C. H. Beck History of Europe” (C. H. Beck 2010–13), also focus almost exclusively on empires and states as units of analysis. Even when mesoregions such as “the North of Europe” (Hippel and Stier 2012, 198–207), “Scandinavia,” “Eastern Europe” (Bernecker 2002, 215–65), “East-Central Europe,” or “Western Europe” are applied to structure chapters on national cases, they signify only groups of states (Schieffer 2013).

English-language multivolume general histories of Europe also follow this pattern, such as, for example, the *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600* (Brady 1994–95) or the new *Cambridge History of Europe* (Wiesner-Hanks 2006), as do multivolume histories of European economic history. While in some of the eight volumes of the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* regional divisions such as “the Italian and Iberian Peninsulas,” “Northwestern Europe,” “the Baltic countries,” or “east-central and south-east Europe” are applied (The Cambridge History of Europe 1963–89), they are nowhere to be found in the recent two-volume *Cambridge Economic History of Modern Europe* (Broadberry and O’Rourke 2010).



But there are also exceptions to the rule. In the first of the fourteen volumes of the authoritative *New Cambridge Modern History*, H. C. Darby came up with a geographical model. He distinguished between “eastern Europe,” divided according to him into three different parts, namely “coniferous forest, deciduous forest and steppe,” as well as “Scandinavia,” “the north-German plain” cum “Poland,” “the Mediterranean basin,” “the Iberian Peninsula” and “the Balkan Peninsula” (Darby 1957, 21–34). However, none of his co-authors adopted his pattern. Instead, almost all structured their chapters according to political units.

Another exception is to be found in the post-1989 four-volume “Siedler History of Europe” (Siedler Geschichte Europas 1997–2009) in the third volume, written by Heinz Schilling (1999) on the late medieval and early modern period. Its first chapter, on “Peoples, Empires and Early States: The Political Morphology of Europe,” deals with six European mesoregions: “The Mediterranean Region and the Atlantic Southwest,” “The Central European realm of states,” “The East and the North—the Scandinavian kingdoms and Russia,” and “The West—the Netherlands, the British Isles and France.” Schilling (1999, 94–129, 144–55) dwells extensively on the mesoregionalizing concept of “East-Central Europe” and even elaborates on Halecki’s innovation of “West-Central Europe.” Schilling’s volume did not, however, set a trend. On the contrary, in the most recent German-language book series *European History in the 20th Century*, edited by the contemporary historian Ulrich Herbert (2010), European history is written as the history of nation-states or federations. In his preface, which is part of each of the six volumes published in the series so far (on Spain, Great Britain, Poland, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Russia/Soviet Union), Herbert justifies this focus by stating that “Europe is our present, but our history remains rooted in the national” (7).

A multivolume history whose title does not contain the word “Europe,” but which in fact concentrates primarily on European history, is the nine-volume *Handbook of the History of International Relations* (Duchhardt and Knipping 1997–2016). Here, it is again Heinz Schilling who applies the most elaborate regionalization pattern. In his volume in the series, which focuses on the period from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, he dwells extensively on “European Powers and Zones of Power.” As such, he identifies “the Ottoman world empire;” “the South and West European Zone of Power,” dominated by Spain; “the Nordic-Baltic Zone of Power,” characterized by the battle for the *dominium maris Baltici*; and “the Central and Southeast European Zone of Power,” where the conflict between the sultan and the emperor took place (Schilling 2007). Alfred Kohler’s (2008, 81–206) mesoregionalizing concept in volume 1 of the same series is more pedestrian. He distinguishes between “Southern and Western Europe,” “Central Europe,”

“Northern and Eastern Europe,” and “Southeastern Europe,” but does not come up with an explanation of the specificity of his four mesoregions.

A particularly interesting case is a five-volume Russian-language *History of Europe from Ancient Times to Our Days*, conceptualized during the so-called stagnation period. This first-ever Soviet and Russian multivolume history of Europe started out under the general editorship of Zinaida V. Udal'tsova, a prominent Byzantinist and orthodox Communist (Udal'tsova and Chubar'ian 1988–2000). From volume 2 on, she was replaced by the historian and director of the academy's Institute of General History, Aleksandr O. Chubar'ian, another Brezhnevite, yet of a more liberal orientation. The detailed preface to the series in volume 1, published in 100,000 copies in 1988, is still strongly influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology. Interestingly enough, it perceives “the history of Europe . . . not as the sum of the histories of individual countries but as a process of the development of a specific historical community with a complicated internal structure” (Udal'tsova 1988, 5). This assumes an elaborated regionalizing concept:

The history of Europe demonstrates how complicated and contradictory the process of world history is. Asynchronicity and asymmetry of historical development manifest themselves in the fact that phenomena and regularities which are common to the whole continent in its regions take place at different times and take on different forms. Therefore, this whole series is based on systematically regional and topical chronological principles. Thus, it is no coincidence that the team of authors pays great attention to Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Soviet Union. In many works on the history of Europe published in the West, the role of Eastern Europe in the history of the continent is underestimated and the peculiarities of the development of its Western part are depicted as its standard gauge. Some Western historians and political scientists try to use the asynchronicity and nonsimultaneity in the historical process as an argument in favor of the theory of an alleged “permanent backwardness” of Russia and all of Eastern Europe compared to the West. In this series the groundlessness of this concept is revealed. The twentieth century, which stands under the sign of revolutionary renewal, demonstrates convincingly the significance of the Great October Socialist Revolution and of the experience of the building up of socialism in the USSR and the other countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe for the history of the world and of Europe. (Udal'tsova 1988, 6)

In principle, the volumes in the series covering the centuries from the early Middle Ages to World War I follow this regionalization pattern, yet with different emphases. Volume 2, *Medieval Europe*, for example, is structured along the history of empires and states as well as that of mesoregions such as “Southeastern Europe,” “Eastern Europe,” “Central Europe,” “Western Europe,” “Northwestern Europe,” “Northern Europe,” and a “Slavo-Balkan

region" (Gutnova and Udal'tsova 1992). The same goes for volume 3, *From the Middle Ages to the Modern Era (Late Fifteenth to the First Half of the Seventeenth Centuries)*, where in addition to the abovementioned regions a "Balkan and Central European Region" also figures (Mil'skaia and Rutenburg 1993). In contrast, volume 4, *Europe in Modern Times (Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries)*, focuses primarily on empires and states and applies regionalizing concepts such as a "Slavo-Balkan region" and "Western Europe" only in its chapters on economic history, as well as, in the chapter on church history, a common "Western and Central Europe" (Barg 1994). Finally, volume 5, *From the French Revolution at the End of the Seventeenth Century to World War I*, almost completely gives up the concept of European regions, with one exception: "The Balkans" (Pozharskaia and Namazova 2000). In general, the regionalizing concepts of the series represent a rather nonreflective mix of geographical, ethnocultural, economic, and religious categories applied in an unsystematic way. It can be assumed that this is due to the fact that various institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (and later of the Russian Academy of Sciences) were in charge of chapters on different regions. Thus, the term "Slavo-Balkan region" is most probably due to the existence of the academy's participating Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies.

### Single-Volume Histories of Europe

Single-volume histories of Europe, like their multivolume counterparts, only rarely use mesoregionalizing concepts. They either apply a dichotomous West-East model or simply focus on states in structuring their narrative, even when they claim to write the history of Europe as a history of its "peoples" (Duroselle 1990). An example for the first approach is a recent French-language *Histoire de l'Europe* where "l'Europe occidentale" is strictly separated from "l'Europe de l'Est." Here, chapter titles convey the perception of a cultural gradient: "l'Europe 'barbare'" versus "l'Europe de la chrétienté," "l'Occident émietté" versus "l'Orient restructuré," "À l'ouest, le grand essor de l'Europe féodale" versus "À l'est, un monde éclaté," "Les permanences de la civilisation byzantine" versus "Les apports de la civilisation occidentale," "Les états de l'Europe du nord-ouest" versus "Les problèmes de l'Europe orientale" and "l'Europe libérale du nord et du nord ouest" versus "Europe centrale et orientale" (Carpentier and Lebrun 1992; see also Carbonell 1999).

Other examples of the state fixation in structuring one-volume histories of Europe include Michael Salewski's (2000) tellingly titled *History of Europe: States and Nations from Antiquity to the Present*, in which the prominent legal historian exclusively defines "states and nations" as units of analysis. Also, Hans Hattenhauer's (2004) voluminous European legal history is struc-

tured according to the legal cultures of empires and (nation-)states. A similar approach characterizes a one-volume Finnish history of Europe (Zetterberg 1993) as well as a Polish one, where empires, states and dynasties form the frame, but for the sake of convenience smaller states are lumped together under regionalizing terms such as “Scandinavia” or “the Balkans.” Only in chapters on *Beziehungsgeschichte* are explicit regionalizing concepts applied. This goes for “Central Europe” in the context of German-Polish relations and the rivalry of regional dynasties, and for “Eastern Europe” when it comes to the relationship with the Islamic World and the Mongols (Mączak 1997, 137–42, 161–76, 199–207).

Even stronger is the fixation on states in monographs that have a focus on or deal exclusively with the twentieth century or, still narrower, with the Cold-War period. Here, “West” and “East” are used primarily in the context of oppositions of the type “democracy versus totalitarianism” or “Eastern Bloc versus the Free World.” For example, Dan Stone (2014) in his (subtitled) *Story of Europe since 1945*, pessimistically titled *Goodbye to All That?*, has subdivided those three of the four parts of his book which cover the period 1944 to 1989 strictly into separate sections on Western and Eastern Europe. However, notwithstanding ideological, political, military, economic, and other differences, he sees pre-1989 communist Eastern Europe and “welfare-capitalist” Western Europe united in the “postwar consensus” of a “broad rejection of the fascist past,” based on the joint perception that World War II was a just war. Accordingly, in his view, “1989” has brought about “the fall of the postwar consensus” resulting in an opening of Pandora’s box in the form of “memory wars” (Stone 2014, 231–94). Also, William I. Hitchcock (2003, 2) perceives the East-West conflict prior to 1989 as a factor unifying Western and Eastern Europe, although he distinguishes between a “good Cold War” in the West and a not so good one in the East.

Several authoritative one-volume histories of the whole European twentieth century also place emphasis on ideologies. Eric Hobsbawm (1994), in his history of the *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, structures his narrative along a trilateral model consisting of capitalism, fascism, and communism. His units of analysis, next to ideologies, also include empires and unhistorical mesoregions—despite obvious coincidences of both categories. Similarities can be seen in the approaches of Konrad H. Jarausch (2015) in his recent and decidedly optimistic history of Europe from 1900 to 2000, and of the Czech satirical writer Pavel Ouředník (2005) in his ostensibly humorous, yet in terms of content rather serious and even bitter book, *Europeana. A Brief History of the Twentieth Century*. Ouředník writes,

Before the fall of Communism, the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe were called the EASTERN GLACIER, because life in those countries was rigid as if frozen stiff, and in 1989 lots of people in Western Europe thought that the eastern countries should join the European Union as soon as possible, and they said that it would enrich the European identity. . . . But in time it became plain that the people in the former Communist countries were not much interested in a European identity, and people in Eastern Europe had no confidence in European history. Some West European historians said that the people of Eastern Europe should be given time because they lacked an awareness of the dynamic of history because forty years of Communism had created a historyless void. But people from the Eastern European countries saw things differently and felt that they could provide the people in Western Europe with lots of interesting experiences, and they felt abandoned and neglected. (87–88)

Again, “Eastern Europe” and “Western Europe” are defined by ideologies, not only for the Cold War era but also with regard to the post-1989 period. Harold James (2003, 6), in his book *Europe Reborn*, conceives Europe “traditionally,” that is, “from Ireland to the Urals, including Turkey, while excluding North Africa and the Middle East, although there is much to be said for a treatment that makes the Mediterranean a center of European life and of political and social innovation.”

A particularly intriguing experiment in writing Europe’s twentieth century history with a special focus on the Cold War is Dan Diner’s (2008) monograph *Cataclysm. A History of the Twentieth Century from Europe’s Edge*, in which he views “the totality of world history evolving from an Eastern and Southeastern angle.” According to the cover’s back flap, which elaborates on the viewpoint: “Approaching twentieth-century history from the periphery rather than the centers of decision-making, the virtual narrator sits perched on the legendary stairs of Odessa and watches as events between the Baltic and the Aegean pass in review, unfolding in space and time between 1917 and 1989, while evoking the nineteenth century as an interpretative backdrop.” Instead of focusing on Western Europe and taking the eastern half of the continent as a mere appendix, Diner (2008, 69) reverses the perspective and portrays East Central and Southeastern Europe—in Mackinder’s “succession”—as the “pivot” not only of European but of Transatlantic and Eurasian modern history (see also Mackinder 1904).

In general, however, in histories of post-1945 Europe the equation “Europe = Western Europe + appendices” prevails. The most recent example is the *Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, whose editor Dan Stone (2012, 7–8) states, “‘Europe’ in this *Handbook* is understood to mean all of Europe, including notable emphasis on Eastern Europe as well as on the cre-

ation of ‘neo-Europes’ overseas and ‘reverse colonialism’ in Europe itself.” “Notable emphasis” on Western Europe seems unnecessary, since it comes as a matter of course. The same goes for the implicit assumption that “Southern,” “Central,” and “Northern Europe” are part of “the West.”

There are, however, also syntheses which focus exclusively on “the West” (in terms of the German *Abendland*) and exclude Eastern Europe altogether. This is true, for example, of Peter Rietbergen’s (2006) overview *Europe: A Cultural History*, although the author is well aware of Europe’s “many internal divisions”:

As a result of many geoeconomic, geopolitical and cultural-religious developments, some of which can be traced far back into past millennia, while others are of more recent origin, many internal divisions have come into existence, creating a multiplicity and diversity of culture(s) in the Europe geographically defined above [i.e., “from the North Cape to Gibraltar, from the west coast of Ireland to the Urals”]. Perceptibly the most obvious is the “dividing line” separating western Europe from what, geographically at least, is called eastern Europe. This “line,” actually a wide transitional zone sometimes referred to as central or even central-eastern Europe, stretches from the Baltic to the Balkans and roughly coincides with the Baltic states, Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics and Hungary. (xxx)

Nevertheless, Rietbergen decides to focus on Europe’s western half: “Although there are sound scholarly reasons, besides considerations of a politically correct nature, to induce an author to fully include the cultures of eastern Europe, I have chosen not to do so” (xxx).

An even more extreme case in this regard is Hagen Schulze’s (1996) monograph *State, Nations and Nationalism* in the Europe-spanning, multi-language Building Europe book series. In the preface the author explains why, in writing the history of post-medieval Europe, its eastern half is of only minor importance in his view:

Some readers may take exception to the fact that Eastern Europe does not play a more prominent part in our account. To me it seems plausible that, since the division of the continent into a Western and an Eastern Roman Empire about the year 330 AD, two European spheres of civilization have emerged and developed over the two thousand years down to the present day, not without influencing each other, but certainly without merging. The tale I have to tell unfolded unequivocally in the western cultural sphere and describes a civilization which, as opposed to the Byzantine and Russian Orthodox East, was marked by the early divorce of the secular from the spiritual authorities and by a process of intellectual secularization featuring concepts like the Renaissance and Enlightenment and, as result of such movements, sovereignty of the people

and democracy. This is the history of the “Westernization of the Occident,” and for that reason I have concentrated mainly on France, England, Germany, Italy and Spain. I have, however, permitted myself, for purposes of comparison, occasional brief glances at Northern and Eastern Europe. (xiii)

Although it is not quite clear what “Eastern Europe” actually means in Schulze’s definition, he does occasionally include the history of Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians in his narrative. He applies the criterion of Latinity and thus mesoregionalizes Europe into a Roman Catholic and Protestant part and an Orthodox rest

Hartmut Kaelble, another prominent German historian of Europe and author of a (1990) seminal treatment of Western Europe’s social history up to 1980, in contrast expands his notion of “Europe” after 1989. “During the 1990s,” wrote Kaelble (2006, 6), “it became clear to me that a European history can be written only by including the Eastern part of Europe.” This is what he did in his (2013) book *A Social History of Europe, 1945–2000*:

This book is based on a pragmatic definition of Europe. It will cover Europe as a whole, including Eastern, East Central, and Southeastern Europe, and will attempt to transcend overconcentration on the western part of Europe, to the extent that the state of research allows. At the same time, the book will address two decidedly controversial geographical constraints. The USSR and Russia are not completely incorporated, as this region’s stronger contribution to the European and Atlantic region after 1989–91 cannot negate the historical fact that before then, the USSR was only ever a half-European power, alongside also being a half-Asian and a global power, and also viewed itself as something special. The USSR and Russia can therefore not be indiscriminately included in Europe. With the inclusion of the USSR and Russia, Europe would look fundamentally different in many social fields, such as birthrate, family, standard of living, social conflict, and inequalities as well as state intervention. Yet because fully excluding Russia and the USSR is also problematic, I have to the best of my ability as a non-expert, comparatively included the USSR and Russia in this overview in such a manner that not just the region’s differences but also its similarities with Europe remain identifiable. Turkey, the second point of contention with regard to the spatial definition of Europe, is also not simply included in Europe in what follows. (6)

Compared to Kaelble, the Hungarian historian Béla Tomka (2013) is less explicit in his social history of twentieth-century Europe. His book is structured along topics such as “families and households,” “the welfare state,” or “urbanization,” since in his view “geographical definitions and boundaries are of little help” (4). Tomka’s Europe is—in Szűcs’s footsteps—“Western Europe, in a wider sense, together with East Central Europe, but Southern

Europe and the Balkans are also included in the analysis as much as possible” (4). The author explains what he understands by these mesoregional concepts: “As a general rule, Western Europe includes North Western Europe (United Kingdom/Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland), Central Europe (Germany/FRG, Switzerland, and Austria) and Scandinavia (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland). Southern Europe refers to Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece; East Central Europe involves Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and South-Eastern Europe coincides with the Balkan region without Greece” (4). Yet Tomka does not apply Szűcs’s term “Eastern Europe,” but instead “Russia/the Soviet Union and the Baltic States,” and thus deviates from Szűcs’s model, in which the region between the Gulf of Finland and river Nemunas/Memel is part of “East-Central Europe,” not lumped together with Russia and the USSR. Tomka (2013, 4) explains this as follows:

The inclusion of Russia/the Soviet Union and the Baltic States would definitely be justified as well. However, Russia/the Soviet Union constituted a world of its own, with sizeable internal diversity throughout the twentieth century, the analysis of which would require a lot of space and would further increase the complexity of the argumentation and would strain the structure of the work. In addition, for these regions we simply do not have sufficient and reliable comparative data and other information in several social areas. Thus the Baltic States, the Soviet Union and its successor states are not covered. This self-constraint is not unique: neither of the major social histories of Europe considers Russia/the Soviet Union and often even more general histories of Eastern Europe fully neglect Russia/the Soviet Union and the Baltic States. Nevertheless, we obviously do not intend to deny that the past of these regions constitutes an integral part of the history of Europe.

Despite this caveat and its justification, in a review of Tomka’s book, Göran Therborn (2014) criticized “the author’s narrow definition of ‘Europe’”: “Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union are left out, and the Balkans are excluded from most, though not all, comparisons. The outcome, then, is yet another book on ‘Europe’ as Western Europe, with the Visegrád countries (Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland) now included in the West.”

A particular case of an English-language one-volume general history of Europe is Norman Davies’s (1996) widely read *Europe: A History*. Davies dwells intensively on questions such as the limits of Europe, “East-West fault lines in Europe” and “the division of Europe into “natural” or “historic” regions,” the latter being in his view “an intellectual exercise that is as entertaining as it is inconclusive” (51; see also map 3 on page 18). Accordingly, Davies dismisses mesoregionalizing concepts based on historical criteria such as “Western,”



“Eastern,” “Northern,” “Southern,” “Central,” and “East Central Europe” by arguing that “one stands on safer ground dividing Europe into regions based on physical and geographical features” (51). In a Braudelian approach he identifies “five natural components” of “the European Peninsula”: “The Great European Plain,” “the Mountains,” “the Mediterranean,” “several large sub-peninsulas” as well as islands, plus “three sub-regions . . . of particular importance: the Midi, the Danube Basin, and the Volga corridor” (51–65; see also map 4, Europe: Physical Regions, on page 48). In the actual narrative, however, this regionalization concept does not figure. What Davies, the prolific historian of Poland, actually does do is bringing the often neglected history of Halecki’s and Szűcs’s “East-Central Europe”—without naming them—into what he calls on the back flap “a total history of Europe in every period.”

In 1996, when Davies’s massive monograph was published, another British historian was busy writing a book on the history of Europe, though “only” on the post-1945 period: Tony Judt, whose equally weighty tome *Postwar* was eventually published in 2005. For various reasons, Judt did not like the book by his colleague, among others due to Davies’s “polemic about the neglected importance of Eastern Europe” (Judt 2012, 256). With hindsight, this harsh judgment seems somewhat premature, since in his own book Judt set out to do the same thing—that is, to bring together “the separate and non-communicating stories of prosperous western Europe and the Soviet bloc satellites to its east” (Judt 2005, 1–2). What he meant was, on the one hand, the story of “the slightly self-satisfied attitudes of postwar Western Europe: capitalist prosperity underpinned by a richly-endowed welfare state” (plus social peace and external security), and on the other, that of “the ‘other’ Europe of bleak poverty and secret policemen” (Judt 2005, 2). “The history of the two halves of post-war Europe,” writes Judt (2005, 5–6), “cannot be told in isolation from one another.” The actual innovation of Judt’s narrative was, however, something different: the identification and analysis of processes and phenomena that affected *all* of postwar Europe alike, such as, for a few examples, the common urge for retribution after 1945, a genuinely European anti-Americanism, a Europe-wide fascination with Stalin and his “thought,” an explosion of university education on both sides of the Iron Curtain, and consumerism as a capitalist *and* communist strategy. While Judt’s (2005, 327, 523–26) most important mesoregional categories were “Eastern Europe” and “Western Europe,” he also identified a “Mediterranean Europe” as well as “Scandinavia,” yet did not elaborate on them. The same goes for Mark Mazower (1998), who in his history of twentieth-century Europe depicts the boundaries of Europe as “porous and adaptable,” yet does not subdivide the continent. He also uses regionalizing concepts such as “the West,” “eastern

Europe,” “central Europe,” “the Balkans,” and “Scandinavia,” as well as “Eurasia,” again without defining them.

### **Two Exceptions to the Rule: “Europe” and “the Balkans”/“Southeastern Europe”**

While single- and multivolume histories of Europe either do not regionalize at all or apply regionalizing categories without explanation, two types of regionalizing concepts are in most instances defined or at least invoked. The first one is the macroregion “Europe”—that is, its “geographic, cultural and mental borders” (Heikkilä et al. 2012, back flap). Almost all authors give a short definition by referring to geographical markers such as the Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines, the North Cape, and the Ural mountain range. The fact that the Siberian parts of Russia are thus excluded is rarely discussed. While the Europeanness of Russia is frequently doubted, the Ural line as Europe’s eastern border is not—an inconsistency that again is commonly not addressed. Historians tend not to take notice of ongoing debates among geographers on where Europe “ends” (Fassmann 2002). Hans-Dietrich Schultz (2009) has pointed out the fact that, in the scholarly conceptualizations of geographers during the last two hundred years, “Europe’s eastern border fluctuated between the 25th and 100th latitude” depending on “whether one wanted to have Russia in or not.” Some geographers excluded those parts of Russia that lay east of a line running from the White Sea to the mouth of the Danube, while others identified the Yenisei river in central Siberia as Europe’s eastern borderline. According to Schultz, the Ural border is as arbitrary as all others—a fact that few historians seem to realize.

The second exception is “the Balkans” or “Southeastern Europe”—a mesoregional category applied by many authors, including those who do not apply any other mesoregional categories (Lang 2011, 392). Among historians of Europe, be they French, English, Polish, or Russian, the Balkans seem to have a reputation for being complicated, conflict-ridden, and thus confusing—a view that results in the urge to lock them away in a single category without going into their political and cultural divisions. Interestingly enough, the standard category of “state” applied by most historians of Europe seems to be inappropriate when it comes to the Balkans. As with “Russia,” the Europeanness of “the Balkans” is also frequently doubted. Whereas in geographic terms the Balkans are included in Europe, in cultural terms they often are not. Quite obviously, among historians of Europe, the “imagination” of the Balkans as an “Orient” within Europe is popular (Todorova 2009; see also chapter 7 in this volume).

## Preliminary Résumé

Historians of Europe, like historians in general, do not usually give much consideration to the question of how to structure “Europe” and its history in regional terms. They either do not mesoregionalize at all, applying instead a holistic concept of “Europe” (which more often than not equates “Western Europe” with “Europe”), or they simply follow the beaten tracks of a “Western,” “Eastern,” “Northern,” “Southern,” “Central,” and other “Europes” without questioning or even defining these mesoregional terms. Explicit models of regionalizing the history of Europe are rare. Their authors are mostly general historians who adopt concepts from the subdiscipline of Russian and East European history as it has existed in German-speaking countries since the late nineteenth century, or refer to Halecki and Szűcs. Hartmut Kaelble (1990; 2006; 2013) and Heinz Schilling (1999; 2007) belong to this latter category. A double exception to the rule of not regionalizing is Norman Davies, who (a) is well aware of models of mesoregionalizing the history of Europe, but (b) rejects them by referring to physical and geographical features.

Yet recently one can identify a call in general historiography to pay more attention to mesoregionalizing concepts, even if it is still weak—and a markedly German and “East Central European” phenomenon (Kocka 2000; Osterhammel 2004, 167–68; Todorova 2005; Paulmann 2013, 666; Cornelißen 2012–13; Mishkova, Stráth, and Trencsényi 2013). On the other hand, in other historically-oriented disciplines, such as the history of literature, art history, and social anthropology, the interest in the model of historical mesoregions of Europe is visibly increasing. And a very recent phenomenon is the interest of historically-inclined sociologists such as Arnason and Delanty in “domains and divisions of European history” (Arnason and Doyle 2010) or in “the historical regions of Europe” (Delanty 2012). It seems as if historians of Europe are separated from each other to a much higher degree than historians in other fields, not only by national historiographic cultures, but also along dividing lines that closely resemble Halecki’s mesoregions of Europe—“Western Europe,” “West Central Europe” (i.e., the German-language region), “East Central Europe,” and “Eastern Europe” (i.e., the Russian Federation).

It is commonly accepted that the average time it takes for fresh research results and new interpretations in historiography to trickle into history textbooks is approximately ten years. The same time span, if not a longer one, can be assumed for single- and multivolume histories of Europe. Thus it may be expected that the analytical potential, as well as the didactic and mnemonic advantages, of the concept of historical mesoregions will lead to its wider acceptance in the near future. The first swallows are already in the air.

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## Chapter 12

# Political Geography and Geopolitics

*Virginie Mamadouh and Martin Müller*



Geography is sometimes conceived as a regional science, a discipline specialized in the study of the specificities of regions. When introducing geography to students, it is customary to highlight two different approaches to geography—regional geography versus thematic geography—and to conceptualize their relations as follows. Thematic geography consists of a wide array of subdisciplines focusing on the geographical (meaning spatial, territorial, and/or scalar) dimensions of a social, behavioral, or physical aspect. Political geography, for example, studies the geographical dimensions of the political.

Regional geography, by contrast, has a regional focus and synthesizes knowledge and insights from many thematic perspectives in the study of a specific region. Regions can be small or large, and a great deal of geographical theorizing has been done to develop and enhance our conceptualization of regions and their delimitation. Some definitions are based on one dimension, such as a linguistic region as the area in which a common language is spoken, distinct from the languages spoken in the neighboring regions, or a region defined by a distinct landscape, different from the landscapes in the neighboring regions. Others are functional, such as the service area of a market town. Some are administrative, as in the case of a territory under the jurisdiction of a specific authority such as a municipality, a province, or a state, whereas others are defined on the basis of the combinations of different physical, economic, cultural, and other dimensions.

As far as political geography is concerned, regions are important as political constructs, as arenas of political engagement, and as terrains of the projection of power. Regional identities are mobilized at different scales and provide

matter for the perception, performance, and representation of politics. Still, political geographers have studied one scale much more than others: that of the (sovereign national) state. The territory of modern nation-states has been the object of much of the analysis of the classic works in political geography, covering issues as diverse as state borders, capital cities, administrative and electoral geographies, and international relations. The state territory is seen as such a specific region that the term “region” has generally been used in political geography to label regions other than the state, either subnational regions (i.e., regions inside the territory of the state) or supranational regions (i.e., regions as groupings of states). In this contribution, we want to engage with the latter types of regions and discuss how Europe has been subdivided in regions in political geography and geopolitics. We emphasize explicit regionalization—that is, studies in which delineating regions was a central goal—as opposed to implicit regionalization, in which assumptions about regions are made in the context of other research goals.

Geopolitics can be considered a subfield of political geography. Originally it was primarily concerned with the impact of physical geographical features, such as topography, orography, climate, and vegetation, on power politics (i.e., relations between the most powerful states) and closely connected to the imperialist and nationalist practices of statehood of the first half of the twentieth century. For this very reason—this politically and morally embarrassing and compromising past—it was neglected by academic geographers in the postwar period until the 1980s, when a revival took place in the context of the reinvention of political geography. Since the early 1990s a prolific school of critical geopolitics has been established in political geography that studies the relation between space and politics in a completely different way (Ó Tuathail 1996). Political geography in general, and geopolitics in particular, has much to say about the regionalization of Europe, and this will be the core of our chapter. But our own narrative clearly belongs to the latter tradition, as we study the regionalizations of Europe in our discipline as geopolitical representations of Europe and its constituent elements.

In the first section, we first ask what a region is. We argue that there are two main ontological traditions in conceptualizing regions in the discipline of geography. The rest of the chapter is divided into periods in which we show that different regionalizations of Europe have been at work: not only have different ontological traditions been dominant, but they have also highlighted different regionalization processes and promoted different regionalization projects, using different labels, different partitions of Europe (with different borders, borderlands, and borderscapes), and different scripts about the relations between these regions. We have distinguished four main periods with four dominant narratives, but we aim at showing how disputed these nar-

ratives were, foregrounding different geographical traditions and assessing, without reifying them, national geographical traditions often closely linked to the nation-state building project in which they emerged, matured, and sometimes waned again. This was particularly true of the political geographical and geopolitical traditions in the first two periods (see also Parker 1998, Mamadouh 1998, Agnew and Muscarà 2012, Moisisio 2015).

## Conceptualizing Political Regions and Politically Relevant Regions

The “region” is a central term, if not conceptual mantra, for both political geography and geopolitics. Commonly defined as “an area or zone of indeterminate size on the surface of the Earth, whose diverse elements form a functional association” (Henderson 2009, 630), the concept of the region exudes an irresistible allure: it offers a way of systematizing and compartmentalizing unruly space, of imparting order to chaos. For a long time, delimiting regions was political geography’s way of making the complexity of the world intelligible and contributing its share to the endeavor of science. At the same time, the region is a quintessentially protean concept, with a number of different understandings and purposes (Agnew 2013). Its size may vary from a couple of square kilometers to a whole continent; its delimitation and boundaries tend to be contingent, and its meaning versatile. Almost anything can be called a region if the right set of criteria is applied.

Two major ontological traditions in conceptualizing the region in the discipline of geography can be distinguished (Agnew 1999). The long-standing realist emerged from the regional geography of the late nineteenth century and seeks to demarcate regions on the basis of common features, whether natural or social (Claval 2006). Vidal de la Blache’s *Tableau de la géographie de la France* (1903), one of the founding works of regional geography, posits the traditional unity of *paysan* (“peasant,” or “people” in general), *paysage* (“landscape”) and *pays* (“land,” “homeland,” or “country” hence “state” more generally) as the characterizing feature of the region. These traditional, rural regions can thus be formed drawing on criteria such as climate, vegetation, or topography, as well as a whole host of human determinants, such as economic and political relations, language use, ethnic allegiances, or cultural similarity. What makes a region cohere as a unit is its (implied) homogeneity. Drawing the boundaries of regions, however, is a deeply subjective endeavor, for it is possible to justify almost any demarcation if the criteria can be chosen at will. For this reason, political geographers and geopoliticians, at regular intervals, became embroiled as handmaidens for legitimating state territorial aspirations and warmongering, as we will see later.

This subservient, apologetic role of the realist tradition of political geography led to the emergence of the second, constructivist tradition toward the end of the 1980s. It takes issue with the arbitrariness of the purportedly objective regionalizations and argues that the delimitation of a region first requires a classificatory scheme according to which regions are to be defined. This scheme, however, is subjective and thus tells us more about the political interests of the classifier than about the resulting regions. This idea is encapsulated in Jacques Rupnik's aphorism, "Tell me where Central Europe is, and I can tell you who you are" (quoted in Johnson 1996: 6). This idea of the region as a social construct was related to a change in how boundaries and borders were viewed in political geography. It meant a shift away from a deterministic perspective, where borders were the expression of natural or social features of a region, toward the study of boundary narratives and experiences that looked at the meaning and social practice connected to boundaries and how these varied over time or in different places (Newman and Paasi 1998).

### **From the Origins of Academic Geography to the Great War: Maritime versus Continental Europe**

In Europe, geography as an academic discipline was not established until the end of the nineteenth century. Although geographical scholarship on Europe had been produced since at least the beginning of the 1800s, most notably by figures such as Carl Ritter and Alexander von Humboldt, it was only after the Franco-Prussian war and the unification of Germany in 1871 that geography was seen as an opportune university subject that could serve a political purpose. Hence, the German Reich and France both decided to establish new professorships, appointing such eminent scholars as Vidal de la Blache (1873 in Nancy) and Ratzel (1875 in Munich, 1886 in Leipzig). For this reason, the 1870s are seen as the founding period of human geography, and of political geography more specifically. In the wake of this bloom in academic geography, regionalizations of Europe began to attract increasing attention. Another competition, that between European states for colonies in a world completely "discovered," shaped the geopolitical context in which political geography and geopolitics emerged and developed in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century (Heffernan 1998, Agnew 2003, Agnew and Muscarà 2012).

While German and Russian geographical scholarship before World War I was preoccupied with the eastern part of Europe, debates in England featured a much stronger maritime element. Sir Halford Mackinder, the first reader of geography in Oxford, envisioned global history as a competition between maritime and continental powers (see also chapter 10 in this volume). He announced a change in power relations to the advantage of continental powers,

with the technological improvement of the railways and the relative erosion of the advantage of nations with strong navies (such as the UK) (Mackinder 1904). In his view, the world was divided into three broad areas: the pivot (situated at the heart of the Eurasian continent), the inner or marginal crescent, and the outer insular crescent (see Figure 1). In the later version of his theory, published in 1919 after World War I (and meant to influence the decision makers at the Versailles Peace Conference), the pivot is vastly enlarged to the west into Europe and labeled the heartland. Mackinder (1919, 194) coined this dictum:

Who rules East Europe commands the heartland;  
Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;  
Who rules the World-Island commands the World.

It underscored the stakes of the drawing of borders at the Versailles peace conference in what he calls East Europe—that is, in the former multinational empires (Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire)—and the importance of shaping new small national states as buffers between Germany and Russia. For Mackinder, an alliance of Russia and Germany that would control the World-Island was the main threat to the position of the UK as a maritime power.

This mapping of the world is Eurocentric in the sense of putting British interests and European conflicts at the core of its interpretation, but decen-



**Figure 12.1.** The geographical pivot of global history and the division of Europe into three zones (Mackinder 1904)

tered in stressing the role of invasion from the East in the long term. For this chapter, it is important to note how Europe was in this perspective divided into continental and maritime zones, based mainly on topography (relief, rivers) and climate. Thanks to industrialization and the promise of railway infrastructure, the continental powers such as Russia and Germany were the new challengers to the maritime power of Britain, and not France, its traditional continental rival. France was an ambiguous country viewed in these terms: both continental and maritime. But continental powers such as Germany and Russia, as well as the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, were also searching for a maritime opening, creating and promoting their sparse harbor cities and developing their navies to compete with the British.

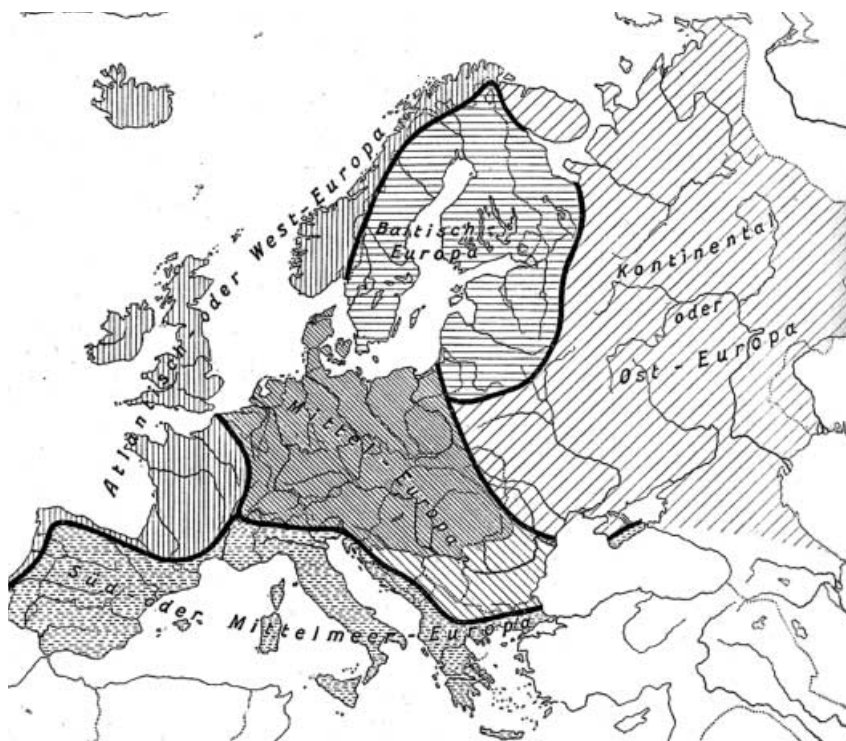
In continental Europe, territory was more seriously analyzed. In Germany, Friedrich Ratzel published the first edition of his seminal *Politische Geographie* in 1897, the subtitle of which in the second edition (1903) clarified the focus of his approach: *Politische Geographie oder die Geographie der Staaten, des Verkehrs und des Krieges* (Political Geography or the Geography of States, Trade and War). He analyzed the modern state through the relation between its population and its territory. According to Ratzel, the vitality of a nation translates into territorial expansion, and the control of territory and land borders are key pillars of sovereignty. This concept of the state as a living organism shares much with that of Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén. Kjellén's major works were translated into German, then the major language of international academic exchange. He is attributed with being the first to coin the concept of *Geopolitik*, in an article published in a Swedish journal in 1899 (Kjellén 1899), and with shaping its further usage. Central to his thought was the organic state that contracted and expanded, extending and changing its borders. This organic process was shaped by the physical character, size, and relative location of the territory of the state (Holdar 1992, 319).

For German geographers, the geographical justification of the location and boundaries of the unified German Reich of 1871 both posed a challenge and provided a political legitimation for the new discipline of geography. The territorial shape of the German state did not follow the natural divisions and boundaries of Europe as they had been identified in previous works, such as Zeune's (1808) *Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung* or Meinicke's (1839) geography textbook. Political geography saw its mission as turning the term "German Reich" into more than merely "a political concept" (Kirchhoff 1897, 14): it needed a scientific-geographical foundation. For this to happen, the idea that Europe was subdivided according to physical-geographical characteristics had to be done away with. In its place, Kirchhoff (1906, 34) proposed that "countries of strong character draw boundaries even through lands where Nature had sketched none out. . . . [It would be] completely un-

geographical [to delineate a region] only according to its physical relations [without consideration of its] political extension.”

There was no doubt for Kirchhoff that the German Reich was one of those strong states, and thus he proposed the following dichotomous delimitation: the German Reich as a cultural unit was at the heart of a larger unit he called *Mittleuropa*, which referred to the lands tinged with German civilization since the Franconian Monarchy (see Schultz 1989). The *Mittleuropa* of old, which had included France, was thus replaced with a much more Germano-centric notion of the term.

Where Kirchhoff still proposed a small *Mittleuropa*, not covering significant parts of Austria-Hungary, the beginning of the 1900s and particularly the outbreak of World War I precipitated a shift toward a notion of a large *Mittleuropa* that included at least the German Reich and Austria-Hungary, possibly also the Low Countries, the Baltics, the lower Danube basin, and perhaps even Italy and Denmark. The Austrian geographer Hugo Hassinger (1917) presented such a division of Europe (Figure 2). In drawing these new



**Figure 12.2.** Hassinger's (1917) division of Europe with *Mittleuropa* at the center (black area) and a nascent, emerging *Mittleuropa* depicted in the shaded area



boundaries, he argued that the consideration “of all criteria of division at the same time . . . is impossible,” and that the geographer therefore has the “indisputable right to use first this, then that boundary, exactly those which are most efficacious at the time” (Hassinger 1917, 471). Schultz (1989, 328) observes that what appears as geographical voluntarism to us now “was at that time a significant advance in the methodological discussion, or so it was believed.” Thus, Hassinger justified his choice of boundaries here on topographical grounds, there on cultural ones. In so doing, he parted with the assumption that geography could give the regions of Europe a perennial, objective foundation. For him, *Mitteleuropa* should be united in a confederation under German leadership, given the pervasive influence of Germanic civilization for centuries.

The relegation of Russia to the margins of Europe in most German scholarship was at odds with how Russian scholars subdivided the eastern part of Europe. With Danilevskii's ([1869] 1895) *Rossia i Evropa*, pan-Slavist sentiments had gained an intellectual voice alongside the dominant pro-European orientation of the Russian Empire at the time. Danilevskii, a natural scientist, sought to base deliberations of Russia's European character on scientific judgement. For Danilevskii, the Slavs were one of several cultural-historical types that had emerged over the course of history and were poised to replace the Franco-German cultural-historical type. Europe for him was an abode of materialist lust and spiritual degradation, and it was separated from Russia by a deep cultural and historical gulf (see Bassin 1991, 9). With this, however, Danilevskii also discarded the idea of Europe as a separate continent, regarding it merely as an appendix to Asia. Europe, then, was about to tumble as a civilization, and Russia would, eventually, have to give history a helping hand by precipitating war (see Neumann 1996, 55ff).

These ideas resonated with those of ethnographer, philologist, and geographer Vladimir Lamanskii ([1892] 1916), who argued that Russia formed a separate geographical unit, apart from Europe and Asia. In so doing, he drew inspiration from German geologists and geographers who challenged the notion of a separate European continent in the 1870s with the development of the first notions of plate tectonics (see Bassin 1991, 12; see also chapter 10 in this volume).

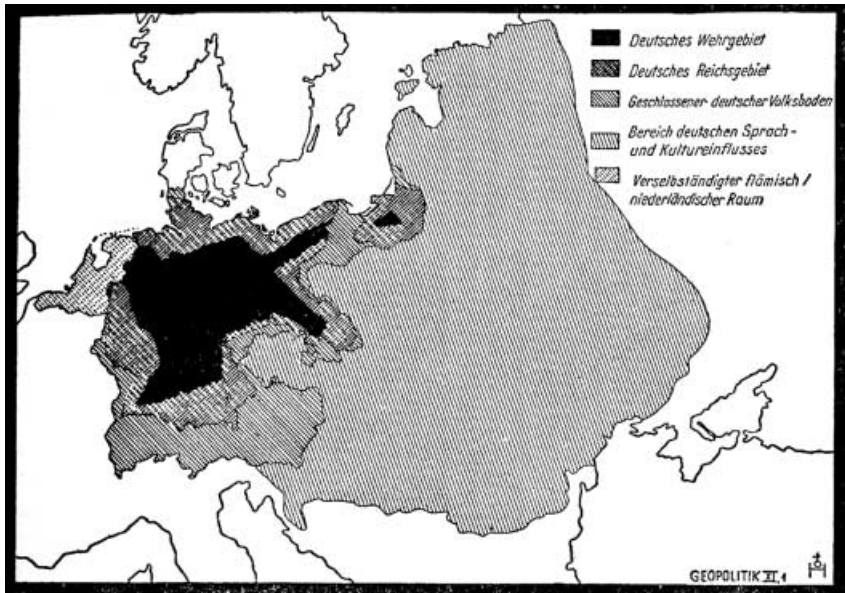
In marked contrast to German scholars, the pan-Slavist positions of Danilevskii and Lamanskii advocated an ethnolinguistic division of Europe, which would see the Slavic-speaking areas united under Russian leadership. This implied that Russian interests protruded far into the heart of German and Austro-Hungarian *Mitteleuropa* to draw in Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks, as well as Southern Slavs.

## Interbellum

If *Mitteuropa* had become a prominent moniker in Germany before World War I, it rose to even greater significance in the interwar period. The “*Diktat of Versailles*,” including territorial losses, disarmament, population displacement, and reparations, sparked strong resentment, including among academic geographers. Hettner (1919, 17), one of the most prominent German geographers of the time, lamented that before the war “most states had grown into well-defined territories,” which had now been cut into pieces. He attributes Germany’s defeat to its geographical position in the middle of Europe, *Mittellage*, which made it vulnerable to attacks from all sides. Hence, so the reasoning went, Germany had to follow the geographical exigencies of this position and stabilize its *Mittellage* by extending its reach across *Mitteuropa*. This was an area that it could rightfully lay claim to, since it was the “Easternmost representative of advanced European culture” and because of its “history as a colonizer of the East” (Hassinger 1926, 148–49). Hassinger even postulates Germany’s *Drang nach Osten* (eastward thrust) as a “cultural-geographical principle” (149).

It was but a small step from these musings to the radical expansionism of Karl Haushofer’s concept of *Geopolitik*. Haushofer had adopted the term *Geopolitik* from Kjellén, along with his idea of the organic state. Kjellén, whose ideas had become popular in Germany during the war, thus became the hidden link between Ratzel and Haushofer (Holdar 1992). Haushofer popularized the term *Geopolitik*, above all through the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, which he founded in 1924 and which experienced strong growth in circulation and in readership in the interbellum period. Haushofer’s thoughts showed a clear indebtedness to the concept of the state as an organic entity and state action as dependent on geographical, environmental conditions. States could and should grow and expand as environmental conditions and demographic needs required. That the German people “have been compressed to the last, unbearable minimum of *Lebensraum*” (Haushofer 1934, 57) and were destined to expand toward the East became a truism. With its Social Darwinist theory of the state, *Geopolitik* thus became the applied arm of political geography, providing “instruments for political action and directions for political life” (Haushofer 1928, 27).

Haushofer drew and popularized his idea through maps (see Figure 3). He envisioned something like a German Monroe doctrine, under which Germany would colonize its *Kulturboden* in the Eastern hinterland as a sphere of influence and secure a mutual guarantee of nonintervention from other states. Haushofer even went so far as to posit four large pan-regions in the world, in which Germany would have control of what he called Eurafrika, including



**Figure 12.3.** Haushofer's widely popularized map contrasting the German military area (according to the Treaty of Versailles, black) with the German *Volks- und Kulturboden* (large shaded area) (Haushofer 1934, 57)

Western Europe, *Mitteleuropa*, and all of Africa. Europe was thus almost too small for Haushofer to care about its regionalization: he was after carving up the world.

To a significant extent, the French tradition of regionalizing Europe can be regarded as a reaction to the German attempts to “invent” *Mitteleuropa* and the rise of *Geopolitik*. It reached its height during the interwar period. Whereas French geographers had before tended to write regional monographs (Parker 1987), the question of Europe and its internal borders came to the forefront in debates about the decline of Europe after World War I (Demangeon 1920) and the shape of Europe's new political geography (Ancel 1940). Whereas Paul Vidal de la Blache (1891) had made a first foray into the regionalization of Europe in 1891, principal among French geographers of the interwar period were Jacques Ancel, Albert Demangeon and Emmanuel de Martonne. De Martonne (1930, 1) positions *l'Europe centrale* as a direct response to the German concept of *Mitteleuropa*, which, he claims, entered the political parlance with World War I and aimed at legitimizing German hegemony.

To the French geographers (Demangeon and Febvre 1935), Rhineland Europe was the core of Central Europe and the core of Europe: the Rhine was

not a natural divide between Germany and France, but a busy interface. They promoted in the interbellum a European federation as an answer to the war, discussing the position of Russia and especially the UK and its empire (Demangeon 1925). In addition, they stressed the diversity of Europe; the divide between an industrialized Europe in the West and a rural Europe in the East (Demangeon 1932), also symbolized as *l'Europe du cheval vapeur* (Europe of the horsepower) and *l'Europe du cheval de trait* (Europe of the draft horse) according to Delaisi (1929); and the need to proceed through local unions between neighboring states (Demangeon 1932; see also Muet 1996).

Where German, French, and English scholarship saw a renewed engagement with Europe in the wake of World War I, in Russia the intellectual climate turned against a preoccupation with Europe. The 1920s saw the emergence of the powerful new geopolitical school of *Evraziistvo* (Eurasianism), which originated among Russian émigrés (see chapter 10 in this volume). It echoed the pan-Slavists' critique of Russia's European orientation, and indeed drew inspiration from writers such as Danilevskii. But the *Evraziitsy* went much further than the pan-Slavists: they advocated a complete dismissal of and dissociation from any notion of "Europe," which was seen as belonging to the Romano-Germanic people. Their principal exponents, Nikolai Trubetskoi (1920) and Petr Savitskii (1933), maintained that Russia was "Eurasia"—neither Europe, nor Asia, but one of its kind. In proposing this argument, the *Evraziitsy* marshaled, among other evidence, recent biogeographical studies, which showed that there were several biomes extending in a latitudinal direction throughout the Soviet Union (Bassin 1991, 16). While geographical considerations formed the foundation, the *Evraziitsy* did not hesitate to draw on a host of other disciplines to justify Russia's special, indeed transcendental, character, fusing geography with philosophy, history, economy, and politics.

In this sense, while they were not concerned with a regionalization of Europe, the Eurasianist postulate of a harmonious unity of a people with its natural surroundings echoed the organic, holistic definitions of "region" that could be found in the earlier scholarship of Ratzel (1897), Vidal de la Blache (1901, 1903), and Hettner's *Länderkunde* (1907–1924), as well as in German geography's discussion of *geographische Ganzheiten* (total geographic regions) in the 1920s and 1930s. One can see, then, that whereas the geographical objects of interest were different—Russia in one case, *Mitteleuropa* in the other—there were clear affinities in the conceptualization of regions across the continent.

## Cold War: Eastern Europe versus Western Europe

After World War II, supranational regionalizations in German political geography were stigmatized within the discipline. *Geopolitik* became a taboo word

in German geography circles, and the prominent geographer Erich Otremba stated in the mid-1950s that earlier regionalizations of *Mittleuropa* were “products of their time and over and done with” (Otremba 1957; quoted in Schultz and Natter 2003, 290). German geographers zeroed in on ostensibly apolitical activities, such as microplanning and descriptive research: “The former geopoliticians and political geographers have now become transport geographers and research morphogenetic settlement or the social geography of the ubiquitous maintenance of basic services” (Wolkersdorfer 1999, 157–58). The apologetic complicity with expansionist agendas and warmongering had altered the face of German geography for good.

Cold-War geopolitics froze the division of Europe and closed borders. Winston Churchill, by then cast out of office by British voters, coined the metaphor of an iron curtain in his famous speech at Westminster College during a 1946 lecture tour through the United States. It marked the disappearance of Central Europe and the oddity of Cold War geography when it became natural to think of Greece as Western Europe and of Czechoslovakia as Eastern Europe. As Sinnhuber (1954, 28) noted in his analysis of the term *Mittleuropa*, “It has become more and more customary in the press to refer to all countries behind the ‘Iron Curtain’ as Eastern Europe.”

This was also true of publications in political geography and geopolitics. Geographies of Europe were generally limited to Western Europe (Ilbery 1981; Knox 1984; Clout et al. 1985), or even the European Community (Parker 1983; Williams 1991; Cole and Cole 1993; 1997). Likewise, a volume titled *Underdeveloped Europe* (Seers et al. 1979) would cover the Southern and the Northwestern peripheries of Western Europe (Greece, Spain, and Portugal; Finland and Ireland). Other geographers would specialize in Eastern Europe (Hoffman 1971; Mellor 1975).

Other scholars were naturalizing this division of Europe by stressing the long-term differences in the development of Western and Eastern Europe, as if Soviet tutelage and the distinct integrative projects of the two halves of Europe were only confirming a long established difference originating in different experiences with key moments of European history: the influence of the Roman Empire, the great migrations, Western and Eastern Christianity, the Reformation, Judaism, and later secularization, settlement patterns and urbanization, serfdom, industrialization and, last but not least, the modernization of the state and nationalism. As Gottmann concluded his *Geography of Europe* in 1950,

Yet if one endeavors to reduce the variety and the complexity of Europe to a small number of dominant elements, there are two ways of simplifying and reducing the whole involved situation to the struggle between two influences. One way is to say that there is and there seems always to have been an East and

a West in Europe. The other way is to say that there has always been some opposition between the maritime countries and the continental countries. And both simplifications could be combined, especially in the middle of the twentieth century. When western Europe considers itself primarily a part of the "Atlantic community." Thus there are two Europes: one western and oceanic, the other eastern and continental (Gottmann 1950, 651).

### **Post-Cold-War Openings: Constructing EUrope and its Neighborhood**

Just as *perestroika* and the end of the Cold War brought about new political openings, geographers, too, started to push the conceptual boundaries of the discipline. Political geography, which some had written off as a "moribund backwater" (Berry 1969) during the Cold-War period, made a remarkable rebound in the Anglophone world in the 1980s. Toward the end of the 1980s, Anglophone political geographers began to embrace a constructivist paradigm of regionalization that was not so much concerned with how to delimit regions but rather with explaining how such delimitations came about. It took some time for other countries to follow suit: Germany saw the reemergence of political geography in the 2000s (e.g., Reuber and Wolkersdorfer 2001), but drew much of its inspiration from Anglophone political geography, thus making it difficult to speak of a distinct national tradition. By contrast, a specific school of subversive geopolitics emerged in France with the journal *Hérodote* (Lacoste 1976; 1993; see also Mamadouh 1998).

Arguably, the most incisive and influential push to conceptualize regions as constructs originated in the work of the Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi (1991; 1996). Regions are constructed and stabilized through a social process which gives a symbolic shape (a name), a territorial shape (with known borders), an institutional shape through a dense network of social interactions and a position in relation to other places in the world. Such analysis also reveals how the identity of a region is intertwined with the regional identity of its inhabitants.

Paasi's descriptive-explanatory approach to regionalization has developed alongside more radical strands that seek to unravel the ideological moorings and political interests behind the construction of regions. The field of critical geopolitics, a prominent approach in contemporary political geography originating in the late 1980s (Dalby 1988; Ó Tuathail 1987; 1989), challenges the purported objectivity of geopolitics and wants to uncover the ways in which actors occupying privileged speaker positions deploy a strategic construction of space that inscribes hegemonic power relations. Other attempts to contest and critique regionalization processes have included various forms of subversive geographies (anarchist, anti-imperialist, anticapitalist), which expose

the political, economic, or racist interests behind the construction of regions (e.g., Mercille 2008; Sparke 1998); political geographies of peace, which take issue with the antagonistic conceptualization of power blocs pitted against each other (e.g., Megoran 2011); and feminist geographies, which seek to deconstruct regionalization as a masculinist, domineering production of geographical knowledge (e.g., Rose 1993).

The fall of the Iron Curtain and the emerging mosaic of new states, new nationalisms, and new regionalisms, as well as the integrative thrust of the EU, offered ample opportunities for constructivist political geographers to test their new-found tools. The basic premise was that there is not one Europe, but a plethora of Europes, depending on the lens one adopts (Agnew 2001; Kuus et al. 2005). This realization opened the path for thinking about different regionalizations and their consequences from different perspectives.

One central debate unfurled around different degrees of Europeanness and the apparent West-East gradient in Europe. EU or non-EU was addressed as perhaps the most crucial bipartite regionalization, first for Finland (Browning 2002; Moisio 2008) and then for the former Communist countries (Berg 2003; Kuus 2004; 2007; Moisio 2002; 2007).

A second perspective examined regional knowledge and discursive region-making—in public and intellectual discourse (e.g., O'Loughlin 2001), but also in diplomatic circles and EU institutions (Kuus 2011; 2014; Jones and Clark 2011). Schott (2007), for example, investigated what he called the geopolitical imaginations of high-ranking officials at the European Commission and in selected member states. He mapped these geopolitical imaginations to compare the geopolitical regionalizations of different states and that of the European Commission.

A third perspective discussed processes of Europeanization, asking how places become a part of Europe, and how this happened at various speeds that created discontinuities within the European Union (Clark and Jones 2008; 2009; 2011; Jones and Clark 2008; Moisio et al. 2013; Rovnyi and Bachmann 2012). Europeanization here refers both to the formal institutional mechanisms of integration toward an ever deeper union, and to more informal, mundane processes of “feeling European” or “arguing with and through Europe,” as, for example, during Ukraine’s Euro-Maidan in the winter of 2013–14. Bialasiewicz et al. (2005) have analyzed how the many spatialities of Europe, and more specifically the territory of the EU, have been constituted, both internally and externally, in the European constitutional treaty that was eventually rejected by the 2005 French and Dutch referenda. They highlight the territorial ambiguities of the EU project between “still-territorial imperatives” regarding security and migration policies and “unlimited ideals of justice and human rights.”

In a fourth and final perspective, political geographers became increasingly concerned with Europe's outside and Other. The dual concept of b/ordering framed this relationship, where drawing borders is considered essential for ordering space. The construction of Russia as a non-European Other, particularly to reinforce the eastern member states' European character, attracted a certain amount of attention, and scholars proposed that having an outside was necessary in the first place to constitute something like a European identity (Browning 2003; Kuus 2004; 2007). The question of Europe's outside led to debates about Europe's borders and where Europe ends, which were fueled by plans to include Ukraine and Turkey as membership candidates (Fassmann 2002; Reuber et al. 2005; Scott and Van Houtum 2009). Borders and margins have provided particularly productive sites for researching the nature of Europe and the renegotiation of Europeanness and non-Europeanness in the process of enlargement negotiations and the formulation of the European Neighborhood policy, which was developed in the 2000s to regulate the relations of the European Union with its surroundings (Ciută 2008; Bialasiewicz et al. 2009; 2011; 2013; Browning and Christou 2010).

While constructivist debates dominated the cutting edge of the field, the political upheaval at the beginning of the 1990s and the reordering of the European political landscape also sparked several classical attempts at regionalizing the new Europe rather than deconstructing its regionalization. A flurry of edited collections appeared that focused on the part of Europe that had, until then, been behind the Iron Curtain (e.g., O'Loughlin and Van der Wusten 1993; Hall and Danta 1996; Carter et al. 1998; Turnock 2001; 2003; Bradshaw and Stenning 2004). The major regionalizations of Europe that political geographers identified were mostly tied to the varying degrees of EU integration: the Schengen zone, the Euro area, the accession states, the EU neighborhood, the European Economic Area, and so on. Alternatively, regionalizations were proposed on the basis of different degrees of integration or of progress in transition, such as were measured with the transition indicators of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the regions designed for regional planning purposes for the INTERREG programs, for example (Scott 2002, 159). Such politico-economic markers largely replaced the cultural and topographical delimitations of Europe of old.

Many textbooks introducing the reunited Europe to students again and again document the enduring demographic, economic, cultural, and political differences between Western and Eastern Europe, even as they reinscribe Central Europe (often using the term Central and Eastern Europe) on the map of Europe (Graham 1998; Heffernan 1998; Unwin 1998; Hudson and Williams 1999). Rumford, discussing economic transformations in the multifaceted textbook *Modern Europe* (Graham 1998), mapped the economic core



of Europe and its peripheries. Similar structural differences were highlighted in the concise introduction to the organization of European space coauthored by Jönsson, Tägil, and Törnqvist (2000), which foregrounded population density, urbanization patterns, infrastructure, and economic activities and added “urbanized and (post)industrialized” to “western and oceanic” to Gottmann’s simplification of fifty years earlier (quoted above). Some geographers have tried to capture the West-East gradient with an index of Europeanness: for instance, Lévy (1997) distinguished five grades. During the Cold War, Jordan (1973, 11) had scored nations on twelve “European” cultural traits, but in a later, post-Cold-War edition (2002), he and his coauthor provided more nuanced portraits, distinguishing a West-East gradient based on a score of nine Eastern traits (394–97), a North–South gradient based on seven Southern traits (397–99), and a synthetic clustering with four different cores (Romance, Germanic, north Slavic, and Danubian) and their peripheries (404–5).

## Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed geographical regionalizations of Europe in political geography and (critical) geopolitics. Despite the significant evolution of the concept of region and the conceptualization of the causes of the regionalization of Europe, the enduring nature of the big divides (maritime/continental; east/west) is noteworthy. Nowadays, EEurope (the European integration project driven by the European Union) shapes the representation of the regionalization of Europe, foregrounding gradients of Europeanness that run eastward from the Western core area. Although academic geography has experienced a recent turn toward constructivism, with interest turning to how regions are made rather than where to best draw the boundaries between them, regionalizations of Europe continue to be propagated in textbooks. It is thus too early to herald the advent of a postregional Europe. If anything, the recent wave of fiscal and currency crises that have struck Europe have sparked a resurgence of regional thinking. Regionalizations of Europe, then, are never over and done with, no matter how often geographers may invoke the “death of the region.”

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## Chapter 13

# Economics

*Georgy Ganev*



The task of describing patterns of contemporaneous conceptual regionalization<sup>1</sup> in Europe according to economic factors is at once seemingly easy and extremely difficult. It is seemingly easy due to clear institutional divisions within the economic sphere for most of the period under consideration (the twentieth century), which most of the time quite neatly divide different European countries into different groups. At the same time, it is difficult due to the fact that how contemporary people conceptualize the division among European regions according to economic factors is next to impossible to trace beyond a few academic publications, which reflect the public's attitudes only to a limited extent. It is very tempting, but would be methodologically indefensible, to try to use noneconomic divisions, even though they are clear and contemporaneous, as a basis for the story. A prime example of such a division at present is the Schengen area. It is a clear regional concept, but it is not economic, even if some economic consequences do occur. It is a regionalization based on border security considerations, and there is not even a single economic criterion among the many criteria for membership in this area. Thus it cannot serve to define contemporaneous conceptual regionalization in Europe according to economic factors.

The problem of determining how the economic regions of Europe were framed becomes even more acute the further back in time one goes, due to the fact that economic considerations seem not to have had a separate importance, and regionalization evolved mostly along other lines, such as political, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or cultural. At the same time, further back in history the clear institutional compartmentalization of the twentieth century was not present. The more subjective, or academic, exercises are usually affected by at least three factors. The first is the authors' own inherited opinions as



to the important determinants of regionalization. The second is the chosen methodology for discovering and determining the borders and the intrinsic qualities of the different regions—an exercise in which improvisation, intuition, and metaphors seemingly always supersede qualitative rigor, and in which even the possibility of such rigor can reasonably be questioned. And, third, more often than not such regionalizations are not strictly contemporaneous, but follow economic realities with a significant lag.

The more objective, or institutional, divisions of Europe into regions suffer mostly from two different objections. First, while they are to a large extent really objective, coming from the outside, they are not aiming at discovering economic realities, but mostly at serving the purposes of the “outsider”—such as, for example, the League of Nations, or the United Nations with its specialized bodies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as more recently the European Union (EU), despite its very peculiar position as both supranational body and also “insider.”

When trying to describe the contemporaneous economic regionalizations of Europe, it is impossible to select one of the two approaches based on rigorous reasoning. A natural outcome of this recognition is the choice of describing and following both as much as possible while keeping in mind their deficiencies. As will become clear, in reality this has a bearing on the structure of the chapter due to the fact that the academic studies focusing specifically on economic realities are relatively recent and feature mostly in the discussion of the last quarter of a century, while further back in time the institutional divisions were prevalent.

Another methodological issue is the starting point of European economic regionalization. Usually, a convenient starting point is a specific large and important event or some sort of cataclysm that can serve as a visible break both in economic structure and in perceptions. But this approach must bear in mind that there is a certain inertia in economic perceptions, and they do not necessarily change quickly due to a specific event. Nevertheless, such an approach comes nearest to the possibility of having a clear and defensible starting point, and therefore it is the approach taken here.

Along these lines, the starting point of this analysis is the end of World War I. It is chosen for two main reasons. First, it is a clear breaking point, coming after a relatively long period of dominance of the Great Powers regime, which formed after the Vienna Congress and evolved only slowly into a status quo with several empires and some peripheries. This relatively clear structure obviously had a bearing on economic regionalization as well. World War I shattered this status quo and gave birth to the supranational organization, the League of Nations, which covered a significant part of the continent, and, besides its political role, had a very specific economic role to fulfill. The

other regionalization was also clearly institutionally distinguished in the communist experiment.

Therefore, at the end of World War I there is a clear break with the old status quo, and the emergence of an institutional framework allowing for the observation of contemporaneous patterns of regionalization. From then on, institutional developments on the European continent allow for a relatively coherent story about the different European regions within the institutional framework, shaped to a large extent by the parallel development of the United Nations with its bodies, the European Economic Community, and the socialist bloc.

The end of this period in 1989 brought another reshaping of the institutional framework on the continent, but also coincided with the almost explosive emergence of a number of academic studies on regionalization and its prospects on the continent. While not unrelated to one specific institutional development, namely the EU's regional policies, this academic development presents a parallel and relatively independent view on European economic regions, which allows us to delve into a more informed analysis and attempt some more generalized inferences.

## The Age of Empires

World War I marked the end of an era in the development of the European continent, and this was the era of the Great Powers. Even though the century preceding the war was marked by important developments, revolutions, experimentation with forms of government and constitutional setups, and also by the emergence of the last two great nation-states on the continent (Italy and Germany), the institutional structure was relatively clear and functioning. It was the age of European (colonial) empires, and the clear establishment and observance of most of the relevant borders meant a relatively clear division of economic space as well. Seemingly unruly regions, such as the Iberian and Balkan peninsulas, were also gradually incorporated into this international order. During this period most of the relevant cleavages, including economic ones, naturally fell around the imperial borders.

At least in the trade and monetary area, however, there were deliberate attempts to create supranational structures, some of which were relatively successful. Three such examples can be given. The most successful effort in this respect, ultimately leading to the integration of the different participating parts into a single state, was the *Deutsche Zollverein*, or the customs union of the German lands, which began in the 1820s and expanded to include most of the German states. Coupled with the operation of the gold standard and standardization of coinage and of weights and measures, this deliberate economic integration really did create a common economic space.

There are at least two other attempts at supranational structures in the monetary area, both based on the gold standard: the Latin and the Scandinavian monetary unions. The Latin monetary union was created in the 1860s on the initiative of France, incorporating Switzerland, Italy, and Belgium. It extended to the two troublesome peninsulas mentioned above—the Iberian Peninsula (Spain) and the Balkans—with the membership of Greece and later association of Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Using standardized coinage and free acceptance of the different currencies, it operated relatively successfully for a number of years, coming to an end only with the tensions of World War I, which *de facto* ended it; *de jure* dissipation came in 1927.

The Scandinavian monetary union, inspired to some extent by the developments in Germany and the Latin countries, was established in 1873 over the northern portion of the European continent and was a relative novelty in that even banknotes were interchangeable and accepted across borders. Though it had overcome various tensions, this monetary union was also brought to an end by World War I, with the *de jure* dissipation coming in 1924.

These examples show that World War I was a true cataclysm, economic as well as political and military, in that it brought about a change in established or emerging economic structures throughout the continent. The age of empires was effectively over, and other factors came into play in delimiting the economic regions in Europe.

In terms of deliberate scholarly reflection on the issue of economic regionalization in Europe during this period, the economic literature does not offer much material. This is probably because economics as a discipline was itself only emerging during the nineteenth century, and even at the end of the imperial period its very methods as a science were under contention, culminating in the well-known *Methodenstreit* between the Austrian and the historical schools of economics.

It is relatively easy to identify definite spatial overtones in the initial literature on economics. Adam Smith's (1776, book 1, part 3) concept of the "extent of the market" has a direct territorial and spatial meaning. The same is true of Malthus's (1826) idea about the link between economic prosperity and population, including population density relative to agricultural resources (see also chapter 14 in this volume). Ricardo's (1821) concept of comparative advantage can immediately be translated into regionalization based on resource availability and geographical characteristics. However, all these ideas did not secure concrete implementation for specifying economic regions and could only serve as starting points toward such a classification. On a theoretical level, both the insights of the Scottish Enlightenment and later developments by Ricardo and Malthus do contain the seeds of a potential theory of regional development, but such a theory was never actually formulated. On

an empirical level, there do exist comparisons—for example, between England and the Netherlands, France, or Spain—but they are more national than regional in character and pertain to illustrating theoretical concepts different from the ones that might lead to a theory of economic regionalization.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the major thrust of economic science followed the example of the natural sciences and developed theories and inferences based on universal and generally valid principles, deliberately ignoring differences based on context and specific environments. Only the German historical school was interested in context. The thinking of some of its representatives, such as Schmoller (1900–1904) and Wagner (1902), has definite spatial and regional overtones, and much of the enormous amount of concrete data gathered by them could potentially lead to a definition of explicitly regional aspects of economic development. Also, even earlier the push toward the *Zollverein* indicated clear thinking on the part of precursors and early representatives of German historicism beyond political borders and toward a conceptualization of the idea of a common economic space.

Thus it is no surprise that the most significant concept leading to definite regionalization in Europe sprung precisely from the German historical school. It is to be found in Weber's ([1905] 1930) division based on aspects of religious beliefs, which basically split Europe into southern/Catholic and northern/Protestant regions with different economic development. Even though, from the point of view of identifying specific economic regions, the Catholic-Protestant/southern-northern division based on Weber's insight is still quite crude, it is nevertheless a valuable effort in creating a concept for the basis of differences between different modes of economic development on the continent.

## The Interwar Period

In terms of economic regionalization, the period between the two world wars features relatively clear institutional structure and is dominated by two related processes, which are both political and economic. The first is the emergence of a new structure and subsequent recovery after World War I, and the second is the positioning leading to World War II. In terms of the first process, the economic structure in interwar Europe can be described mostly by the outcome of the war itself, and the European continent can be split in four. This split is loosely based on the divisions implicit in the activity of the Economic and Financial Organization of the League of Nations (Clavin and Wessels 2005).

A central, stable place in this structure is held by the countries which won the war, mostly the UK and France, which seemed to be the ones setting the

agenda and looking for solutions not only on the economic issues, but more generally. They can be seen as the order-providing core, even though it is a matter of careful consideration whether they were successful in managing this task. One opposite party to this core was devastated Germany, coupled with debilitating punitive debt obligations imposed by the victors. The country was not allowed to become a member of the League of Nations and was de facto turned into an outsider, left to cope alone in an unfriendly environment (until 1926, when it was finally accepted). Another opposite pole to the leading core was communist Russia, and later the Soviet Union. This was a territory in the far eastern part of the continent, which was effectively torn from whatever level of economic integration into the overall European economy it had achieved. Like Germany, it did not become a member of the League of Nations and was not involved in its economic activities. This economic space took off on a completely separate economic trajectory, a fact clearly recognized by all contemporaries (see, e.g., Webb and Webb 1935).

Besides the two large nonmembers of the League of Nations, who by this very institutional setup formed a separate economic space, there were the countries in Eastern Europe, many of which had newly emerged after the war (Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary), or greatly expanded in the wake of the war relative to the period of the Empires (Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece, and to a lesser extent Bulgaria). Most of these countries faced severe economic difficulties and needed economic assistance, which was provided through the institutional setup of the League of Nations.

The second part of the interwar period was marked by two interrelated developments: the Great Depression and the repositioning on the continent, both political and economic, which ultimately led to another world war. The Great Depression, quite like the Great Recession eighty years later, hit the core as well as Germany hard. Its effect on the Soviet dynamics was less obvious, except that it made the Soviet model of economic organization look even more intriguing and attractive. Its effect on the periphery in Central and Southeastern Europe was mostly a consequence of their own internal weaknesses, rather than of transfer of the Depression dynamics.

The latter part of the 1930s saw a clear division of Europe into three parts, which were also visibly separated economically. Western Europe, with its (relative) market democracies continued to have a specific and separate economic dynamic. (East) Central Europe became dominated by dictatorships or dictatorial regimes, and also became economically dominated by Germany, which served as a major economic attractor. This tendency of the time is explicitly evident in the “*Lebensraum*” concept, in the resurfacing of the “*Drang nach Osten*” (Spread to the East) slogan around the Sudeten crisis,<sup>2</sup> and the specialized trade and economic agreements between Germany and East-

European economies such as Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Finally, the Soviet Union, with its five-year plans, continued on its own trajectory, clearly noted and distinguished by many contemporary observers both empirically (Webb and Webb 1935) and theoretically as exemplified in the socialist calculation debate (e.g., Lange 1936 and 1937).

This clear separation and lack of economic integration should be considered among the leading factors that made the second severe armed conflict within a human generation in Europe possible. The very observation of the relevance of such an economic factor, then, should be considered as a major impetus for the formation of a new political, but also economic, order in Europe after World War II.

During the armed conflict of 1939–45, a vision for the development of a specific European economic vision was drafted and put into practice. This was the implementation of the *Generalplan Ost* of Nazi Germany (Madańczyk 1990, Müller 1991), aimed at Eastern Europe, and especially at Ukraine. Being essentially a plan for economic colonization of the territory of Eastern Europe, it necessarily included a certain vision for the economic purpose of this space. In general, this purpose was seen in terms of specialization in raw materials provision and in agricultural output serving the needs of the more highly developed industrial heartland of the Third Reich.

Thus, even though it is relevant only to a part of Europe, namely portions of Central and Eastern Europe, the *Generalplan Ost* essentially combines two distinct principles of economic regionalization, which will continue to emerge throughout the present study. The first is division along certain geographical lines, in this case West and East. The second is division based on specialization, in this case an industrialized, developed, high-value-added core, or center, and a less developed hinterland or periphery with low-value-added primary outputs (raw materials, foodstuffs).

## The Iron Curtain Period

Institutional factors continued to dominate the economic divisions within Europe in the wake of World War II. However, in the Western part of the continent, the division clearly became more complex, involving different levels of economic groupings and decisions. At the same time, the West-East divide, which emerged along ideological lines after World War I, moved from the relative periphery of the continent to its very center in the form of the Iron Curtain, which included not only political and military juxtaposition, but also a strong economic split. As a structural consequence, there was very little room for a relative periphery between the two camps, or blocs.

In the East, a clearly defined and easily observed economic bloc emerged as a result of the establishment of communist dictatorships. After their political settling, these dictatorships introduced economic changes based on the communist ideology, involving specific organization of economic life. Several years later, in the mid-1950s, the next step was taken and a supranational economic organization, the COMECON (formally Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, or CMEA) was formed. For the next three decades, this part of Europe became a distinct and clearly defined separate economic region, based on state-owned property, full-scale economic planning, and Soviet Union-dominated international division of labor and trade.

In terms of regionalization, the COMECON can simultaneously be seen as creating divisions among and homogenizing the different European members of the Eastern bloc. The divisions mainly involved different members of the bloc specializing in different specific industries (products) with a somewhat limited intra-industry division of labor. The homogenization came from the fact that all countries were expected to develop both raw materials, agriculture, and lighter and heavier industries, so that none could be seen as subordinate to others in the economic chain of value added. Despite this second thrust of the COMECON, it is clear that in terms of planning, coordination, decision making, and conflict resolution there was a definite center—the USSR—and a clearly defined periphery: the other socialist countries.

This Eastern, or socialist, bloc was characterized by relatively strong trade integration, internal transfers based on centrally made decisions about the prices at which goods were to be traded and the division of labor between various participating states, and the clear leading role of the dominating Soviet Union. However, it did not include all countries embracing socialism—for example, Yugoslavia and Albania remained a less integrated periphery. In the case of Yugoslavia, the country established relatively strong ties with the Western part of the continent.

In the West, initially at least, three different processes developed simultaneously, overlaying each other, and having different effects in terms of economic integration, linking, and ultimately regionalization. The first such process was the Marshall Plan (formally the European Recovery Program). It involved aid (capital transfers) from the USA to all European countries desiring to participate, which ultimately included all of what would be termed Western Europe (but including Greece and Turkey), except for Spain and Finland. The rejection of the proposed 1947 plan by the Soviet Union and its satellites was a clear, institutionalized indication of the economic split of the European continent. Regardless of how the concrete effects of the plan are viewed and assessed, its very existence and unfolding in the specific context

of the time indicated the major economic divide that was to dominate the European continent for the next four decades.

The second process in Western Europe was integration within the framework of international cooperation and joint decision making realized through the United Nations Organization (UNO). In terms of the economic importance of this development, the relevant structures were the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the UNO-parented international financial organizations known as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Both were established to provide assistance for development and financial stability to member states. The formation of Western Europe as a region is most evident in the lists of memberships of countries in these bodies.

The strongest impetus for regionalization in Western Europe, however, came through the process of deliberate European integration known today as the European Union. Its very beginning (in the form of the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Atomic Energy Community) was strictly driven by economic considerations, and especially by the desire to render further armed conflicts between European states less likely through close economic ties and interdependence. The institutional framework of the European Union through time provided a clear trajectory for the development of different economic regions on the continent from the time of its creation in the early 1950s. It also allowed the formation of various groupings within the Union itself, due to its capacity to develop different processes within the same general framework.

Initially, the specific integrational effort by the six founding members (France, German Federal Republic, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) clearly set them apart with respect to the other Western European countries and established an easily identifiable European economic region defined by free trade, first in specific resources, but with the target of a general free trade zone and eventually a common market.

After the evident initial success of the arrangement, it started attracting the interest of other European countries, especially the UK, which until then had always formed a somewhat separate entity in any European regionalization. This resulted in the first expansion of the European Union to include the UK, Ireland, and Denmark, increasing this specific economic region of Europe and greatly expanding its potential. From then on, the EU has been a major attractor and structuring force for the Western (and later the whole) European economic space. However loose (at least at the beginning), its institutional character demonstrates a high level of self-identified regionalization of the continental economic space. Its expansion has led to specific developments in this sphere as well, by gradually forming distinct “camps” within the Union.



This process began clearly with the second expansion of the Union in the 1980s, when within the space of several years a clearly recognized southern periphery was admitted in the form of Greece, Spain, and Portugal. A major legitimizing factor in this second expansion was the concept of economic convergence. More specifically, one of the postulates of neoclassical economics, namely the understanding of diminishing marginal returns to capital and therefore the inevitable—within a common economic space—catching-up of less capitalized countries with more capitalized countries in terms of real income per capita, clearly served as a strong argument in favor of expansion. The economic reality was that this development led to the introduction of significant economic disparities within the Union (which before that had mostly been confined to the contrast between Southern Italy, and in part Ireland, and the rest of the Union) on a relatively massive scale that was impossible to ignore. Economic convergence, even when it really happens, takes time, while the disparities immediately turn into political reality.

There were two results of this change. First, already in the 1980s there were calls within the union to institutionalize the fact of the differences in level of economic development and integration so that more developed and less developed and integrated parts of the union had their own paths. This concept gradually became known as the idea for Multispeed Europe. Second, and in opposition to the idea of separate development paths within the union, came the first conscious attempts to introduce convergence, or cohesion, policies, with the side effect of a strengthened interest in the regional dimensions of the European economic landscape and development.

### **From Transition to Eastern Enlargement**

In 1989 two processes relevant to the dynamics of perceived economic regionalization in Europe came to a critical point. The first was the competition between the two big blocs, ideologically and institutionally divided straight down the middle of the continent. After going through a series of convulsions during the late 1970s and the 1980s, the socialist bloc collapsed, while at the same time Western Europe demonstrated a relatively good growth capacity and improved standards of living. The second process was related to internal EU developments and had an academic character, namely the development of spatial models of regional economic development, which led to a series of metaphorical formalizations of perceived regions within the Western European, and later broadly European, economy.

At the same time, within the EU the increased variety of member states and continued institutional innovation led to specific internal divisions, once again (after the nineteenth century) centered on the issue of monetary union.

In any case, besides the institutional changes in Eastern Europe due to the collapse of the planned economies, the institutional changes within the EU continued to provide a rich institutional basis for changes in economic regionalization, despite the emergence of different, more academic and visionary, perceptions of existing regions.

The collapse of communism and the planned economies of the Soviet bloc, coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union itself, was the beginning of another major institutional turbulence in the eastern part of the European continent. The definition of this region can be clearly traced by following the activities of various international financial institutions, with none more clear than the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Created for the sole purpose of providing support for countries in transition from planned to market economies, it had a very specific area of focus, initially covering the European members of the socialist bloc, and later the separate countries resulting from the split of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Geographically, the area recognized in this manner as “Transition Europe” spans the territory from Central Europe to Central Asia as far as Mongolia.

The main publication of the EBRD, the series under the title “Transition Report,” clearly identified three separate economic regions, differentiated by the bank’s set of “transition indicators,” within this vast space: the CEB (Central Europe and the Baltics), the SEE (South-Eastern Europe), and CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States, the ex-Soviet Union). In terms of relatively successful self-identification, four of the CEB countries, namely Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary, identified themselves early on as the Visegrad Four and embarked on a process of relatively quick integration into the European Union.

In fact, the splitting of Transition Europe in three by the EBRD turned out to anticipate subsequent events quite correctly. The group identified as transition leaders (the CEB) were the ones who managed within fifteen years of the change in 1989 to become members of the EU. The middle group (the SEE) were considered as doubtful about integrating into Europe, and it has turned out that some of these countries are now members (Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia) while others are still far from membership. The third group (the CIS) has very poor prospects for EU integration and is still undergoing economic, as well as political, transition and turbulence.

The center of gravity defining these movements in Transition Europe, it becomes clear, is the European Union. Ultimately, it is around this center that the Eastern European countries are ordered—from relatively deeply integrated (CEB), to relatively poorly integrated (Bulgaria, Romania), to non-integrated (part of the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe), to actively oppos-

ing (Russia, Belarus). In effect, the change during these years has been that a select number of Eastern European countries have managed to transform themselves from the relatively richer Western part of the Soviet bloc to the relatively poorer, but integrating, part of the European Union.

Thus the EU has become the defining general framework within which and in relation to which economic regions in Europe are perceived and are actually formed. It seems that its internal developments and dynamics will continue to be the defining factor for the actual and the perceived regionalization of Europe for some time to come. Probably the most encompassing metaphor describing the presence of a variety of different levels, directions, and tempos of development on the continent is the image of Multispeed Europe, which can be applied in different degrees to all concrete examples of conceptual regionalizations given below.

### **Blue Banana and Beyond: New Models of Economic Regionalization**

The process of conceptualizing the developmental and integrational challenges facing the European Union after it accepted countries in the 1980s that, in economic terms, clearly belonged to a periphery led to the emergence of specific regional policies and to the formulation of explicit notions about how the European economic space is structured in terms of identifiable regions. Within the period 1989–2002 at least six such metaphors emerged, each having at least some idiosyncratic specifics.

It was in 1989 that Roger Brunet (1989) developed an image of a core of the European economy along a curved discontinuous corridor, later termed “The Blue Banana” due to its shape on the map. Covering the economic area from Northwest England to Northwest Italy, the area exhibits relatively high levels of real income per capita, seems to concentrate very high levels of economic activity, and seems to be an attractor for other areas. Later interpretations developed this idea, expanding it to include some of the areas along the Mediterranean (down to Northeastern Spain) and indicating specific potential directions for expansion of this formation (Hospers 2003, Figure 1). This included three specific peripheries to the core: Western (Ireland, Western France, and the Iberian Peninsula), Northern (Scotland and Scandinavia), and Eastern (from Central Europe down to Southern Italy).

This metaphorical image was the first to grab public attention and people’s imaginations, and was to serve as the basis of further similar exercises, some of which will be mentioned below. However, it is based on a relatively rigorous application of specific spatial concepts and ordering according to a set of economic indicators, and it holds useful information beyond the mere image.

The question, as is the case with all other representations here of the European economic space, is the extent to which it reflects generally held perceptions about regionalization, and also the extent to which such representations influence such perceptions in the general public or in other academic circles.

Interestingly, the image of the Blue Banana carries a certain resemblance to much older economic patterns in Europe, in particular the reemergence of long-distance trade and the formation of relatively independent cities after the Dark Ages, especially related to the transfer of goods through the Alps northward using the Rhine. This economic core was later reinforced both during the blossoming of ocean trade routes in the early modern period and once again during the industrial revolution. It is actually quite natural for this area to continue to be an economic core some two centuries later.

Only a year after the Blue Banana, Lutzky (1990, summarized in English in Nijkamp 1993, 11 and Figure 5, and also noted in Metaxas and Tzavdaridou 2013, 16–17 and Figure 2) significantly expanded on the idea, incorporating notions of the international division of labor based on certain geographical and natural economic advantages. The result is an image of Europe of the Seven Apartments, each with its own specific features. In this image, Apartment 2 corresponds quite clearly to the Blue Banana and is named “Technology Network West.” The other six apartments are, to an extent, of special interest, mostly because they also seem to reproduce relatively traditional, even ancient, perceived divisions. Apartment 1, for example, called “The Sun Belt” and spanning Greece, Italy, the Mediterranean islands, and the Iberian Peninsula—that is, roughly from Istanbul to Lisbon—is seen as an agrarian and recreational space, also providing labor force for the Banana. Its geography literally overlaps with the ancient Hellenistic and Roman economic space. Apartment 3, named “North-Sea Partners,” encompasses the North Sea and its neighbors from Scotland through Eastern England to the northern parts of the lowlands (today the Netherlands and Belgium), Denmark, and Norway. It is seen as specializing in working the resources of the North Sea, including food and energy, and providing harbors and shipbuilding services. Apartment 4, named quite directly “Baltic Hanse,” is another clear reference to an economic region of older times. Like the North Sea region, it is envisaged in this regionalization as providing sea-related services, some raw materials (especially timber), and trade routes for channeling other resources to the core.

The other three apartments comprise the regions of the old Soviet bloc, newly emerged from decades of planned economy. They quite closely coincide with the implicit division, mentioned above, of this same vast region by the EBRD, and the three apartments are almost exactly the same as the three groups from the Transition Reports. The only difference is that Lutzky distinguishes them not according to progress along a set of transition indica-

tors, but along spatial dimensions and lines of potential specialization under the envisaged common European division of labor. Thus Apartment 5 is the "Middle-European Capitals," including the four Visegrad capitals, Berlin, and Vienna. It is envisaged as a very competitive extension of the Banana, specializing in administrative activities, research and development, heavy industry, and trade both as a transit and as internally generated flows. In this way, the vision of Lutzky, not unlike Brunet's original idea, envisages an actual expansion of the Banana to the East. Apartment 6 corresponds to the CIS area from the Transition Reports, including mostly the ex-Soviet republics, and is appropriately named "East-Slavic Federation." Following another traditional stereotype, which nevertheless seems to be confirmed by later economic data, this region is envisaged as a provider mostly of fuels, raw materials, and agricultural products. Given the low value-added of this specialization, it is expected to remain the poorest of the European apartments. Finally, Apartment 7 is quite optimistically named "Balkan Take-Off," expected to develop toward providing light industry products, foods, and transportation services. It was also expected to be among the poorer regions due to its specialization. The expected take-off has not materialized yet, but in defense of this vision it must be said that political factors and armed conflict may have played a more important role than the economic specifics underlying the particular vision of the Europe of Apartments.

Overall, this vision is among the clearest views of a regionalized Europe. The vision is based on both economic and spatial considerations and on historically established areas related to longer traditions. It clearly shows a desire to see Europe as a single economic space—a single home, with one roof, but with different and specialized rooms and with naturally occurring disparities.

Immediately after these two conceptualizations of European economic regional development, a third one emerged, forming somewhat of a trend in thinking. Kunzmann and Wegener (1991) presented the idea of Europe as a bunch of grapes, called "The Green Grape" in obvious reference to the Blue Banana imagery. In this metaphorical image, the regional development of Europe is presented both statically and dynamically. Its main concept is the idea that a large number of relatively clearly separable urban bubbles (areas centered in economic terms around a relatively large urban formation) are connected with different kinds of economic and infrastructural links. Thus some already form a cluster of such interconnected bubbles, and others will continue to form and join the cluster, which has in this manner an almost limitless (geographical) capacity for expansion.

Kunzmann and Wegener's image is both similar and different from the Blue Banana and Europe of the Apartments metaphors. It is similar in that the several core urban bubbles around which the cluster is forming are in fact

the Blue Banana, only this time presented as a connected series of large and highly integrated urbanized areas. From this point of view, the Green Grape may be considered another extension of the idea that economic regions of Europe are defined and will be developing in their economic and geographic relation to this core. However, Kunzmann and Wegener's bunch of grapes can also be interpreted as a much more horizontal and less hierarchical ordering of regions than Brunet's idea of a single super-region (the Banana), or Lutzky's idea of several regions that are all centered on and somehow defined by their relations with this same center. The idea of a bunch of grapes conveys the possibility of a relatively horizontal network of different urban areas and points toward much less hierarchy and a much more equal footing between the different grapes in the cluster. This image much more strongly conveys the idea of separate linkages, independent from a specific core, between different regions.

Another feature of the bunch of grapes idea is that its understanding of the regionalization of Europe is closer to the institutional view of the European Union and the then-emerging concept of a "Europe of regions." The regions in both cases are considered to be subnational, not supranational. Even though not limited by national borders, they form (or coagulate) around certain urban centers and their size is visibly smaller than the size of the economies of the countries. Thus the overall image is that Europe's economic regions will be many, small, and relatively horizontally connected in a complex network.

Several years after the first three emblematic metaphorical images of European economic regionalization emerged in the academic literature, a new strong image appeared in Van der Meer (1998). Again, its basis can be traced to the Blue Banana concept of a core, but it offered a specific and different vision about the manner of growing interconnectedness and extending regionalization. When a map is drawn of these extensions from the core, the image looks like the spread tentacles of an octopus.

In short, the image indicates clear "corridors," lines, or tentacles of spreading economic linkages, all of them stemming from the original Banana. This spread is envisaged as moving in all directions, except of course due north, where there is only sea. These directions include northeast toward Stockholm through Hamburg and Copenhagen; due east through Berlin to Warsaw and potentially to Moscow; southeast through Vienna, Budapest, and Belgrade into the Balkans; due south to Rome; southwest through Barcelona to Madrid and eventually Lisbon; due west through Paris (famously not in the original Banana), Nantes, and possible Bordeaux; and northwest toward the Edinburgh-Glasgow area.

Akin to the grape image, this visualization of Europe's economic regionalization is based on economic linkages spreading along interconnected urbanized areas. Unlike the grape image, and closer to the apartments image, the different tentacles of the octopus do not seem to be connected with the other tentacles, only with the core. Thus the Red Octopus once again returns to the idea that the economic development regionalization of Europe will be based in, and related to, a specific core.

Even though developed at the end of this decade of proliferation of spatial images of European economic regional development, the last two metaphors in fact mostly return to the beginning, namely to the idea of a single dominating core. The image of the Pentagon is a return to this type of thinking, only the geometrical shape is different. Also known as the 20-40-50 Pentagon, this core region is spanned by five major cities: London, Paris, Milan, Munich, and Hamburg. According to rough estimates, which of course change with time, at the end of the twentieth century this region comprised about 20 percent of the area, 40 percent of the population, and 50 percent of the real income in the EU.

The image of the Pentagon became very popular in EU documents (European Commission 1999; 2004; 2007a; 2007b), and was used to indicate convergence between European regions in the decade between 1995 and 2005. However, one of the problems of this metaphor is the lack of a concept about the relations and developments among the peripheries outside the core.

Finally, to return where it all started, in 2002 Brunet (as presented in English by Curci 2011) presented a new image, showing virtually the same core of the European economy, but this time in the shape of a ring that is surrounded by concentric circles, indicating closer or more distant peripheries. The Ring is a relatively clear oval shape when the cities of London, Paris, Basel, Zurich, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Cologne, and the region of the Randstad (the four cities) in the Netherlands are connected. In the same publication, the idea is conveyed that the spatial distribution of economic development processes seems to be taking the shape of concentric ovals around this core. Ultimately it returns to the imagery of a core with periphery.

The review of academic conceptualizations of European economic regionalization offers several general inferences. First, the offered images generally constitute a conception along the lines of a core and its periphery, with the possible single exception of the Green Grape of Kunzmann and Wegener. Second, the ideas often replicate historically known regional developments and distinctions over the last two to three millennia. Third, thinking in the direction of conceptualizing the spatial characteristics of European economic development by the imagination of academic researchers seems to have a re-

lation, and may even be shaped by, the already emphasized institutional divisions offered within the framework of the European Union.

### **The EU in Crisis**

The year 2007 signaled two simultaneous changes in Europe's economy. The first was the completion of the fifth wave of enlargement of the European Union with the incorporation of Romania and Bulgaria, uniting most of the continent in a single economic space. The second was the coming of the Great Recession, which for the EU meant a severe financial crisis and also very significant pressure on the newly created monetary union. Both of these changes have led to a relative change in the dynamic of European economic regions. The regional dimension of these changes has not yet entered the academic literature, but is clearly visible in formal institutional changes at the EU level. For this reason, this part of the overview will return to focusing mostly on the changing regional perceptions as they can be inferred from the institutional changes.

The joining of a number of Eastern European countries to the EU created conditions for catching up and a gradual decrease in disparities between them and the more western European core. Besides the fact that macroeconomic data do indeed indicate such convergence, it is notable that, as of 2016, five of these countries managed to join the "inner" club—the monetary union within the economic union. At the very same time, the financial and economic crisis clearly demonstrated severe deficiencies in the economic structure of another area within the economic and monetary union, namely "the South." It is notable that all Southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal) are experiencing a breakdown in their economic and welfare systems, and three out of the four had to obtain international financial and institutional support.

The result of all this is that a major shift took place in the focus of EU institutions, especially the ones underlying the monetary union. The European semester, the fiscal compact, and the banking union, as well as the changes in the way monetary policy is conducted in the Euro area, are all a *de facto* recognition that the Southern European countries are no longer considered an integral part of an economic core, but rather a periphery in need of guidance and help. Coupled with the fact that despite difficulties the new EU members from Eastern Europe seem to be coping with the Great Recession without major breakdowns, this development means that the major regional economic cleavage is not between a Western core and an Eastern periphery, but rather between a Northern engine and Southern trouble. Once again, the idea of a Multispeed Europe is clearly on the academic and political table.



## Conclusion

This brief overview of the conceptualization of European economic regions over the period of a century shows a significant dynamic, especially when traced through the way various supranational institutions seem to have viewed the continent. For most of the century, the major split has been between a Western core and a relatively poor and less clearly defined Eastern periphery. The idea of a core, spatially situated along the area most famously designated as the Blue Banana, seems to be attractive for most academic authors involved in such spatial analyses, and also seems to be accepted institutionally at the EU level through the reforms of the monetary union in the wake of the Great Recession. Ultimately, it may be that the presently existing tendency for Europe's regionalization into different economic areas may be changing its most important axis from a West-East toward a North-South divide, but only time will tell whether this existing tendency will develop further. Several very recent developments, such as specific policies adopted in Eastern Europe as a result of recent elections (Hungary, Poland), as well as the vote in the UK to leave the European Union, indicate that a much more complex dynamic may be taking place, and the resulting regionalization may follow axes and cleavages difficult to foresee at present.

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## Notes

1. Contemporaneous here means that what is under consideration is the division of Europe into regions as perceived by those living in a particular historical period. It is different from ex-post regionalization—i.e., regionalization suggested and conceptualized by people living often significantly later than the respective historical period.
2. Noticed by Carlson (1937) as being used without translation or explanation in American media at the time.

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## Chapter 14

# Historical Demography

*Attila Melegh*



### **Morality and Populationism before the Twentieth Century<sup>1</sup>**

In Europe, a systematic idea of demographic regions was born in the late eighteenth century, more than a century after the birth of political arithmetics and demography. The idea of comparative population development (concerning relevant social institutions and processes of marriage, family, fertility, and mortality) and its relationship to other social institutions and arrangements appeared earlier, most importantly with regard to nations and local communities, but there was no concept of identifying various geographic spaces with specific demographic behavior.

Nevertheless, a latent idea of the spatial spread of population existed well before and in fact could be a major concern for various thinkers. Beyond some early thinkers such as Ptolemy, the most important of these is Ibn Khaldūn, who in the fourteenth century reflected upon the spread and increase of human population and civilization constrained by mainly climatic and environmental factors. He was followed in this by later geographers and, very importantly, Montesquieu. Montesquieu divided the world according to religions, among which Christianity was not presented as superior, at least in its effect on population development. He was a harsh opponent of the proscription against divorce in Christianity, especially among Catholics. He saw this as an unfortunate and historically recent social custom that reduced fertility by forcing people to live together without proper emotional basis, joining “living men to dead bodies.” At the same time, he also opposed polygamy among the Muslims, which also reduced the capacity of men to reproduce (Montesquieu 1964, letter 114). Thus he saw both cultures as being equally problematic, especially since they departed from the Roman experience of supporting monogamy and divorce. Protestant countries were praised for at least allowing

the marriage of priests and the clergy. According to Montesquieu, they were more populous and more industrious. Beyond religious norms and regulations, some other factors also mattered for him in demographic behavior. Very importantly from the point of view of later regionalization, stem family inheritance (one son inherits key assets) was seen as reducing fertility, and Montesquieu considered it a production of “vanity,” whereas equal heritage among sons supported fertility (Montesquieu 1964, letter 19).

Before Malthus appeared on the scene, we must mention a debate that had an impact on the way ideas of regions evolved (Tomaselli 1988; Teitelbaum 2006). Mercantilists held a pronatalist view that there was a need to increase the power of the monarch by increasing the labor force and/or the number of soldiers. This was a competitive idea in the arena of states fighting for territories and resources, but it lacked a direct link to spatial spheres beyond nation-states and their colonies. The mercantilists and the related utopians did not hold the pessimistic view that any increase of population would lead to obstacles in economic growth and the space of the polity. Their optimism was shared by thinkers outside France, such as Johann Peter Süssmilch, who argued that monarchs should do everything for the sake of increasing the population of the relevant political community by easing the access to marriage, controlling food prices, avoiding the unnecessary loss of people before “their time,” or even encouraging immigration and discouraging emigration.

The idea of increasing the demographic strength of the power of the sovereign through various methods of intervention, and thus thinking in terms of a compact territorial framework plus the possibility of an ever-increasing population, was first questioned by the physiocrats when they shifted their priorities concerning factors of production from labor to land (Vilquin 2006; Teitelbaum 2006). Physiocrats argued that only agriculture was a real source of value (not industry or commerce) and that population should grow only until land could feed the relevant population; this balance was regulated by the standard of living. Later, classical economists, most importantly David Ricardo and Thomas Malthus, introduced the idea that land was problematic among the factors of production, as the marginal increase of capital or labor investment led to diminishing returns, due to the fixed nature of land and the decline of the quality of additional inputs. This questioned the assumption that agricultural production could be increased infinitely and thus raised the concern that the increase of population might be a very serious problem in relation to the quantity of food. Malthus attempted to solve this problem, which led to his idea of demographic regions, which was part of a new way of conceptualizing international politics and moral control over human reproduction (Malthus 1826). Drawing on various ideas that all existed before his time, he combined them into a very simplistic but powerful colonial-Eurocentric epis-

temic mix: (1) the negation of social cooperation between individuals beyond sexual relationships and instincts to reproduce; (2) the idea of differential demographic behavior according to social classes and the required suppression of the lower classes in order to avoid unintended consequences (decline of wealth) of concern for the whole society; (3) the idea of differential demographic behavior according to the regions of the world. These, (4) regions and related states represented various levels of historical-moral progress according to the ration of 'positive' (war, famines, epidemics) and 'negative' (voluntary control of fertility through delaying marriage) "checks on population." All (5) of these aspects were linked by establishing a unilinear global-local moral scale of various forms of control.

As opposed to Montesquieu, Malthus, a former Jesus College fellow, Anglican curator and East India Company educator, not only opposed overpopulation but had a fixed hierarchical "reading of history sideways" (Thornton 2005) and established a specific system that linked regions, historical development, and demographic behavior by scaling the ratio of negative and positive checks. This technique and the constant recalibration of this progress-regional differences-history rod of measurement have been the most important focus in demographic thinking over the last two hundred years (see Melegh 2006, 52–54). Malthus envisaged and established one of the key ideas of global biopolitical control based on liberal economic thought, the colonial gaze, and the internalization of global/local social hierarchies. This set the bounds of an intellectual arena in which most of the debates over demographic changes and resources took place until the late twentieth century.

There are various geographical divisions in the texts of Malthus. All divisions are understood as representing various stages of history. The "bottom of the scale of human beings" is that of *Tierra del Fuego*, described as living in a "miserable" state where there was no voluntary control over fertility. Concerning the "barbarian" characteristics among Australian aborigines and American Indians, Malthus mentions constant fighting, promiscuous intercourse, the low status of women, deformed children, filth, and nastiness.

Non-Europe is behind past Europe as represented by Greece and Rome. Modern Europe is explicitly seen as homogeneous in terms of habits, "owing to the similarity of the circumstances in which they are placed." Europe is united in the use of preventive checks, as opposed to "past times" and "the more uncivilized parts of the world." This can be regarded as a line of racial-historical differentiation (Malthus 1826: bk. 2, ch. 13, par. 41). Nonetheless, Europe is not completely homogeneous and Malthus, who traveled extensively in Europe, divides it up in various and somewhat conflicting ways. He draws a dividing line between North Europe (Norway, Sweden, and Russia) as opposed to other regions (as he calls it, the middle part with Germany

versus the region containing England, France, and Switzerland). The line is drawn not due to some major demographic characteristics (although the greater role of positive checks is raised in the case of Sweden and Russia), but due to a similar “internal economy,” while “the middle parts of Europe” differ very little from England.

Malthus had large-scale impact, and ever since there have been references to him and his biopolitical view. His concrete ideas of regions have not been so popular, however, and we can even say that they were rather unclearly formulated and have mainly been forgotten. Only the idea of Northwestern Europe has proved to be persistent, albeit with major modifications. But later we will see that his idea of regions based on marriage behavior (age at marriage and the proportion of ever-married) had a large influence in the twentieth century.

Malthus wrote little about inheritance and various other processes of family formation or family economy, though they were among the concerns of many other thinkers. The person who made this a crucial element was the conservative moralist Frédéric Le Play. Writing about the workers of Europe (1855, 1879/1937), about the organization of the family, he introduced a tripartite regional differentiation that was different from that of Malthus and based mainly on inheritance, parental control, cohabitation, and family budgets (Thornton 2005): (1) stem family (Central Europe)—Germany, France, as well as the two peninsula of the Mediterranean (Italian and Spanish); (2) unstable family (Northwestern Europe)—the industrial areas of Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and France; and (3) patriarchal family (Eastern Europe)—between the Arctic Ocean and the Mediterranean, Scandinavia, Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Turkey. Le Play is a clear representative of non-Malthusian French pronatalism, which can be dated to the eighteenth century, as can be seen even in the case of Montesquieu, and was promoted by various other thinkers, most notably Condorcet (Sen 1994, 1996; Teitelbaum 2006). France was a unique country in this respect. It was a major colonial power on the first level of the global hierarchy, but still, due to constant conflict with the British Empire and other European powers, most importantly Germany, it understood itself as being in constant struggle for dominance in population discourses. Malthus thus was clearly seen as somewhat irrelevant in the national-colonial imaginary of France (Quine 1996; Schneider 1990). Instead of colonial expansion, Le Play was concerned with domestic resources and was interested in measuring the moral strength of the nation. His field work in various European countries aimed at measuring the strength and the stability of intertwined work and family organization.

The classification of work and family social organizations was linked to regions, as well as to social and moral developmental scales. The key idea of Le Play was the difference between market-based industrial class systems and

various forms of integrated rural systems. This contrast appeared in his ideas of regions. Region for Le Play was not a clear geographical category, as industrial areas of Central Europe were also included in the category of the Western type. Nonetheless, he uses the idea of a line separating North Africa, the Middle East, South Italy, Hungary, Northern Europe, and "Slavic" Europe from Middle and Western Europe. He also had a clear idea of Western Europe, containing countries between Spain and Sweden, as being separate from the mixed areas characterized by stem family. His regional taxonomy proved to be very powerful in later demographic thinking. He was the first person to formulate ideas of regional variation of family systems, as opposed to Malthus, who saw only minor internal European borders and argued for overall homogeneity concerning Europe. Le Play was also the first person to categorize these regions by names such as "East" ("Eastern group") and "West" ("Western group"), thus having a more explicit conceptual regionalization.

Following the region-history-development scale, he also sees advancement from patriarchal systems to modern unstable families as real development. But in contrast to the developmental scale, he has an opposing moral scale in which the stability of the patriarchal system is much praised. Thus Le Play is the first demographer to oppose the idea that the West was the most developed and occupied the highest moral position; instead, he sees social development as being accompanied by moral decline. He does not exclude the possibility of a moral solution in the most developed areas and in fact argues that such a solution can be found by changing various social institutions (such as partible inheritance in France) in order to unite moral and developmental focal points. This perspective also proved to be important in further debates in the twentieth century, which also concerned regional differentiation, most notably the fascist and later, with a different logic, the state socialist challenge to Western domination.

### **Regions versus Demographic Resources: Demographic Thinking between the Two World Wars**

Up to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the idea of direct intervention in population development had a somewhat limited impact. The strong support for direct control only came with the advancement of eugenics, the spread of family planning methods and the overall biologization of demographic discourses, which led to the open discussion of intervening in fertility control on the basis of social class. In these cases, morality as an external guide for behavior lost influence and more and more "moral" ideas were sublimated into (and to a large extent voided by) demographic and eugenic techniques of power. The population came to be seen as a direct resource that



needed direct management in a highly competitive world, marked by large-scale wars within Europe and in its colonies.

This was an era when mortality and fertility went through dramatic changes, but in a differential way. The tempo and the timing varied quite substantially, which pushed thinkers to reflect on the ways population could be managed, and of course the idea of regional differences gained momentum. There were three main approaches in ideas of managing population development.

A liberal approach utilized the idea of the West as a focal point of development and also of progress in control over fertility. This is the Malthusian tradition, but by the 1920s the moral element (i.e. avoiding “pauperism”) is sublimated into techniques of fertility control itself. In varying ways, this approach, which later was referred to as *demographic transition* or *demographic revolution*, from time to time made alliances with eugenics, promoting “quality” reproduction. Later it could even easily transform itself into a repressive idea globally aiming at direct interventions due to Malthusian crises. This approach was well represented by Thompson, (1929) Landry (1934, 1987), and Notestein (1945), all of whom had explicit ideas of regions.

The conservative and the only slightly varying fascist perspectives questioned the idea that the West represented the focal point of global development. The “us” community was defined in a fluid way as being a nation, ethnic group, race, or class. Very importantly, this type of demographic resource management relied on a biological or culturally essential understanding of ethnic, national, and racial characteristics. Morality was either sublimated into various repressive measures necessary for the rise of the nation, or it was embedded into ethnic, national, and/or racial types directly, and the rise of the valued group’s global position legitimized almost any measure taken against other groups or internal enemies, understood also in terms of demographic behavior (“racial hygiene”). Ideas of regions also appeared among these thinkers, and, as we will see, there was a certain convergence between their approach and that of the liberals.

Both of these approaches were challenged by so-called populist or Narodnik thinkers in Eastern Europe (e.g. Imre Kovács, Ferenc Erdei, Dimitrie Gusti), who shared the idea of a possible rise of otherwise declining national, racial, ethnic, and social groups with essentialized characteristics (Melegh 2006, 76-82). Very importantly, these populists focused on changing the social background of population processes instead of promoting ideas of demographic determinism or large scale immediate intervention. While they targeted the behavior and the wellbeing of the peasants and their structural constraints, the fascists saw pronatalist or social intervention only as a means to discipline the population and to directly achieve a higher relative position of the “nation” and/or “race” against “others” inside and outside.

In the first half of the twentieth century, there was a widespread panic over the decline in fertility, combined with other demographic processes in North America and Europe which forecasted the relative decline of population ratios of the “West” (Bashford 1914, 55–156). This sense of a change led to the idea of demographic transition as represented by Thompson, Notestein, and Landry (1929, 1945, 1934). This theory recombined class, history, progress, and regional scaling, and established one of the main interpretative frameworks utilized even by the rival approaches mentioned above (Melegh 2006; 2009). It is also important to note that this was the period when debates over various regionally located family types started in ethnography, sociology, and legal science.

Thompson (1929) used a threefold system of “group A,” including Northern and Western Europe, North America, and also Australia, versus “group B,” including Southern and Eastern Europe without Russia, and “group C,” including everybody else. Very importantly, the boundary between group A and B was the “Gdańsk–Trieste” line, which was close to the line between mixed and Eastern areas according to Le Play (with the important differences that it did not mark the end of the Northwest and that the mixed area included Italy and Spain). This line also satisfied the desire for a clear East–West division, and later the line drawn from Trieste began its career, named after John Hajnal.

It is important to note that Thompson’s regional idea proved to be one of the dominant ideas, as the combination of Eastern and Southern Europe appeared often. As we analyze below, Corrado Gini (1930) had somewhat similar ideas, but the combination also appeared in the works of Wilbert E. Moore (1945) on economic demography. Even more, we can argue that in some ways John Hajnal (1965, 1983) and Peter Laslett (1983) presented somewhat similar ideas.

The French Adolphe Landry (1934) was different from Thompson in the sense that he had much clearer ideas of a “demographic revolution” and demographic differentials among classes, while his concepts of regions were hidden in the text. He divided up the whole historical process into three stages, against a background of a long tradition of pronatalism and a fear of population decline. This approach was far less triumphant than the one promoted by Thompson and later Notestein. According to Landry (1934, 87), the first stage has automatic equilibrium; in the second stage equilibrium is achieved through various human strategies (e.g., marriage patterns to maintain standard of living); and in the last stage this control is lost, there is no equilibrium, and as a result population decline continues and there is moral decay (see also Vilquin 2006). In terms of regions he is much less explicit, although he concedes that in this revolution various stages were performed by

various areas in different time periods, and that between Italy and Romania, for example, there was a serious time lag in the decline of fertility.

In this perspective, the novelty of Notestein (1945) lies not only in his revision of the Thompson scheme but also in his ability to push these ideas to the level of international politics. This was due partly to the fact that the United States took a leading position in global politics, a position held earlier by the previous colonial European states, and partly to the appearance of international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, which began to formulate policies for the global management of population and food production. The idea of demographic transition and of inherent regional differentiation was key in this formulation of global politics (Bashford 2014).

The full-fledged theory successfully combined various elements that had been circulating in demographic thinking before. It had a strong neo-Malthusian flavor in idealizing conscious family planning among the middle classes in the West. At the same time, it explicitly broke with the Malthusian framework and opted for social determinism (that is, population trends are not independent variables and they are influenced by various social institutions, industrialism, urbanization, and individualism). It should be noted nonetheless that after the Communist takeover in China in 1949, this society-population causality was reversed for the Third World, as there was allegedly no time to wait for social forces to do their job (Szreter 1993). In this neo-Malthusian turn, regionalization of global demographic processes played a very important role. As most historical discourses, this regionalization was put into a progress-region scale, but very importantly it also contained an idea of competition over resources.

Notestein's global map relied on the West-centric map of Thompson. But it contained new elements (1945). The linkage between Western Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand was maintained, but within Europe this first zone (characterized by the "incipient decline" of population growth) was extended to much of Central Europe and Southern Europe, whereas these countries (Italy, Spain) were in region B in the scheme of Thompson. Notestein maintained the Trieste–Gdańsk line, but the region beyond, called Eastern Europe (the region of "transitional growth"), was extended to the Soviet Union and Japan, and thus what was called the Third World (the region of "high growth potential") was somewhat reduced. It is worth noting that actually Thompson (1929) was also toying with the idea that industrialism in Russia and Japan would get these two countries out of category "C," but the territorial extension of the second group by Notestein was far more radical. This also shows that Notestein avoided the inherent racial element implied by Malthus and various other thinkers.

Ideas of demographic transition understood as a way of interpreting global demographic change did not go unchallenged, and this criticism had a clear impact on regional thinking as well. The challenge came from all those areas that were seen in the transition theory as not being in the forefront of demographic progress toward lower fertility and mortality, namely in Southern Europe and Eastern Europe. Demographic nationalism and also fascism were looking for ways to compensate for geopolitical territorial losses, or to regain “strength” as part of the global fight for resources. Italian and German fascism and Nazism are prime examples, along with East European conservative or Narodnik-type demographic nationalism (Ipsen 1993; Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001; Gregor 2005).

The fascist approach is well exemplified by people such as Corrado Gini (1930), who are largely forgotten, despite the fact that they were quite influential thinkers in their time. Gini was well integrated into various demographic and statistical networks and combined the issue of demographic revitalization to issues of redistribution already in the 1910s. Subsequently, he was an influential political figure (head of the Central Institute of Statistics of Italy between 1926 and 1932), and also a key advisor of Mussolini in demographic issues, even in the case of the famous Ascension Day Speech of May 1927 (in which he said, “Number means force”).

Though he also represented the same biopolitical fear, Gini was a firm critique of Malthus in several ways. First, following Spengler and in some other ways Pareto, he believed in cycles of population development. His originality lies in the fact that he combined regional demographic development with national and class demographic differentials. He followed a eugenic interpretation of population change (on eugenics see Turda and Weindling 2007). He called this theory demographic metabolism, according to which upper classes lose their biological potential and are replaced by a population coming from the lower classes, whose potentials are higher.

Gini had an idea of internal class dynamics in fertility. The upper class in the first phase of the cycle of the nation (race) is fertile, but with development its fertility declines. At the same time, demographic metabolism uses a supply of people due to the higher fertility of lower groups, who are then absorbed. In the long run their fertility also decreases. But this is just the local story, which Gini puts into a regional-global framework. “Dying nations”—that is, the richer ones—receive “fresh blood” from other, poorer nations. This terrain of population exchange can be within one race, most importantly his words the “white race,” in which “Western and Northern Europe” (together with North America, Australia, and New Zealand) represent the “upper class.” And Eastern and Southern Europe represent the lower class,

which still had high growth rates to be maintained and even strengthened, according to Gini.

It is very important to note that Gini in various ways was playing with the boundaries of race, nation, class, and region in his text, concepts that were used almost completely interchangeably. His regional ideas can also be found in the text, and his regional divisions followed the line which later became called the “Hajnal line.” His region of Eastern and Southern Europe contained Spain, Italy, the Balkans, Russia, and Poland, but excluded the Baltic countries, Austria, and very interestingly Hungary, due to its quick fertility decline. On the other hand, in some ways following Thompson and in opposition to the later Hajnal line, Gini was also drawing an explicitly racially understood division between Europe and non-Europe. To him, the white race stood above all the others, “the Hindu, the Malayan and the yellow races.”

It is important to note that in combining social, national, and regional “metabolisms,” Gini’s theory was also a theory of migration and even a theory of the assimilation of migration. Gini strongly argues that too quick and too intense migration leads to cultural conflicts, and that the tempo of assimilation should be slow. In this sense, when writing about global demographic change, he foresaw many of the later debates on migration well before demography paid attention to the phenomenon.

Overall, Gini’s ideas contained original elements, but mostly they fitted rather well into a wider anti-Malthusian discourse on eugenic and population concerns as related to the fate of nations, regions, and races. His ideas and even regional concepts resonated with, among others, the Hungarian geographer Pál Teleki and the statistician Alajos Kovács, who maintained that in the overall European and very importantly global fight there was a need to observe and to intervene directly into the development of social groups, nations, and regions from the point of view of racial hygiene, entailing a concern with how they can “properly” “amalgamate” populations and spaces (Ablonczy 2005, 26–33; Turda 2013). While Teleki himself was thinking in regional terms (the Danube region for instance), demography was not an important element in his regionalism. He had ideas of quickly growing Balkan states, but overall he maintained a national or Carpathian Basin perspective when he spoke about demographic issues and eugenic intervention.

With regard to the development of regional thinking, the work of Werner Conze, a young German follower of *Volksgeschichte* and future prominent historian of Eastern Europe, was also important. In some ways following Le Play, he was among the historians who established a research approach of linking family and household formation with inheritance patterns, and in this sense he was a forerunner of some later approaches (see: Szoltysek-Goldsten

2009). He was also creating the pathways toward the so-called Hajnal line, at least in the Baltic region. Conze was a follower and promoter of the “Ostforschung” in Nazi Germany, publishing his related thesis in 1940. On the basis of the so-called *Hufenverfassung* system, he claimed that there was a huge difference between the “Slavic” multiple household systems (*Grossfamilien*) based on partible inheritance, and the non-Slavic (e.g., Lithuanian) population, characterized by nuclear households and impartible inheritance (idem). According to Conze, the line fell along the Southern fringes of Samogitia and Grodno, which was later used for debates about the Hajnal line (Szoltysek-Goldsten 2009).

Some of the East European populist thinkers also used ideas of regions, and they often did so in order to understand longer-term developments. They were prominent in discussing various complex and changing family forms and family systems, such as the *zadruga* or *mir*. Among these thinkers there was an implicit logic in which not demographic behavior but regional development (“organic” West versus “distorted” East) was a key factor. In Hungary, these regional ideas were used in interpreting demographic changes, including sharp fertility decline, as East European distortions contrasted to the organic development of the West, where fertility decline was seen as a more normal, structurally less “crystalized” process (Erdei 1976).

In other countries, such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Russia, not fertility but mortality was the key issue. The key concern was mortality and overall well-being, most importantly infant mortality and the hygienic conditions in the rural population (Kiss 2010, 121–23; Baloutzova 2011, 32–36; Ransel 1981, 143). The “Gusti school” in Romania and also the Agrarian (BANU) party and the related activists in Bulgaria focused on village communities and rural land structures, but paid little attention to fertility. They mainly observed a huge discrepancy between Western and Central Europe and their own countries. The East–West dichotomy provided a rather strong comparative framework for Soviet demographers and statisticians in the 1920s (Porter 1993, 151–53). Among Russian agricultural economists, the so-called organization and production school (e.g., Maslov, Chayanov, Kosinskii, Brutskus) and the various Narodnik thinkers agreed that mortality in Russia became relatively much worse as compared to the period of Malthus. Beyond unexplored references to “Europe” or “Western Europe,” however, they thought mainly in terms of “national economy” and subregions of the national economy, as in the case of Chayanov (2006, xxv–xxxv). It is important to note that this school, by establishing a link between demographic family cycles and the behavior of peasant economies, not only made use of the macro- and microlevel assumptions of Malthus but also provided a model for later debates on the regional and temporal differences of non- or semicapitalist economies.

## **Debates after the Second World War: Political and Demographic Borders**

After World War II, the intensive and open discussion of regions and demographic processes in the context of struggle over resources somewhat receded but certainly did not disappear. It withdrew into more scholarly debates, which were less directly political and established links to geopolitical changes mainly through issues of identity. Nevertheless, with some notable exceptions, they maintained a rather clear Eurocentric vision of the West and more importantly of the supposedly unique origins of Western capitalism.

The debate over modernization and regions also appeared within Europe, when the emergence of socialism appeared in debates over population development and most importantly over Malthusianism. A clear East–West divide was set up along the bloc lines, which come to surface even in very recent discussions on the so-called second demographic transition. In East European demography, the idea appeared that Malthusianism was only applicable in capitalist countries and that the reallocation of resources and appearance of large-scale demand for labor made fertility control unnecessary in socialist countries (Petersen 1988, 90–95). Nonetheless, it is important to note that modernization theory was not questioned in East European pronatalist demographic thinking, but that instead it was claimed that East European progress toward modernity was quicker and more moral. State socialism also tried to integrate morality into its political techniques in order ensure a better position in geodemographic fights. On the one hand, it freed marriage, childbearing, and family life from some social constraints; on the other, it suppressed “improper” demographic behavior. Beyond the appearance of a clear-cut political border along the Trieste–Gdańsk line, the debate over historical regions somewhat declined through the 1950s. The issue came back only in the 1960s, when Hajnal formulated ideas of “European marriage patterns in perspective.” In his original article (1965) he successfully combined various elements. Most importantly, he openly followed Malthus when he focused on the age at first marriage and the proportion of ever-married (married, divorced, and widows together), as well as the regional and historical regional distributions of these variables. He also openly followed Malthus’s ideas concerning non-Europe representing not only difference vis-à-vis Europe, but also the past.

But he also revised him. In 1965, as compared to Malthus, Hajnal reduced the territory of “Europe” to the region beyond the Trieste and St. Petersburg line toward the West. In 1983, when he further elaborated his ideas with other elements of household formation (the existence of neolocality, life-cycle servants, various rules of household fission, etc.), he further reduced “Europe”

to “Northwest Europe,” and compared “joint household formation systems” with that of “Europe.” Thus he basically followed the line between the “Western unstable” region and the “mixed” stem family region as proposed by Le Play (1855), or the line between region A and B as proposed by Thompson (1929), and cleared all other regional lines in the world in a dichotomy with Northwest Europe. It seems that beyond these dramatic regional reductions, Hajnal (1983) was also able to push back the timing of the modernization (great transformation) from the late nineteenth century to the early seventeenth and the sixteenth centuries. In this he was supported by the growing evidence of various analyses of local parish registers and new data, including tax records. He was also aided by his technique of reading history sideways—that is to say, by his assumption that pre-seventeenth-century Northwest Europe was like Nepal in the 1970s.

This perspective sparked a huge debate among family historians and other social scientists interested in historical sociology or historical anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s. Foremost among these was Peter Laslett, a friend and long-time collaborator of Hajnal, who became a harsh opponent of the modernization hypothesis in family history. He argued that the great transformation of complex patriarchal families to modern “unstable” nuclear family households was a myth (Laslett 1972). In 1983, in the edited volume of Richard Wall (1983) Laslett proposed a typology of four historical regions based not only on household formation but also of organizing work on a microlevel: West, West/Central or Middle, Mediterranean, and East.

This typology was a break and basically provided a more detailed and sociologically more complex classification. Laslett never ventured to draw exact lines. So he had areas such as Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, the village Grossenemer, Great Russian serf villages, and Baltic provinces, but he was not looking for clear borders and was looking more for “tendencies” or, in other words, statistical probabilities only. Among his collaborators we find historians such as Peter Czap, Richard Smith, and Andrej Plakans; economic historians such as Anthony Wrigley and Richard Schoefield; but also anthropologists and sociologists such as Michael Anderson or the Hungarian sociologist Rudolf Andorka.

Interestingly, Andorka (1975, 1995) focused on a territory actually lying on the so-called Hajnal line. As a reformulation of the Hajnal idea, he constructed a mixed type. With this he managed to introduce some of the research problems (single child system, fertility control, etc.) of interwar Hungarian populists into empirically minded international historical research. He also formulated several research issues that became important during the deconstruction of the Hajnal line (e.g., Andorka and Faragó 1983; Andorka 1995). In this he collaborated with the historian Tamás Faragó, who later became



important in reinterpreting and reformulating the Hajnal line (Fragó 1997; 2001). Although no direct references were made, the above attempts at finding an in-between model or mixed territory fitted very well with the rise of the concept of Central Europe as represented by Jenő Szűcs (1983, 1988) or Péter Hanák (1989).

The questioning of modernization theory as put forward by Laslett was also elaborated by Alan Macfarlane (1978; 1986; previously working as an anthropologist on Nepal), writing about the origins of “English individualism,” and by Richard M. Smith (1984), who started a well-focused work on medieval sources from the point of view of family structures and inheritance. Both of them came up with the idea that the Hajnal hypothesis was misleading in its historical assumption of a great transformation, and they also argued that there was no substantial change, at least in England. In this way they gave an interesting new momentum to the Eurocentric interpretation of the birth of capitalism by emphasizing the somewhat essentialized, continuous individualism and regulative role of private property concerning demographic processes, at least in England.

Macfarlane’s work published in the late 1970s was also interesting, not only because of his criticisms of Hajnal’s idea of historical change, but also because he reconstructed the idea of East European peasantry out of the work of major thinkers (including Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Alexandr Chayanov, and also East Central European scholars such as the Polish Florian Znaniecki). He also showed that this classical model “hypnotized” English historians such as George C. Homans (Macfarlane 1978, 34–80). Nonetheless, it is notable that he did not refute the idea of Eastern Europe as a peasant society comparable to other regions outside Europe, with a special demographic regime due to its social arrangements, most importantly household economies.

Pushing back the Hajnal line historically was also a priority for the prominent Austrian historian Michael Mitterauer and the historical anthropologist Karl Kaser (Mitterauer-Sieder 1982; Mitterauer 2010; Szoltysek 2009). Mitterauer (2010, 28–57) systematically recontextualized the “European family pattern” into a hide system, the so-called *Hufenverfassung* system, which was already used by Conze. But instead of locating this division in the Baltics as did Conze, Mitterauer generalized it for most of Western and Central Europe, along the lines of the Carolingian Empire, and pushed it back at least to the ninth century. He argued that this system led to all the features of the modern European family as understood by Laslett (small age difference between spouses, retirement of the elderly, late age at marriage, life-cycle service) (Mitterauer 2010, 60–69).

As already mentioned, behind the above debates there were also implicit attempts to understand the development of political systems, such as Liber-

alism and Communism, from the microstructural perspective of the family history. This element was made explicit by Emmanuel Todd (1985), a firm Laslett supporter, but also a follower of Le Play, who drew both a global and a European map of various “anthropological” family systems: exogamous community, authoritarian, egalitarian nuclear, and absolute nuclear family. According to Todd, these could explain ideological differences. This led him to draw a rather complex map of Europe with England as an extreme type, Hungary, the Balkans, and the USSR as another opposing system, while the rest of continental Europe was different from both. The southern part of South Europe was also separated from the other parts. The nuclear family was typical in England, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Northwestern France. The authoritarian family was dominant in Germany and the adjacent countries of Central Europe—Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, and Belgium—in most of Scandinavia, in parts of France and Spain, in Ireland, and in Scotland. The egalitarian-nuclear family was typical in France, most of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Romania, and Greece. Finally, the community family characterized Russia, Finland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, small patches of Italy, and Southern France.

As a systematic attempt to deconstruct the modernizationist understanding of family development related to ideas of historical regions, the historical anthropologist Jack Goody (1983; 1996) not only questioned that the modern family was created at the dawn of industrial modernity (or just in Northwestern Europe), but actually argued that precapitalist family systems have been more or less the same throughout Eurasia, as opposed to sub-Saharan African systems, where women played a very important role in the transfer of inheritance between generations. But the concept of Eurasia did not prevent Goody (2000, 100–18) from seeing differences within Europe. Instead of the East-West division, Goody stressed the North-South difference concerning pre-eighteenth-century Europe in terms of age at marriage. Europe was also divided by inheritance structures (Roman versus customary law), a difference that cut France into two parts. In this way, Goody followed Le Play very clearly, even by referring to the changes during the French Revolution and using the term “stem family.” Later he was followed by Christer Lundh (2014) and Tommy Bengtsson (2004) and other historical demographers, who refuted overall East-West dividing lines in family and household formation in a longer-term Eurasian project.

While Goody went beyond the European areas, and in doing so distanced himself from the Hajnal line and related ideas of historical regions, some other historians, mainly from Central and Southeastern Europe, either reformulated or even deconstructed regional ideas from a social and economic point of view by drawing attention to a complex interplay of various social and

economic institutions (inheritance, neolocality, geographic factors, the role of the state and of landlords, etc.). In her criticism, Maria Todorova (2006) came to the conclusion that if the concept of *zadruga* in the Balkans is to be maintained at all as an important social institution, then even within the region it should be linked only to specific areas and social groups, with several variations due to the interplay of various social, cultural, and, very importantly, political factors.

There was also a refusal of general models and patterns in Hungary, where Péter Őri (2003) spoke about mosaic patterns—namely patterns constrained by local economic, ethnic, and cultural factors—whereas Faragó (2001) maintained that preindustrial household structures were so complex and so dependent on various demographic, social, and ethnocultural factors that models had to be severely confined spatially and temporally. From the 1990s on, several historians have argued that regional models are useless on a macro level, or that, at least on a micro level, historical processes and relationships did not match overall patterns (Benda 2008; Pakot 2013). Overall, we can say that even in historical demography, microhistory turned away from sub-European regional models and differentiations in its focus on locally worked-out social relationships to explain local demographic developments.

## Conclusion

After this three-hundred-year-long debate, the conceptual history of demographic regions has certainly not reached its end. Nonetheless, we can safely argue that differentiation in nuptiality and most importantly in fertility lost its power by the end of the twentieth century. There are several factors behind this complex history.

The most important is the global decline of fertility, which would certainly amaze and shock the thinkers of the eighteenth century, who like Montesquieu and Süssmilch were firm believers of ever-growing populations and relatively high fertility. But even Malthus, who explicitly formulated the biopolitical balancing of resources and population, would be surprised to see that fertility has been and continues to be declining, with an almost complete detachment of marriage and fertility, a link that was crucial in the moral geography of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Tomaselli 1988).

This idea of moral control was later abandoned, and between the two World Wars it gave way to political techniques of liberal versus conservative, or fascist versus populist, political ideas of control that referred to, but basically sublimated, various versions of morality. This was the period when the intensifying fight over resources between blocs and countries led not only to the horrors of large-scale wars, but also brutal and coercive policies of fertil-

ity control for either increase or decrease, firmly contextualized in the interplay of local and global hierarchies (the targeted groups were either internal “threats,” such as “paupers,” “imbeciles,” and various competing ethnic groups, or external threats or both).

From the 1960s on, ideas of regions based on differential fertility and family formation have been severely attacked from various angles and positions, and have basically been deconstructed. It seems that with the convergence of fertility at very low levels (at least by global historical scales) and detached from nuptiality, this demographic process has become much less important from the point of view of the economic and political competition of regions, states, and communities. Furthermore, eugenic and other attempts to control family and childbearing behavior were politically challenged after the revelation of the inhumanity of colonial, Nazi, communist, and Western liberal population controls. Colonial and fascist genocides, experimentation, communist/nationalist antiabortion campaigns, plus forced migration campaigns and various other repressive techniques used by, for instance, Western family planners in the developing countries, all led to the questioning of demographic regimes as ultimate aims for political intervention. Thus overall models themselves became less and less legitimate areas of scientific research, especially with regard to fertility and nuptiality.

Demographic reproduction within this global competitive framework is now less interested in making use of these conceptual heritages and is focusing more and more on migration and migratory regions as areas that need to be observed and controlled to serve competitive geopolitical and geoeconomic interests. Migration has always been an important process in biopolitical coordination, but it seems that future historians and social scientists need to say more about how it has been spatially and socially organized.

Besides the overall demographic processes, there have also been other factors at play in shaping and then in deconstructing various forms of demographic regions. In the eighteenth century, there was almost exclusively anecdotal evidence of variations and historical change of demographic and family behavior. Malthus used rather problematic travel accounts, and even Le Play had just a limited number of interviews. Between the two World Wars, statisticians were already rather well equipped with various sources and had rather well-developed measurement techniques. They were also supported (if many times misinformed) by ethnographers and anthropologists; nevertheless, some of the basic issues of comparison were raised but left unsolved (the comparison of indices by regions and other communities). The real boom of demography came only in the 1950s, when it was seen as a major research area for poverty and through this a sphere of intervention. This boom was so strong that social historians soon formed an alliance with demographers

and historical demographers and started producing a huge number of case studies and historical statistics, digging into sources on a massive scale. Thus it is no accident that the emerging empirical evidence questioned the validity of major regional models and that the imposed homogeneity on past societies crumbled and led to, for instance, microhistories, a tendency that is also supported by the ongoing diversification and specialization of social and human sciences.

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## Notes

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## Chapter 15

# Linguistics

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Strong cultural characteristics constituting cultural spaces have developed and steadily expanded from west to east in Europe since the high Middle Ages. Thus, from the medieval core-Europe of Charlemagne, there developed Latin Europe, with a Romano-Greek religious border from 1350; the Europe of the Enlightenment, bordering with Islam from the 1600s; and the Europe of the nation-states in the nineteenth century (Tornow 2010). Today, however, the borders of the classical spaces of Western Europe, Central Europe, and Eastern Europe, the conceptions of which are associated with the names of Jenő Szűcs and Oskar Halecki, are less and less clearly defined; the fate of Ukraine, unfolding before our eyes, is a particularly clear example. This likely holds true for all spaces of Europe: for the complex Central/East Central Europe as much as for Eastern Europe (Okey 1992) and the old controversy of Southeast Europe versus the Balkans (Sundhaussen 1999; Mishkova 2012). This is especially true given that the focal points of European identity formation have been inscribed into the mental map of Europeans for such a long period. Northern Europe and Southern Europe are not stable entities of cultural studies either, but rather geographically defined macrospace (Ureland 2005).

After 1989, the Iron Curtain, which sharply demarcated political blocs, transformed into a Velvet Curtain of living standards and the turbulence of neocapitalist praxis (Ureland 2010). For the last twenty-five years, Europe has fashioned itself into a new space according to its own laws, determined not only by politics but also dynamically conditioned by a multifaceted flow of traffic, primarily from east to west (Schlögel 2013). For this reason, *all* spatial concepts are being undermined and reshaped, and precise definitions are neither possible nor necessary: Europe is emerging into the twenty-first century, inventing itself anew. Europeans have come to see things from a multiplicity of perspectives, oscillating back and forth between political, economic, geo-

graphical, and cultural parameters. A brief overview of the current European space concepts is offered online by the EGO-Portal (2013).

In the future, all European spaces will come under the influence of increased permeability and mental convergence from within, and of the long-distance effects of other cultural macrospace from without. Perhaps because Europe as a whole is still undefined, in the twenty-first century it is likely to be conceptualized in a maximal way, expanding widely into the East, in accordance with those voices that have long looked to bring Turkey, and more recently also the Maghreb, into play, seeing the Mediterranean as a European sea. Corresponding to this trend is an increase in the number of languages in Europe, now brought to some 150 with the inclusion of the Caucasian languages (Bossong, Comrie, and Matras, 1987–2013).

Given the many, often divergent, definitions of spaces in Europe, this article treats “regions” as linguistically defined areas and spaces. The situation of Europe sketched above is clearly reflected in linguistics: “To date, there is . . . no uniform definition of Europe in European areal linguistics: . . . South Russia, West Kazakhstan, Transcaucasia, Turkey, . . . Cyprus and Malta, but also Greenland and the north Russian Arctic regions, are, according to different approaches, part of Europe or not part of it” (Stolz 2010, 402). The



Figure 15.1. The new Europe (Copyright: European Commission<sup>1</sup>)

larger and more diffuse Europe grows to the east and southeast, the more it is apparent that no closed and compact *Sprachbunds* (linguistic unions) can exist on the model of the Balkan Sprachbund, but rather open, complex networks of convergence clusters that Maria Koptjevskaja and Bernhard Wälchli (Koptjevskaja–Tamm 2010, 516) have named “contact superposition zones.” This is confirmed everywhere by linguistic landscapes (the relief of which reflects basic cultural patterns): between convergence areas there is often a language which is transitional between one area and the other—for example, Serbo-Croatian to the south in the Balkans, Serbo-Croatian between Central Europe and the Balkans, German between Eastern and Western Europe, and Russian between Europe and the Eurasian bloc.

### The Pan-European/West European Area

Modern conceptions of a “European Sprachbund” were established around the turn of the century in Western Europe and are grouped around the nucleus of the Whorfian “Standard Average European” (SAE) (König and Haspelmath 1999). The great European Sprachbund and Western Europe were therefore conceptually bound together from the very beginning: typically, in areal linguistics, a term such as “West European area” was not used. This inherent “western orientation” is even more striking given the fact that already for fifty years or more, Europe has been a coherent language area on the linguistic agenda. Let us take a look at the prehistory.

In 1816, the German Indologist Franz Bopp discovered the relatedness of Indo-European languages in Europe and beyond. Nevertheless, it was not until 1942, 128 years later, that Europe was conceptualized for the first time as a *sui generis* language area (Lewy 1964). Against this background, the process of the linguistic regionalization of Europe can be divided into three phases (after Stolz 2010):

- An early phase between 1942 and 1975, in which there is an attempt to correlate certain linguistic features with worldview, culture, and society, associated with the names of Ernst Lewy, Henrik Becker, Gyula Décsy, and Vladimír Skalička.
- 1976–1989: “Revolution” and founding of a rigorous areal linguistics. With the work of Harald Haarmann, the cultural psychological phase ends and the discipline receives methodological foundations and linguistic terminology.
- 1990–2010: International projects such as the EUROTYP-Project spell out the linguistic material of the European languages (Bossong, Comrie, and Matras 1987–2013), leading to a new conception of a European Sprachbund (König and Haspelmath 1999). On the basis of Benjamin

Whorf's "Standard Average European," the perspective widens to encompass the entirety of Europe, as far as its edges in the East and South-east (Haspelmath 2001). Two major international handbooks published around 2010 represent the new Europe not only with all its languages, language types, and language families on all its linguistic levels, but also as a historically developed, *sui generis* cultural space (Hinrichs 2010; Kortmann and Auwera 2011).

Parallel to this, the model Sprachbund region—that is, the Balkans—has been projected onto Europe as a whole. Therefore, all attempts to capture Europe as a holistic Sprachbund came to be seen through the methodological lens of Balkan linguistics. This had the advantage that the European Sprachbund could draw on the Sprachbund *par excellence*, and the disadvantage that it inherited all its associated problems and preconceptions. Already in the 1970s, however, the traditional and widespread conceptualization in Europe of relatively closed Sprachbunds was overlaid by an open and wide-ranging contact linguistics, defined by broad geographical lines, especially the seas and waters of Europe—stretching from the rivers of Russia, from the Baltic and the Atlantic down to the Mediterranean (Ureland 1996–2010; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2010). There is a general orientation to mountains: two conferences of the Eurolinguistischer Arbeitskreis Mannheim (ELAMA)<sup>2</sup> in 1999, had as their theme "language contact north and south of the Alps"; see also the common terms "Balkan languages," "Caucasian languages," "Uralic languages," etc. If not only geographical metaphors underlie these terms, then the question of *sui generis* cultural spaces arises.

Representing the first phase, Ernst Lewy ([1942] 1964) described Europe as a geographical macroregion, ranging from the Atlantic to the Urals, including several subregions (so-called *Gebiete*). He attempted to work out key points within social and cultural macrospace without, however, deriving them from historical developments. Lewy was fighting against the positivism of the Neogrammarians as well as fashionable sociologism, naïve *Völkerpsychologie*, and decontextualized structuralism. His "regions" represent language types that emerged in the context of *longue durée* areal codevelopment.

Lewy's areal typology divides Europe into five regions. His criteria are morphosyntactic in nature, but are not specific to the perspective of a holistic or even universal typology: they revolve around flexion, article systems, and syntactic organization. Lewy considers eighteen languages:

- Atlantic region: Basque, Spanish, French, Italian, Irish, Swedish. Characteristic feature: "isolating flexion"—the concentration of all flexional categories in an individual element of a construction.
- Central region: German and Hungarian. Characteristic feature: "word flexion."

- Balkan region: Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Greek. The characteristic feature is called “demonstrative” because the definite article determines the word in a deictic manner.
- Eastern region: Latvian, Russian, Finnish, Mari, Mordvin. Characteristic feature: “stem flexion” and “subordination,” which is “dominance of the word root over the affixal apparatus.”
- Arctic region: Nenets, showing no correspondence with the rest of Europe.

The mixture of internal and external linguistics, of diachrony and synchrony, is also identifiable in Décsy’s (1973) compilation of Sprachbunds in Europe, voluminously republished in 2002 as *Language Story Europe*. Here social-historical, geographical, cultural, and linguistic factors are employed in a manner that is neither exact nor balanced. None of his zones are defined by unique characteristics and many features do not apply to all languages. Despite these systematic deficits, it is an ambitious design for outlining linguistic regions in Europe—a European mega-Sprachbund is subdivided into eight Sprachbunds, just like a great puzzle. For the first time, Décsy integrates Whorf’s idea of “Standard Average European” (SAE) from 1939 (even though Whorf spoke neither of a European language area nor a Sprachbund, but wanted merely to distinguish European languages, such as English or French, from North American indigenous languages, such as Hopi).

Décsy covers sixty-two languages presenting around one hundred features:

- The SAE Zone: German, English, French, Italian, and, surprisingly, Russian. Thirteen features: two phonetic, e.g., vowel reduction in unstressed syllables; seven morphological, e.g., definite and indefinite articles, simplified case inflection, suffixes and composition in word-building, analytic and synthetic verbal inflection; three lexical, e.g., lexical concords from Latin and Greek, Christian-based personal naming system; one syntactic: predicate not at the end of the sentence.
- The Viking Zone: all North Germanic and Celtic languages, Saami, Finnish, Veps, altogether twelve languages. Twenty-one linguistic features: seven phonetic, e.g., phonemes /θ ð/, apophony; eight morphological, e.g., conjugation in verbal inflection, *have/be* as auxiliary verbs; three syntactic, e.g., preferential treatment of verbal nouns and adverbs, word order with no distinctive function.
- The Littoral Zone: Frisian, Dutch, Basque, Spanish, Portuguese, Maltese. Characterized only by a vague geographical feature: position by the sea.
- The Peipus Zone: Estonian, Livonian, Votic, Latvian. Fifteen features: ten phonetic, e.g., great number of diphthongs, musical tone, distinctions of length, predisposition toward palatal correlation; three morphological, e.g., highly developed case system, evidentiality as a grammatical category; one lexical feature, i.e., loanwords from Baltic and German.

- The Rokytno Zone (from Ukrainian *rokyta*: “crimson willow”): Polish, Belorussian, Ukrainian, Kashubian, Lithuanian. seventeen features: nine phonetic, e.g., no quantity correlation, mobile word accent (not in Polish); seven morphological, e.g., well-developed case system, verbal prefixes; loanwords of Polish origin.
- The Danube Zone: Czech, Slovak, Slovene, Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Hungarian. Fifteen features: nine phonetic, e.g., distinction of length in vowels; four morphological, e.g., strongly synthetic case inflection, no synthetic form of the future tense; heavy Latin and German influence.
- The Balkan Zone: Romanian, Moldovan, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Albanian, Greek, Turkish. Décsy complements the eight known standard Balkanisms with other features: nine phonetic, e.g., presence of phoneme /ə/, mobile accent, presence of apophony; six morphological, e.g., rich verbal system, postposed article, absence of an infinitive; a large quantity of Balkan words of Turkish (and other) origin.
- The Kama Zone: Chuvash, Mari, Tatar, Bashkir, Mordvin, Udmurt, Komi, Nenets, Kalmyk. Nine linguistic features: five phonetic, e.g., absence of any distinctions of length; four morphological, e.g., large number of cases, no synthetic future, evidentiality.

With the establishment of the new discipline of Eurolinguistics in the 1990s and the extension of SAE to all languages of Europe, the “European Sprachbund” was conceptualized anew. This development was prepared by a wealth of materials from the EUROTYP-Project, 1990–94. In this project, one hundred linguists from two dozen countries worked to identify a European Sprachbund on the basis of nine selected grammatical fields, illustrated by many “name maps” (Bossong, Comrie, and Matras 1987–2013).

In their book, König and Haspelmath (1999) distill a European Sprachbund focusing on four core features (see Figure 15.2):

<i>Features</i>	<i>Examples</i>
(1) syntax of mental predicates	<i>ich habe Hunger</i> “I am hungry”
(2) dative external possessors	<i>mir zittern die Knie</i> “my knees are shaking”; Slovenian: <i>roka mu se je tresla</i> “his hand was shaking”
(3) intensifiers ≠ reflexive pronouns	<i>der Präsident selbst kommt</i> “the President himself is coming” vs. <i>der Präsident verteidigt sich</i> “the president protects himself”
(4) negation with pronouns	<i>niemand sah etwas</i> “nobody saw anything”; Italian: <i>nessuno è venuto</i> “nobody came”

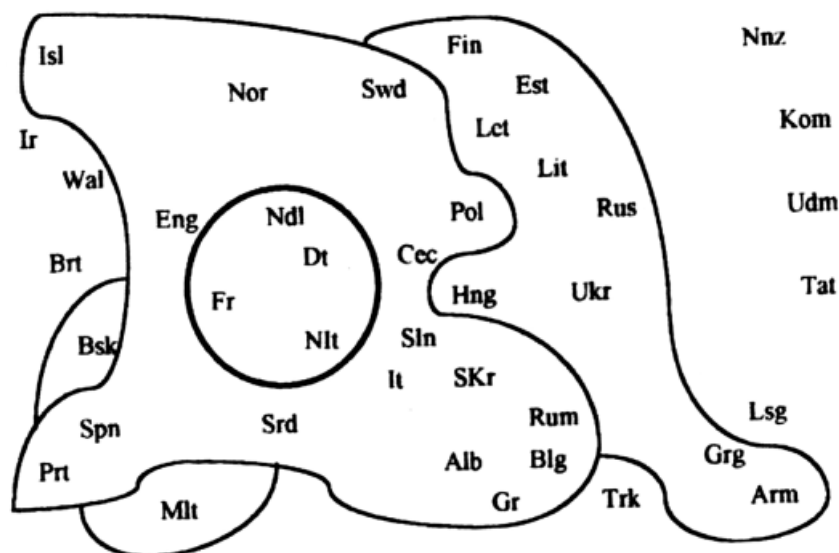


Figure 15.2. The European Sprachbund, after König and Haspelmath (1999)

The nucleus is composed of German, French, Dutch, and (North) Italian. This corresponds roughly to the borders of the medieval Frankish kingdom (Johan van der Auwera [1998, 824] refers to “Charlemagne-Sprachbund”). English, Scandinavian, the other Romance languages, together with the West and South Slavic languages and those of the Balkans, are peripheral. The Sprachbund borders with Baltic, East Slavic, Finnish, Hungarian, Georgian, and Armenian and excludes the Celtic languages and some others.

The improved version of the SAE-European Sprachbund (Haspelmath 2001) aims to eliminate those deficits identified by critics (Pottelberge 2001), such as Eurocentrism, the promotion of Western Europe, and arbitrary selection of features. Thirty-nine languages are included, which are examined according to nine linguistic core features (see Figure 15.3).

<i>Features</i>	<i>Examples</i>
(1) definite and indefinite articles	<i>ein Mann</i> “a man”; <i>der Mann</i> “the man”
(2) relative clauses with relative pronoun	<i>Der Mann der fortging</i> “the man who left”
(3) <i>have</i> -perfect	<i>Ich habe gesehen</i> “I have seen”
(4) participial passives	<i>Ich habe es gemacht</i> “I have made it”
(5) dative external possessors	<i>mir zittern die Knie</i> “my knee is shaking”



- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| (6) | negative pronouns/lack of verbal negation | <i>niemand sah etwas</i> “nobody saw anything”  |
| (7) | particles in equative constructions       | <i>so groß wie stark</i> “as big as it is strong”   |
| (8) | strong agreement/non-pronoun-dropping     | <i>ich gehe</i> “I go”  |
| (9) | intensifier-reflexive differentiation     | <i>der Präsident kommt selbst</i> “the President himself is coming” vs. <i>Der Präsident verteidigt sich</i> “the President protects himself” |



**Figure 15.3.** The improved European (SAE) Sprachbund, after Haspelmath (2001, 1054)

German and French have all nine features; Dutch and the Romance languages except Romanian have eight; English, Romanian, and Greek, seven; Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, and Czech, six; the other Slavic and Baltic languages, five. Finnish, Estonian, Turkish, and Basque, *inter alia*, have two or fewer features and no longer belong to the SAE Sprachbund. German, French, Dutch, English, and the Romance languages enjoy a clear methodological advantage in comparison to the Slavic languages, even though several Slavic languages can finally be considered part of the SAE sample, especially Czech. Although the database is impressive, in its subtext lies the old division between a “core-Europe” shaped by the Frankish agricultural and social order, and a “peripheral Europe” not shaped by that order, or at least not to the same extent (Mitterauer 2004, 66). In fact, from a typological point of view, depending on the choice of features, an “SAE center” in the East or South could be set up with equal justification, but would yield reversed results (Hinrichs 2008).

The crucial question for the future is whether the European macroregion can be captured as a Sprachbund at all. Stolz (2010, 398ff.) illustrates this complex of problems in a programmatic manner. Above all, four complexities must be clarified: the choice of features, the area as such, the ontological status of the Sprachbund, and its historico-cultural interpretation—a task for the future. The ideal would be a comprehensive, systematic analysis of all European languages, including all their existing forms, below the level of the written standards—probably a utopia. This would include an encyclopedia of the similarities between European languages identifiable at all linguistic levels, from the number of phonemes up to cultural-pragmatic similarities (see Hinrichs ed. 2010, 577–751). What is not a utopian idea is the fact that the network of these “Europemes” is an output of cultural identity building, pointing to the future and relating the regions and languages of Europe to each other. These manifest general typological lines present in Europe are the following: (1) the drift in European languages in the last thousand years from a synthetic to a more analytic type (Hinrichs ed. 2004) is a result of increased population density, migrations, the advent of vernaculars, and diverse language contact. (2) Most of the traits of the SAE Sprachbund apparently developed between antiquity and the Middle Ages, in the context of *Völkerwanderung* and ethnic mingling as the civilizational center of Europe moved from the southern regions of the continent toward the northwest (Haspelmath 1998). These traits are therefore contact induced. (3) The European language type—as vague as it still might seem—has apparently been a reality for a long time and is highly attractive: typologically distant languages such as Hungarian, Basque, and Finnish have increasingly converged on it over the course of time (for examples from Basque, see Heine and Kuteva 2006, 245ff.). (4) Fu-

ture research on the linguistic areas of Europe has several methods available to it that are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary (after Stolz 2006): (a) *the egalitarian approach*: exhaustive identification of similarities under the keywords “Europeme” and “Supraregionalization” (Haarmann 1976, 108ff.); (b) *the segregating approach*: investigation of sub-Sprachbunds under the umbrella of the European Sprachbund (Décsy 2002); (c) *the center versus periphery approach*: identification of concentrations of features in a linguistically polycentric Europe and their gradual dissemination in space (Haspelmath 2001); and (d) *the dynamic approach*: comparative analysis of levels of grammaticalization of selected categories (for example Heine and Nomachi 2010). These four approaches, with their internal orientation, stand in opposition to approaches contrasting the European areas with Sprachbunds and language areas in other parts of the world.

### The Southeast European Area/Balkans

In linguistics, Southeast Europe/Balkans is usually understood *grosso modo* as a space “composed of the nation-states of Romania (along with Moldova), Bulgaria, Greece, European Turkey, Albania and ex-Yugoslavia” (Hetzler 2010, 457). Southeast Europe (SEE) is a macroregion, the extent of which is less in doubt than that of Eastern or Central Europe. For the region, as well as for Balkan linguistics, it is necessary to distinguish between SEE and the Balkans: SEE has a different terminological history, a different extent, and different connotations from that of the Balkans. Notably, neither name is indigenous; both are rather ascribed from the outside (see chapter 7 in this volume). SEE differs in its cultural characteristics from the “Balkan cultural space” (Burkhart 2014). It is not an oversimplification to characterize “the Balkans” in a general way as that region of Europe which was under Byzantine and later Ottoman rule and thereby developed its own cultural and civilizational physiognomy that distanced it from the rest of the continent (Sundhaussen 1999). This has fed into projections (Occidentalism; Orientalism) from both sides (see Todorova 1999). As a rough orientation, the natural lines of the Sava and Danube rivers and the artificially drawn borderline of Trieste-Odessa serve to demarcate the region. Southeast Europe as a space is broader in the north and east, comprising Hungary and Croatia as well as the Balkan states, and also the Vojvodina, all of Romania and Moldova with Budzhak, and sometimes even Slovenia and Slovakia. It has considerable lines of connection to the cultural spaces to the north.

Nowadays, nobody would seriously dispute that the so-called Balkan languages form a linguistic region with regard to their characteristics, or that, taken together, they form a cluster unique in Europe. The core zone of Bal-

kanisms is located in the Albanian, Macedonian, and Greek borderlands, a region that historically has the most languages, cultures, and contacts, gradually radiating toward the north. Even today, people live in that area who actively speak three or four Balkan languages. The so-called Balkanisms concern all linguistic levels, and meanwhile number between two and three dozen. However, not all features are equally strong, and they can have different values in the language system (Hetzer 2010). If the Balkanisms in the material are examined in detail, the number of variants increases and the distribution becomes more and more differentiated (Asenova 2002). At the core of the Balkan Sprachbund are the standard languages Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Modern Greek, with Romanian, Serbian, Turkish, and Moldovan being peripheral.

*List of Balkanisms (after Hetzer 2010):*

1. Phoneme /ə/
2. Postposed definite article
3. Additional linking article after the substantive
4. Decrease in the number of morphological cases: Greek (3), Romanian (2), to the point of losing synthetic case-marking, e.g., Bulgarian
5. Retention of the neuter, i.e., development of heterogeneity (“Ambigender”), e.g., Romanian
6. Expression of possession by means of personal pronouns in the genitive or dative
7. Indeclinable particle instead of relative pronoun
8. Formulation of numbers 11–19 following the pattern “one *on* ten”
9. Pronominal reduplication of dative and accusative objects
10. Analytical comparative forms with particle
11. Gerund instead of participle for simultaneity
12. Substitution of infinitive by finite forms
13. Formation of the future with an invariant form of the verb “to want”
14. Retention of synthetic preterite tenses
15. Reinterpretation of forms of the perfect tense as mode of hearsay: evidentiality
16. Common vocabulary: substrate words, Turkisms and Graecisms.

The history of Balkan linguistics—that is, Southeast European linguistics—is almost two centuries years old. It can be subdivided into the following stages:

In the nineteenth century, in the framework of the flourishing of Indo-European studies, structural similarities in the Balkan languages, such as the postposed article, are identified by the Slovenes Jernej Kopitar (in 1829)

and Franz Miklosich (around 1862), as well as the German Gustav Weigand (1888). These “Balkanisms” are mostly attributed to the presence of an underlying substratum—for example, Thracian.

In the twentieth century, the Balkanisms are systematically categorized according to linguistic level and explained as being due to the influence of Greek (Sandfeld 1930) or later of Balkan Latin (Solta 1980). Toward the end of the twentieth century, extensive introductions and collections of materials become available—for example, by Helmut Schaller, Renatus Solta, Jack Feuillet, Petja Asenova, and Olga Mišeska Tomić. Balkanisms are increasingly seen as outputs of language contact, multilingualism, and interference (see Steinke 2014).

The paradigm of the twenty-first century is marked by the growing influence of other linguistic disciplines, such as contact linguistics, areal linguistics, language typology, Eurolinguistics, and even creole linguistics, which is, to some extent, a recession of Balkan linguistics in its narrower sense. Balkanisms are seen from a multiplicity of perspectives. One such perspective focuses on an early-sedimented and late-codified output of diffuse multilingualism, intensive language contact, and creolizing convergence processes in a lower, oral milieu of the social hierarchy in the Balkans in the first millennium CE (Hinrichs ed. 2004; Hetzer 2010). Another points at markers of a typically Southeast European expression of a pan-European tendency toward the development of analytic language structures (see Hinrichs ed. 2004). Of special importance is the identification of analytical iconicity as a structuring principle of the Balkan languages. A third aspect concerns the flexible isoglosses, ranging both in the north and west (e.g., the analytical comparative), as well as in the southeast (e.g., evidentiality) beyond the Balkans (Friedman 1988 and 2010). In a geolinguistic perspective one can find analogies in widely distant languages such as Farsi and Arabic (infinitive replacement) or in creole languages (Hinrichs 2012), as well as—curiously enough—in many European non-standards.

The linguistically relevant *differentium specificum* of the Balkans is constituted obviously not by the individual linguistic features as such, but rather by their massive condensation, interaction, sedimentation, and later codification in a very confined space and under special cultural conditions. More important than the exact geographical boundaries of the Balkans/Southeast Europe are the cultural factors that enabled the development, stabilization, variance, and strengthening, as well as weakening, of the typical Balkan convergences in a given temporal horizon. These are, according to Sundhaussen (1999, 36ff.), the following: the instability of settlement areas and consequent mixed ethnic composition, the loss of and postponed reception of ancient heritage, the Byzantine-Orthodox heritage, an anti-Western disposition, the Ottoman-

Islamic heritage as well as the wars of liberation, reinforced complex ethnic, linguistic, and confessional diversity and a “Balkan way of life” (“*balkanische Lebensform*”; Sundhaussen [1999, 39ff.]). Through “Balkan syncretism,” all these factors finally converged into a typical cultural and institutional pattern, which first kept the idea of the nation-state in the background but in the nineteenth century led to its overvaluation. In the twentieth century, and especially after 1989, its particular development was sharpened by the dissolution of the blocs. This heritage of diverse developmental velocities and trajectories results today in an often confused process of political rapprochement between the Balkans and the European Union. The differentiation of the “Southeast European” and “Balkan” macroregions will probably become weaker with the progression of EU integration processes and finally become obsolete. The distinctive features of the Balkans will, in the twenty-first century, fade and merge ever more with those of the rest of Europe. In particular, especially the multiethnic and multilingual past of the Balkans could serve as an example for the development of the language world of an integrating Europe. A “constitutive element of the southeast European regional self-understanding is . . . mutually overlapping and interpenetrating diversity with fluid ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and political border spaces” (Sundhaussen 1999, 42).

What does this mean for the Sprachbund of the Balkan languages? What future does it have? Answers to these questions are entangled with the political history of the region (Steinke 2009). The Sprachbund developed and stabilized long before the period of nationalism; it reaches back from the “Old Balkans” through Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman rule up until the seventeenth century. When the great national movements were formed, the Sprachbund experienced a break, because the trend toward monoculturalism supports one state language at the cost of neighboring or minority languages: for example, at the cost of Greek in Albania, Turkish in Bulgaria, Hungarian in Romania, Albanian in Serbia, and Romani in all states. The parcelling up of the Balkans into nations, accompanied by a simultaneous regression of Balkan multilingualism, is something like the “Epitaph of the Balkan Sprachbund” (Klaus Steinke). Its structures are available in a sedimented fashion, but it is rare for them to be actively revived interlingually. Even within the Balkans, the Sprachbund is not attractive enough, so powerful is the modern attraction to English (and to German)—which is also creeping into the Sprachbund.

The sedimented structure of the Balkan Sprachbund has a twofold significance. On the one hand, it remains a model for a European Sprachbund that is investigated worldwide and which is contrasted with other Sprachbunds, such as the Indian or Mesoamerican ones. On the other, the Balkan Sprachbund could, in the future, turn into its successor—a European Sprachbund, the political meaning of which cannot be underestimated in the *longue durée*.

## The Central European Area

After the end of the Cold War, a new Central Europe (CE) emerged, which built on a tradition stretching back before the twentieth century. No region of Europe is more difficult to demarcate, because its “borders” spill over in all directions. The space concepts move between two extreme positions, one with a strictly geographical definition, from longitude 10 to 30° east (Paul Magocsi), the other arguing for a historically developed Central European mentality, the idea of a flexible “spiritual archetype” that cannot fit into stable political boundaries. Also, vertically, Central Europe (just like Eastern Europe and Europe itself) is today defined as a macroregion: it orientates itself to the old confessional borders, stretching from the north of Scandinavia, via the Baltic far down into ex-Yugoslavia, and measures over 3000 kilometers (Ureland 2010; see Figure 15.4).



Therefore, it cannot be wrong to consider Central Europe in many ways as a *Terrain Vague*, which is not clearly delimited: also in its own self-perception it is both Central Europe and an in-between Europe in transition (Breysach 2003). Its historical core undoubtedly comprises the multiethnic state of the Habsburg monarchy, as well as the Danube as a transport artery, providing external conditions for multiculturalism, multilingualism, and convergence. Until today, Central Europe has been shaped by the outstanding role of the German language, which has generated—as Földes (2011) emphasizes—an apparently typical “communications paradigm” in the region. Ureland (2010, 477) identifies here an “intermediate territory,” which acted as a “buffer zone” between East and West, especially in the Soviet period. After 1989, the traditional heterogeneity of the region was overlaid by common political interests, a new nationalism, and from 2004 the entry of its states into the European Union. According to Schlögel (2002) Central Europe rediscovered its old western orientation with axes between Warsaw, Vienna, Budapest, and Prague, and from Lviv to Sarajevo.

On the basis of migration-related, cultural, economic, and linguistic factors, which have caused specific convergences, the modern space of “Central Europe” can be divided into three areas, without laying down their borders too rigidly. Northern Central Europe is given the name “Circum-Baltic Area” (Maria Koptjevskaja) and encompasses languages and cultures around the Baltic Sea. Middle Central Europe comprises today’s Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Germany, and occasionally Slovenia and parts of Ukraine. In cultural studies, a specific cultural space of *East Central Europe* (Ostmitteleuropa) is favored (e.g., at the university of Leipzig). Southern Central Europe is rather an offshoot, comprising Croatia, as well as parts of Bosnia as far as the Adriatic.

Just like other convergence zones, the Circum-Baltic Area (CBA) has been a stage for migrations and linguistic and cultural contacts for thousands of years, although it has never been a comprehensive political or economic union. Typologically, the CBA is not a clearly demarcated area with defined borders, but rather perhaps a “contact superposition zone” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2010, 516) with open boundaries. Indo-European languages (Baltic, Slavic) rubbed shoulders with Uralic (Finnish), Turkic (Tatar), and dialects of Romani in the area. The prehistoric contacts between Finns and Slavs were already intensive, with loanwords on both sides as testimony. The political history of the region favored language contact, interference and the formation of larger and smaller zones of convergence: one including, for example, Latvian, Livonian, and Estonian (Stolz 1991); a second called the “Karelian Sprachbund,” comprising east Finnish and north Russian dialects; and a



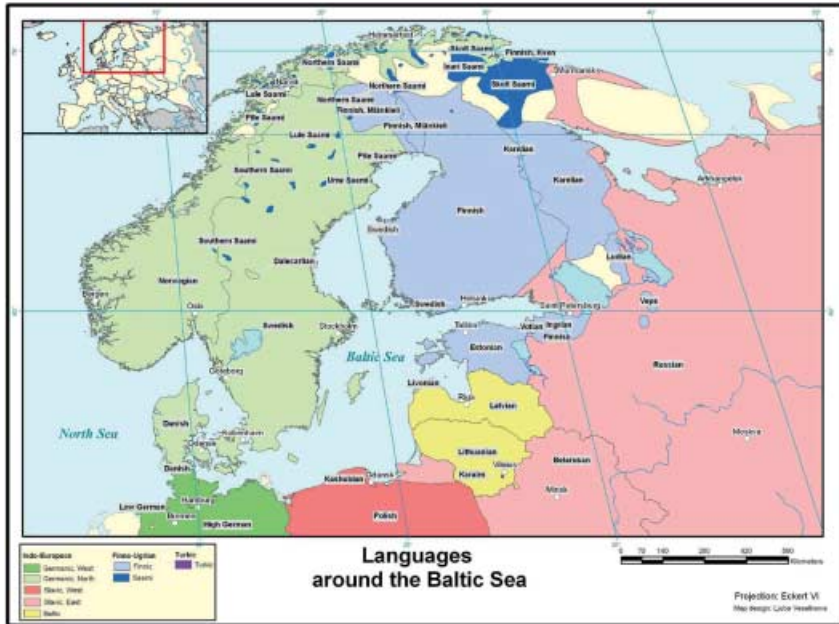


Figure 15.5. Languages around the Baltic Sea (after Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2010, 504)

third including a zone where Swedish, Finnish, and Saami were in contact (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2010).

The high Middle Ages witnessed the formation of Scandinavian, Polish, and Russian states and the centuries-long expansion of Denmark. The German-dominated Hanseatic League and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth introduced new contact languages and dominant languages of prestige (German, Russian, Swedish, Polish) into the region, which always had unilateral influence. Multilingualism and diverse diglossia became the norm, and the religions supported these language hierarchies from another angle: German for Protestantism, Russian and Church Slavonic for Orthodox Christianity, and Yiddish for Judaism.

The CBA has one phonetic feature, two morphological features, four morphosyntactic features, and one syntactic feature (after Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2010). More than for other areas, it is also true here that the features are not universal, meaning that they very often concern only one group of the languages, in the west or the east of the CBA. No single isogloss covers all of the CBA languages. The CBA is therefore of an extensive rather than intensive nature. The most important features are as follows:

- *Polytony* is a strong super-feature that appears in most of the languages of the area. From a typological perspective, the feature of phonemic pitch accent connects the CBA, as a region of *restricted tone languages*, with Serbo-Croatian in Europe, and ultimately with *non-restricted tone languages* in Southeast Asia. The phenomenology of polytony in the CBA is complex and correlates with special suprasegmental conditions. In the Baltic variant, tone and (vowel) length are generally correlated: Lithuanian has two tones and Latvian three. In the Scandinavian variant (Norwegian, Swedish, Danish) it is correlated with syllable structure, while in the Estonian variant it is correlated with the quantity of vowels and consonants. But “there are no obvious connections among the three groups of polytonicity phenomena found in the CB area” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2010, 509).
- *Postfixes*, that is, “the expression of certain verbal voice functions (reflexive, reciprocal, anticausative, passive) by means of verbal postfixes” (ibid., 511)
- *Evidentiality*: Estonian, Livonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian have special forms of verbs for hearsay
- *Word order*: Baltic and Scandinavian languages, Finnish, and Saami tend to place the possessor *before* the possessed
- *Accusative/genitive opposition*: Finn. *söi-n omena-n/en syönyt omena-a*; “I ate/didn’t eat the apple”
- *Predicative instrumental*: in Finnish and Baltic

Middle Central Europe is traditionally associated with the historic cultural space *Mittleeuropa*. It comprises, at its core, today’s Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary, and occasionally also parts of Ukraine and Romania. In the 1930s, the “Prague School” linguists started to show interest in linguistic convergences in the Danube region (Donauraum). In 1947, the Hungarian Romanist László Gáldi used the term “Danube Sprachbund” for the first time. Although subsequently famous linguists, such as Henrik Becker, Vladimír Skalička, and Gyula Décsy, dealt with the Sprachbund, it was rather late, in 2001, when a comprehensive description of its linguistic structures was published (Pilarský 2001). The languages included are German, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, Serbo-Croatian, and Slovenian.

Pilarský (2001) settles finally on eight strong features: three of them phonetic, three morphological, one syntactic and one lexical. The distribution of these features in the Danube Sprachbund can be found in Figure 15.6. Note that Figure 15.7 shows a hard core and a rather softer periphery, with a German taillight.

Nr.	Strukturmerkmal	Deutsch	Ungarisch	Tschechisch	Slowakisch	Serbokroatisch	Slowenisch
1.	Akzent auf der 1. Wortsilbe	(+)	+	+	+	(-)	-
2.	Phonologische Quantitätsopposition der Vokale	+	+	+	+	+	+
3.	Nichtvorhandensein der Vokalreduktion	-	+	+	+	+	-
4.	Produktive Verbal-präfigierung	+	+	+	+	+	+
5.	Synthetische Nominalflexion	(+)	+	+	+	+	+
6.	Dreitempussystem	-	+	+	+	(+)	+
7.	Lexikalische Konvergenzen	+	+	+	+	+	+
8.	Leichte Präferenz für die Voranstellung der Attribute der NomP	+	+	+	+	+	+

Source: Pilarský 2001, 216.

**Figure 15.6.** The distribution of Sprachbund features in the Danube Sprachbund (Pilarský 2001, 216)

Nr.	<i>Sprache</i>	<i>Markmale</i>
1.	Ungarisch	8
2.	Tschechisch	8
3.	Slowakisch	8
4.	Serbokroatisch	6–7
5.	Slowenisch	6
6.	Deutsch	4–6

Source: Pilarský 2001, 217

**Figure 15.7.** The strength of the Danube Sprachbund according to distribution of features (Pilarský 2001, 217)

In the following, I speak about the Danube Sprachbund (DSB) languages without considering the distribution of features in each concrete case (for details see Pilarský 2001, 57–219).

The DSB languages have a stable dynamic word accent on the first syllable (which is a continuation of the European tendency). It is generally not phonemic. German is atypical in this regard, as the accent is in principle fixed on the root syllable (*bedecken* “cover”), and there are minimal pairs such as *üb-*

*ersetzen* “ferry across” versus *übersetzen* “translate.” All DSB languages have a distinction between long and short vowel phonemes of the German type. *Bahn* “way” versus *Bann* “spell”: short vowels can be more open than short. German has seven such pairs, Czech five, and Hungarian seven. The Danube Sprachbund languages don’t reduce unstressed vowels in the standard pronunciation (such as, for example, Russian), in which regard German differs in many instances, such as *bedecken* “to cover” or *Tasche* “bag.” Bilateral features of the DSB languages include word final devoicing (*Auslautverhärtung*) (German, Czech) and the use of front rounded vowels (*ö; ü*) (German, Hungarian).

With regard to morphology, “prefixing is a tool of word formation in all languages of the Danube, comparatively far more productive than in the Balkan or SAE languages” (Haarmann 1976, 104). The enthusiasm of the Hungarian language for prefixes is recent; it is a phenomenon of convergence, which has become productive—for example, *bejár* “attend,” *megcsóvál* “wag once.” This isogloss can be found also at the boundaries of the Danube Sprachbund—for example, (Russian) *dopisat’* “write to the end.” It is possible that a common morphosemantic feature developed in the region under the influence of Slavic and German: the expression of the type of action by means of such verbal prefixes (Kiefer 2010).

All DSB languages are by a high level of synthesis in nominal flexion. The leading language in this regard is Hungarian, with eighteen to twenty-seven oppositions of case (depending on the definition of case), followed by the Slavic DSB languages with six or seven, and German with four. The DSB is at the end of a block of languages to the east being rich in case distinctions, and German is in this respect a transitional language to another block of languages, poor in case distinctions, to the west (SAE languages). Comparative and superlative forms of the adjective and adverb are also synthetic. Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian have a system of three verbal tenses, with present, preterite, and future (Serbo-Croatian usage is also tending in this direction). The copresence of the *Präsens pro futuro* (present tense for future) and the analytical future with auxiliary verbs is striking (Kurzová 1996). Peripheral morphological features of the Danube Sprachbund are preceding articles (Hungarian, German) and the structure of the numerals following the pattern “one *on* ten” (Czech, Slovak, Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian).

The syntactic field of the DSB is underrepresented in research. Structural convergences are evident in the periphrastic passive, in subject-verb-object word order, and in subordinate and relative clauses (Kurzová 1996, 57ff.). Only nominal phrases have been analyzed in detail to date, and it was found that there is a “light preference for a prenominal position for attributes” (Pílský 2001, 117–39).

A separate research field arises from the overwhelming importance of the German language, which served as a kind of lingua franca in the region under the Habsburg monarchy for a period of centuries: a massive number of German loanwords testify to long cultural convergence on the lexical level (Newerla 2002). Nearly a quarter of these are of Austrian provenance, and another quarter originate in other languages mediated by German. Since the fifteenth century, a large number of loanwords have spread into all languages of the area in the domains of military affairs, the urban bourgeoisie, agriculture, court life, knighthood, church, craft, kitchen, mining, and metallurgy. The intermediary function of German also finds expression in family names and idioms. Loanwords in the DSB were exchanged especially in the imperial capital of Vienna and also included loanwords from other Slavic languages, Hungarian, Romanian, and other languages. With the 1990s and EU enlargement, the number of Germanisms and Austrianisms decreased, but language contact between speakers of DSB languages increased, under the auspices of English. Common loanwords in the southern transition area of Hungary-Austria-Croatia-Italy are described by Vig (2007).

Semantics and pragmatics are entirely blank spots on the linguistic map of the Danube Sprachbund (as well as for other Sprachbunds or linguistic areas). Nevertheless, “[Zrinjka] Glovacki-Bernardi proves that there are similar salutation formulas, forms of address and topics of conversation in Southern Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia which constitute a specific *Mitteleuropa* communications paradigm” (Földes 2011, 12).

## The East European Area

Given that the European continent in the twenty-first century is *per consensum* maximally conceptualized and the EU is steadily expanding politically, the old Atlantic-Ural Europe is losing its solid contours in the East and Southeast. Today, it is less clear than ever where Europe ends (Tornow 2010). The “New Eastern Europe” (Rehder 1993) today extends beyond its traditional borders: Eastern Europe (EE) includes Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia, with its scattered Finno-Ugric and Turkic speaking peoples; Turkey, Armenia, and the Caucasian republics with Georgia and Azerbaijan; and to their north the Mongolic Kalmyk language areas and the western parts of Kazakhstan. The language list alone of the new Eastern Europe currently comprises one hundred and twenty standard, literary, and minority languages (Okuka 2002, 15). Eastern Europe is larger, more diverse, more Asian, less Indo-European, and is enriched by numerous languages and another religion (Buddhism/Kalmykia).

A Sprachbund or other convergence of languages in the East European area must first be established and constructed; it is possible that it will develop in the future. To date, however, the focal points of convergence can be identified, in which five or more languages interact with each other: Bukovina, the region of Vilnius or the so-called Budyak in the southwest of Ukraine, where in 1812, “Romanian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, German, Ukrainian and Russian settlers came to the area” (Weiss 2010, 437). However, there is no focused research on it as a Sprachbund (as there is for the Balkans).

Core to a potential wide-ranging EE convergence area would without doubt be the “high degree of synthesis” (Haarmann 1976) that connects all the Slavic languages of EE, especially in nominal declination (case, comparative), but also finding expression in the verbal system (Polish *czytaliśmy* “we have read,” Ukrainian (*vonі*) *vidvezli* “they have departed”). In the focus of an EE area are further typological features, such as multiple negation, lack of obligatory subject marking (pronoun-dropping), special functions for peripheral cases, and possibly the area of verbal aspect.

Russian, with its very strong anti-analytical character (Weiss 2004) is here not only a typological extreme, but also a link to adjacent convergence areas in the eastern part of EE. As far as can be determined, high-level symmetrical convergence between Russian and many minority languages in the region (e.g., Mordvin, Tatar) has not occurred; but rather Russian, as a dominant donor language, has been the source of many loanwords, but itself has rarely adopted lexical items from elsewhere. Russians rather seldom speak Mordvin or Tatar. It should be examined to what extent Russian, as the core language of the EE area, during the course of its coexistence with other languages in the Euroasiatic bloc, adopted “foreign” structures—for example, the agglutinative morphology and rich case systems of the Finno-Ugric languages—and to what extent it has distanced itself from the European language type (or whether this type itself has been extended). The Finno-Ugric languages, such as Mordvin, Cheremis (Mari), or Zyrian (Komi), are clearly well ahead in this regard.

The parallels between Finno-Ugric (F-U) languages and Russian were so obvious (Veenker 1967) that without hesitation a Russian-Finnish Sprachbund could be postulated. In fact, almost all so-called exotic features of Russian have analogies in the structures of the F-U languages. Already the two features that characterize the auditory impression of Russian, namely vowel reduction and the palatalization of consonants, could have developed under the influence of F-U languages. A Finno-Ugric-Russian convergence can be postulated in various fields.

Most striking is the tendency to omit parts of the sentence which supports the thesis of a “Eurasian orientation,” meaning a grammar as sparse as possible in its expression: this is shown most explicitly by the empty copula (*on*

\_učitel' "he [is] a teacher"; *u menja* \_kniga "I [have] a book"), with parallels in many Finno-Ugric languages, such as Mordvin: *mon* \_*lomañan*. Also possible is the empty subject (*tam chorošo* \_*kormjat* "one can eat well there") or the empty connection—that is, causal, inter alia, subordinate clauses without conjunction, as described in detail in Weiss (2013). Structurally related to this is the structurally "un-European" asyndesis, which is widespread in the Russian colloquial: for example, *sadis' rasskazyvaj!* "sit down *and* tell me!," *stoit smotrit* "he was standing *and* staring." This occurs in many F-U languages, especially in Komi (Weiss 2012); and one has to reckon on further lexical reduplication of the type *bystro-bystro!* "quick-quick!" which is known also in the Turkic languages, such as Tatar: *želt-želt*.

The archetypal possessive expression *u menja kniga* "there is a book with me" = "I have a book," is available in seven Finno-Ugric languages, and also occurs in all of the Turkic languages. Furthermore, many peculiarities of the Russian case usage could go back to F-U influence, such as the casus negationis, the instrumental predicative (see above), or the so-called comitative—for example, *my s ženoy* "I and my wife."

The hypothesis of the Eurasian features of Russian culture and language was launched by the Russian émigré linguist Nikolai S. Trubetskoi in the 1920s and was revived in the 1950s by Lev Gumilev, to be represented on the European scene since the 1990s by the extreme right-wing politician and philosopher Aleksandr Dugin (Ignatow 1992). Eurasianism offers today a *Weltanschauung* for many Russian intellectuals (see chapter 10 in this volume). This neo-Eurasian paradigm includes the old cultural links to the Finno-Ugric and Turkic-speaking populations of Russia as well as, in a broader perspective, ultimately states such as Serbia and Bulgaria, and even Iran, China, Turkey, and India—in contrast to the "Germanic-Romanic" culture of Western Europe. It is beyond doubt that Russian has certain characteristics that distinguish it from the European Standard, particularly with regard to the categories mentioned above. The eurolinguist Helmar Frank even talked about Russian as a "Eurasian language." However, for modern Russian linguistics, affiliation with other Slavic languages is the prevalent theme, and thus a strong Eurasian hypothesis could hardly be seriously advanced, even though the "non-European" traits cannot be denied. This might well change in the future, however, following the change of the political context toward an ideologically motivated "distancing" from Europe.

## Conclusion

The regionalization of Europe in linguistic areas has a long history. But only with the great projects and handbooks that established the new discipline of

Eurolinguistics after 2000 did it become possible to overcome Eurocentrism: Europe became conceptualized as a *sui generis* linguistic macro region, and its Eastern and Western regions are now placed in a non-normative and equal way next to each other. If one wishes to give a summary picture of the traditional linguistic regions of Europe at present, and especially in the future, one should distinguish three main lines and different dynamics of transformation, which mutually influence each other and which also to a certain extent overlap:

The *longue durée* perspective: over a period of about fifteen hundred years following antiquity, Europe's major regions and their language types had *grosso modo* emerged: in the first millennium the Balkans, the western Romanic-Germanic core Europe, then Russia and Eastern Europe and in-between also the elusive central Europe, ranging from the Baltic to Croatia. The strongest pan-European feature which links all these regions is the tendency toward more analytic language structures with a growing dynamic from East to West.

The middle-range perspective after the 1980s: in the framework of the continuous enlargement of the European Union—which sped up after 2004—due mainly to the growing mobility of people and increasing political and cultural contacts, the traditional regions lost their contours and the national borders became less sharp. Whether there “exists” a Central-European, Balkan, or Eastern European language type will most likely soon become an intralinguistic or historical issue, which will be superseded by contemporary historical developments. The discussion on the future of the Balkan language type (Steinke 2012) can be extended to other language types and regions as well: local or culturally bound language types or Sprachbunds do not seem to have a future in an integrating Europe, but will be further converging due to pan-European developments and the growing impact of English. Whether the linguistic interpenetration of all European languages and regions will eventually result in a European Sprachbund is a merely academic question to be decided by the future. What is important is that the development of modern area linguistics will in a way dissolve this problem altogether: most probably in Europe we have already been experiencing a convergence landscape, with a cluster of large-scale “contact superposition zones” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2010, 516). These zones cannot be neatly delimited from each other, as their peripheries overlap as “oscillating fields,” spreading across the European continent and, at least to the east and southeast, extending beyond it and connecting to other macroregions.

The current perspective from the twenty-first century: in the great metropolitan cities of Europe, unprecedented mixing of languages and cultures is taking place due to increased migration and integration processes. Such centers are Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Madrid, and London in the West—destinations and melting pots of multifarious migrations. Cities such as Mos-



cow, Riga, Warsaw, Prague, or Sarajevo, on the other hand, are departure and destination points of a new pan-European mobility of people, cultures, languages, and experiences, especially for the younger and educated groups. Due to different migration and refugee waves, it is not an exaggeration to predict a demographic situation in the next ten to twenty years that will radically change the face of Europe. As a result, Europe in the twenty-first century will be affected in linguistic terms—in different parts with different speed—by the tendencies of Creolization, typological equilibration, and possibly also simplification of more complex grammatical structures.

Current research takes these trends into account insofar as it deals with entities such as “European Sprachbund,” “European language type,” “Europeme,” etc. and is increasingly influenced by holistic paradigms (Stolz 2010). Today one can assume that the four macroregions, and the countless microregions within them, are as a whole illuminated from a linguistic point of view. There are, however, also locally bound countertendencies beyond the sphere of pure linguistics, at the level of everyday experiences and practical politics, which influence the direction of research. These include phenomena such as the “de-Europeanization” of the Russian language, the purist profiling of small languages such as Croatian, Bosnian, Moldavian, or Slovak, the resistance against the preponderance of English all over Eastern and Western Europe, the “antiquization” of Macedonian, or the rise of a number of microlanguages or minority idioms due mainly to linguistic(-political) motives. These are contradictory trends that mark out new mental borders and ideological competitions. They can overlap with and overwrite each other and thus defy a clear linguistic prognosis: the project of a holistic Europe is countered by nationally motivated trends, which gives the general development its specific dynamics. For the linguistic regions of Europe, this offers an analogy: the individual regions in their cultural and linguistic phenomenology will lose their importance, while their history and specific contribution to the typology of a European macrospace will remain relevant. On the whole, the gap between the practically spoken everyday language and the written standard will further increase—a tendency which will be to a certain extent triggered “from below” by the emergence of new Pidgins and other purportedly deficient language forms. It is also likely that a renaissance of the oral language modus will lend support to the linguistic approach to regions in the long term.<sup>3</sup>

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## Notes

1. <http://www.weltkarte.com/europa/europakarte/europa-karte.htm>. Used with permission.
2. Led by P. Sture Ureland.
3. This paper was translated from the German original by my colleagues Cormac Anderson and Beatrix Bukus (University of Leipzig).

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## Chapter 16

# Literary History

*Alex Drace-Francis*



Before the Enlightenment, the term “literature”—which did not originally refer to *belles-lettres* or works of fiction—was used in a fairly general way, in Latin or in the west European vernaculars, to denote intellectual authorities, corpora of sources, or traditions of learning or interpretation; a sense which is preserved in the meaning of “scholarly literature” or bibliography (Williams 1977). As such, it was understood as a body of material transcending geography, even if there was an implicit understanding of a transfer of learning from an origin point, perceived as the Eastern Mediterranean, to the northwest of Europe (the so-called *translatio studiorum*). Literary history, then, was equivalent to the general history of knowledge. And despite radical transformations of the concept over time, most attempts to write comparative literary history have remained—whether by accident or willful occlusion—remarkably indifferent to coherent geographical systematizations.

This is not to say that all older attempts to consider “the state of learning in Europe” were bound to a universalistic interpretation of the classical and Biblical heritage as the building blocks of literary knowledge in modern Europe. For example, British scholar and editor of manuscripts Samuel Purchas, who sketched “A Briefe and Generall Consideration of Europe” in 1625, had recourse to a division of the continent based on the different languages spoken in it (Purchas [1625] 2013). But his divisions rested primarily on identification of languages and language families, and he did not seek to delve further into the literary traditions they perpetuated, either by nation or region.

### **From Exchange to Division: The Republic of Letters and the Legacy of De Staël**

It was in the course of the eighteenth century that the concept of literature is generally agreed to have undergone its most important transformations.

On the one hand, there was a change in the nature of literary communications—press freedom; free association across religious, political, class, and gender boundaries; and the development of learned networks. On the other, new criteria emerged for the valorization of literary taste which privileged new modes (such as fiction over history and lyric over epic) and placed an emphasis on sensibility and aesthetics. Literature, then, took on new functions both in terms of public communication and as a field mediating between the private and the public sphere (Marino 1974; Goodman 1998).

To others, it was not necessarily the existence of different publishing centers, but of a literary process of exchange, that permitted the articulation of a concept of Europe. Writing from Riga—by eighteenth-century standards a somewhat marginal point on the European map—Johann Gottfried Herder ([1795] 2013, 86–87) saw, in remarkably modern fashion, that Europe was in one sense “merely a figment of the mind,” and that if anything resembling a European public space existed, it could only be said to consist of “the general principles and opinions of the keenest-sighted, most reasonable men,” who “truly form an invisible church, even when they have not even heard of one another” (see also Norton 1991; Hoock-Demarle 2008). Nearly two hundred years before Benedict Anderson, Herder intuited the extent to which the practiced elaboration of a critical discourse valorizing a common literary heritage could conjure a spatially-designated community into being, even if its members would never meet in person (Anderson 1983). But what of Europe’s regional divisions? Perhaps the most influential attempt at furnishing a more clear-cut, middle-level division of European culture according to literary-historical principles, was that made by the Swiss-French critic Germaine de Staël. In 1800 de Staël published a pioneering work of literary sociology, *De la littérature dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*, which continued the debate initiated by Montesquieu and Rousseau on the complex relations of climate, education, and sociability to the potential perfectibility of societies (De Staël 1800; for good contextualizations see Fanger 1962 and Macherey 1998).

In *De la littérature*, de Staël’s interest in the cultural geography of literature is relatively muted. For the subject matter of this chapter, her more important and ground-breaking work was her 1813 *De l’Allemagne*, a critical survey of modern German literature for an international audience, written in the context of the opposition to Napoleon and the German Wars of Liberation. In the preface to this volume, de Staël set out her conception of European literary divisions, with a view to persuading French critics to “penser à l’européenne” (to think European), as she put it. She traced “the origin of the principal nations of Europe” to “three large and distinct races”: the Latin, the Germanic and the Slavonic. She went on to classify the literary culture of each of these groups according to (fairly haphazard) historical criteria.

For instance, she considered that “the nations whose intellectual culture is of Latin origin have been civilized for longer than the others; they have inherited much of the Romans’ sagacious dexterity in handling the affairs of this world” (de Staël 1813: 96–97). The Germanic nations, on the other hand, “have almost always managed to resist the Roman yoke; they were civilized later, and only through Christianization; they went straight from a form of barbarism to a Christian society: the epoch of chivalry, the spirit of the Middle Ages, are among their liveliest memories” (de Staël 1813: 96–97). Slavic literature was placed in a subordinate position, because “the civilization of the Slavs, having developed more recently and more rapidly than those of the other peoples, shows at present more signs of imitation than originality.” Asiatic civilization, meanwhile, was dismissed as “too underdeveloped for their writers to be able at present to display their true, natural character” (de Staël 1813: 96–97).

De Staël’s influence was such that this tripartite model of literary Europe persisted in much nineteenth-century scholarship in French and in other languages. It rested on a cultural-historical interpretation of a linguistic division at the same time as philologists were establishing the concept of Indo-European languages, with the Germanic, Latin, and Slavic being its principal groupings (but also taking into account manifestations such as Celtic, Baltic, Greek, and Albanian at its margins).<sup>1</sup> It was also part of a general trend of eliminating or minimizing references to extra-European influences on European literature: for instance, both the contribution of Egyptian culture to that of Ancient Greek philosophy and that of Arabic to medieval Romance vernacular poetry were gradually occluded in this period and effectively replaced by the above schema. As it was organizing its internal literary divisions, Europe was also patrolling its external cultural boundaries (see Bernal 1987; Dainotto 2006a and 2006b).

Broadly speaking, this relatively schematic division of European literature spread itself across Europe and became fairly generalized by the mid-nineteenth century. De Staël’s influence was evident in Britain, where Lord Byron attributed his interest in Greece to her (Goldsworthy [1998] 2013), and Thomas Carlyle his decision to take up the study of German (Kaplan 1983, 56). It was also important in Italian culture: not only had de Staël rendered Italy significant through her novel *Corinne, ou L’Italie*, but an important 1829 essay on the idea of a European literature by the young Giuseppe Mazzini ([1829] 2013) shows the influence of her topological schema quite clearly. So do both the iteration rehearsed by Finnish philosopher Johan Vilhelm Snellman in 1841 (Jalava and Stråth 2016) and the famous considerations of Russian novelist and critic Ivan Turgenev ([1860] 1965) on Shakespeare and Cervantes, in which the former is adjudged to be representative of the



Northern spirit, and the latter of that of the South. Well into the twentieth century a “de Staëlian” model was being referred to, for instance in the work of Galician naturalist author Emilia Pardo Bazán (du Pont 2003).

### **National, Universal and European Conceptions of Comparative Literary History: Goethe, Arnold, Taine, and Brunetière**

“Nowadays,” said Johann Wolfgang Goethe to his friend Johann Peter Eckermann in the course of a conversation in the first days of 1827, “national literature doesn’t mean much. The age of world literature is beginning, and everybody should contribute to hasten its advent” (in Moretti 2000). This statement is often cited as a protomanifesto for comparative literary studies in the twenty-first century and as an indicator that the study of literature had a liberal cosmopolitan agenda whose lineage could be traced back to one of its polymath founding father figures (Pizer 2000 and 2012; Behdad and Thomas 2011). The positing of such a genealogy should be met with caution, however (Bernheimer 1998; Pizer 2000). A regionalizing outlook was much more in evidence in the “scientific” disciplines of linguistics and philology, and scholars in those fields were not always interested in establishing equivalent status or interchangeability among different languages, but rather in creating genealogies and hierarchies, which tended by their nature to reinforce conceptions of “European” languages as being more developed and articulate, as against the “primitive” source-linguistic material furnished in particular by Asian (and to some extent Celtic) languages. The greater energy was directed toward building literatures on a national paradigm. Concepts of “Celtic literature” were developed somewhat more strongly than those of, say, “Balkan,” “Baltic,” or “Iberian” literature, but again this was a discussion focused more on linguistics and folklore-culture studies than on literary history *per se*: moreover, it was conducted in the languages of the metropolis (English, French, German) rather than in the vernaculars (Leerssen 1998). This is not the place, nor would there be the space, to review developments in all national literary historiographies in Europe during this key period (Hohendahl 1989; Spiering 1999; Cooper 2010; and Ivanovic 2013). But the point may at least be established through a brief look at some of the major figures who devised paradigms for the uses and importance of the study of literature in the nineteenth century. Perhaps the most influential models were those developed in England and France, particularly through the work of Matthew Arnold and his near contemporary Hippolyte Taine.

Matthew Arnold, one of the giants of Victorian literature and intellectual life, is today best known in criticism for his work *Culture and Anarchy* (1869),

which sought to make the case for the study of works of literature for their own sake. Although an apology for the study of (high) culture, this work bore the subtitle *An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* and became a key reference point for the study of literature as developed and institutionalized in Britain and the United States in the course of the twentieth century. Arnold's essay continued to cite continental European culture as an example to his compatriots, even including calls to a Voltairean "war on the absurd" (Collini 2004). At the same time, it made little attempt to "geographize" European literature according to climatic, characterological, or other principles. His cultural program has been deemed to be at once transnational and anational, with something of an oscillation between a belief in a divergent (and hierarchical) understanding of historical literary cultures and a dependence on a cosmopolitan—if largely Eurocentric—notion of literature as the product of transfers, interfaces, and general cultural synthesis (Leerssen 2015). To the extent to which it was geographical, his model, especially in *Culture and Anarchy*, posited the "streaming" of modern cultural values from the twin ancient sources of "Hebraism" and "Hellenism" into "our" world (Arnold 1869), which is understood to be an English one fueled by ongoing contact with West European culture, as well as with investigation to some extent of its more-recently discovered ethnocultural roots, as evinced in his work on Celticism (Leerssen 1996; Stone 1998).

Taine approached literary history in a much more historical way, if not always evincing the lucidity which his English counterpart considered so characteristic of the French. His works, beginning with the important *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* (1863), were almost as influential on the European literary scene as Arnold's were on the Anglo-American. In the preface to this work Taine made a case for the study of literature not just for aesthetic or moral improvement but as a source for the history of manners and human particularities. Subscribing to notions of human diversity, he sought to explain them by invoking three fundamental factors: "*la race, le milieu et le moment*"—in other words, hereditary, environmental, and temporal-conjunctural factors. He then applied these to an empirical study of the English case, and subsequently to a full-blown study of French history, *Les origines de la France contemporaine* (1876–94), so that his influence extended well beyond the confines of literary history *stricto sensu*.

A towering figure in late-nineteenth-century European cultural criticism, Taine's legacy was taken up by the nationalist right in France and other countries, and for that reason suffered a general eclipse in the twentieth century (Spitzer 1948). For the purposes of this article, however, it should be stressed that his concept of *milieu* did not really develop into a theory of literary spaces or regions; it was designed, rather, to provide an attractive, if somewhat for-

mulaic, support to general conceptions of national character that had already been aired to a considerable extent in existing works of cultural history, from Guizot (to whom *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* was dedicated) and also in the work of English historical sociologist Thomas Henry Buckle (Pozzi 1993).

Most comparative literary historians working in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed to some extent the concepts of “currents” and “interrelations” between different national literatures in a broad paradigm which attempted to draw on the scientific or quasiscientific models of Darwin and Hegel, emphasizing both the importance of “spirit” as a historical motor as well as a source of cultural value, and the “evolutionary” character of the enterprise. In Denmark, Georg Brandes (1872) produced an influential multivolume work, the *Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, which was translated into German, French, and English (the literatures upon which it largely concentrated). In France, Fernand Brunetière to some extent attempted to move the focus of literary history away from “great men” and the general history of culture onto the more specific development of literary modes and genres: his *Evolution of Genres in the History of Literature* (1890) drew on Darwinian models and treated literary genres almost as biological species in formation. In 1900, in a keynote lecture to the Association of Comparative Literature, Brunetière offered his thoughts on the concept of “La littérature européenne” (European literature).

Unlike Goethe, who had envisaged literature as tending to move from the national to the global, Brunetière (1900) saw national literatures as being the product of an earlier pan-European literature which had subdivided into separate “species,” and the task of the literary historian, he said, was “to know what happened to the strictly European as it became Spanish, I suppose, or French.” However, in his conception, not all national literatures in Europe could be considered to be “European” merely by dint of having arisen *within* the geographical confines of the continent. Works from the periphery, whether Basque, Breton, Norwegian, or Russian, would not be considered European unless they “enriched the European spirit with some element which had remained until then “national” or “ethnic.” Leaving aside the tautological (or circular) reasoning behind this definition of Europeanness (Dainotto 2012), important again here is that it is conceived either in essentialist or diachronic terms, being the product of an evolutionary current or process, rather than as a product of (or representation of) space.

### The View from the “Periphery”

In contemporary discussion of the notion of world literature, the Eurocentrism of the nineteenth-century tradition has by now become a familiar object

of critique (Bernheimer 1998; Prendergast 2004). What such criticism largely overlooks is that calling such Eurocentric mainstream discourse “European” itself offers only a very partial representation of wider European literary history. If one looks at literary history not in France, Britain, and Germany, but in, say, Spain, Russia, and the Balkans, one finds that attitudes toward this model were often ambiguous and sometimes contestatory. In Spain, for example, it was acknowledged by some of the first literary historians, the brothers Rafael and Pedro Rodríguez Mohedano, that the need to develop a literary history (*historia literaria*) was something that would be stimulated by the example of “other nations,” almost certainly including France (Ríos-Font 2004, 17). However, this did not necessarily entail producing a “European” literary history: indeed, they saw the literature of the rest of Europe (or even that of Portugal, which they also excluded) as being much less relevant to their enterprise than that of the (Spanish) Americas, of which they wrote that “we include it in the plan of our literary history . . . despite its distance, we cannot regard it as foreign” (Ibid.).

From Eastern Europe, the concept of a comparative Slavic literary culture based on the notion of “literary reciprocity” was advanced by Ján Kollár ([1837] 2008) in his work *On the Literary Reciprocity between the Various Branches and Dialects of the Slavic Nation*. Part of the process, Kollár argued, was aimed at encouraging Slavs to understand the interrelations between their literary cultures and perhaps to conceive of their various branches (*Stämme*) as forming one nation (*Nation*). At the same time, he insisted, he intended “to become not just a one-sided Slav, but to achieve wherever possible a European perspective” (Kollár [1837] 2008, 74).

However, while Kollár argued that the Slavs have a right “to join the great European family” and should answer “the call to seize the course of the age and of European life,” he placed their literary reciprocity in contrast with that of Western Europe (Ibid., 101). Where Western European nations had achieved linguistic uniformity, the Slavic nation would remain individuated (Ibid., 78). Although they were “the largest nation in Europe,” allegedly occupying “half of Europe, a third of Asia, and a significant section of America,” they retained more affinity with the ancients than with their Western European neighbors (Ibid., 78, 102, 108). If some successful scholars had succeeded in presenting Slavic literary history “in a systematic order” it was to show something “to Europe,” “as if in a great mirror” rather than as if participating in a common culture (Ibid., 83). The Slavs were also differentiated by their lack of a public sphere (Ibid., 116). In other words, Kollár promoted literary reciprocity among the Slavs, yet not necessarily stronger relations with Europe as a whole. His concept of reciprocity, while not strongly political, was therefore more of intranational articulations—including with the

non-Slavic nations of Eastern Europe—than one contributing to an overall conception of literary regions in Europe.

A second major attempt to present Slavic literary history to a Western audience was made by the poet Adam Mickiewicz, in a course of lectures delivered at the Collège de France in Paris from 1842 to 1844. Building to some extent on the ideas of Kollár, Mickiewicz bemoaned the fact that Slavic literature was so little known to (West) European audiences. Also like Kollár, he compounded the division between West and East European literary history by positing some differential characteristics of the latter. The Slavs as a people were positioned as “the last to arrive and play a part on the European stage,” and their literature was adjudged “entirely modern, a contemporary creation.” The body of Slavic literature was presented as a relatively undifferentiated mass: “what distinguishes it above all from your Western literatures, is a lack of specialization. In Europe, everything fissures and separates off; among the Slavs, by contrast, everything is summed up and tends toward a concentrated conclusion” (Mickiewicz [1914] 2013, 127).

Indistinctness, then, was the Slavs’ paradoxical distinguishing feature, in literature as in political geography. And yet Mickiewicz ([1914] 2013) also assigned a special role to Poland—“the France of the North”—as a country capable of mediating Western ideas to the Slavic peoples as a whole. In this sense Mickiewicz to some extent perpetuated a myth of a differentiated, advanced “Europe” (albeit represented only by a few literatures) and an undifferentiated, insufficiently known “North,” where nevertheless one nation could act as guide and messiah of the new spirit of literature.

The development in Russia was somewhat different. There were attempts to cultivate a “Slavic” literary history, such as in the Moscow professor Osip Bodiansky’s 1837 study *On the Folk Poetry of the Slavic Tribes*, published in the same year’s as Kollár’s more famous tract, but limited to the Slavs of the Russian empire rather than an attempt to establish a transnational “Slavic region” (Mickiewicz [1914] 2013). Yet Russian Slavists tended to limit their conception of Slavic literature and culture to the confines of their empire, and to some extent Austrian Slavists did the same, although both paid some attention to the cultures of the Slavs still under Ottoman rule.

As is well known, the question of Slavic identity or Slavophilism developed into a major philosophical debate in Russia about the country’s geocultural, and to some extent political, destiny. The debate cannot be resumed in full here, as it goes well beyond the confines of literary history (Bracewell 2008). Suffice it to note that some Russian historians and philosophers of culture advocated a “European” direction for the country’s culture, while others—the so-called Slavophiles—saw Russian history as taking a path distinct from that of the rest of Europe. These kinds of arguments over tradition versus moder-

nity, or over “European” versus “autochthonous” cultural roots, also played themselves out in many cultures of Central and Eastern Europe, in a way that partially anticipated the debates in postcolonial literatures.

Among many variations on this theme elaborated in Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, one of the most significant was that propounded by Russian cultural critic and theorist Nikolai Trubetskoi, in a critical essay on “Europe and humanity” first published in Sofia in 1920, but influenced by earlier debates over “Eurasianism” in Russia. In this essay Trubetskoi ([1920] 2013: 178–81) argued perhaps more clearly than any of his predecessors that the apparently “cosmopolitan” discourse elaborated by philosophers and cultural historians was in fact a chauvinist, Western European (in his terms, “Romano-Germanic”) one. To such historians, he said, “civilisation’ implies the culture that was developed by Europe’s Roman and Germanic peoples . . . the culture pioneered by cosmopolites as globally superior, set to replace all other cultures, is the same manifestation of culture as the ethno-anthropological concept propagated by the chauvinists. There is no fundamental difference between the two” (Ibid., 179). It is paradoxically an indication of the force of Trubetskoi’s argument that his viewpoint was itself effectively peripheralized, being rarely cited in general discussions of the geography of culture, despite its early date and its affinity with later, more famous critiques of West European regionalism.

## Interwar Developments

The twentieth century, which, according to nineteenth-century philosophies of progress, should have been the apotheosis of the civilization of Europe as exemplified by literary endeavor, became in the wake of World War I almost a site of mourning for it, as intellectuals from nearly all west European countries sought to diagnose the disaster of war through a critique of the continent’s cultural wellbeing (Hewitson and d’Auria 2013). Perhaps on account of a perceived need to rebut and shore up this spirit of pessimism, but also on account of the slow rhythm of paradigm change in academic circles, the feeling of “crisis” did not immediately strike the field of comparative literary history. Indeed, despite the intense questioning of the value of Europe’s literary heritage, symbolic importance continued to attach to European culture, and the prestige of literature as an object of study continued to grow, with the establishment of chairs and university research departments dedicated to individual or comparative literatures, even as an exercise in “shoring fragments” against Europe’s ruins, as T. S. Eliot had it (Eliot [1922] 2014: 46). General works of comparative literature, of which the most prestigious was perhaps the Franco-Belgian scholar Paul van Tieghem’s *Précis de l’histoire lit-*

*ténaire de l'Europe* (1925), exercised a wide influence and became standard reference works across the continent.

Another influential project which had its roots in interwar scholarship and disciplinary institutionalization was that of René Wellek. Educated in Prague and teaching Slavic literature in London in the 1930s, Wellek was to become an *eminence grise* in US comparative literature circles after World War II, and went on to produce a *History of Modern Criticism* in eight volumes (1955–92), enshrining the main currents of European criticism from 1750 until modern times in a coherent interpretive narrative. Of the two giants Van Tieghem and Wellek, it was Van Tieghem who attempted to be more comprehensive in terms of the geographical spaces literary history was supposed to cover. But both broadly subscribed to the notion of literary history as being comprised of a series of parallel currents, in which the development of ideas on a temporal axis took precedence over understanding cultural context, and particularly regional divisions, as a significant architectural principle on which a historical discourse could be built.

At the same time, certain literary groupings attempted to establish a series of interactions between writers in different parts of Europe, and to promote a conception of European literature beyond the nation-state. Efforts in this direction are often associated with liberals, with both Romain Rolland and Thomas Mann in a firm anti-Nazi position (Mann 1943; Roth [1939] 2003); but were also adopted by more conservative advocates of a European cultural space. Indeed, the idea of a “European” literature was even taken up by Nazi cultural policymakers. In this vision, as Benjamin George Martin (2013, 490) has recently shown, a clear concept of European literature was elaborated that involved “extend[ing] to the rest of Europe the kind of machinery and mobilization of the cultural sphere that Goebbels had believed he had perfected for Germany” (see also Lubrich 2006, 52–53). While this did not lead to any explicit subdivision of Europe’s literary history into regions, it implied and reinforced a division between a (German, occasionally German-Italian) center and a periphery in need of subordination. In this and other conceptualizations of Europe’s literary-historical regionalization, the center-periphery model was to the fore, much more so than any more systematic geographical or mesoregional thinking about Europe’s written heritage.

## The Postwar Setting and Debates

This period saw in part a reiteration of the *Kulturkrise* that had taken place after World War I—an admission of a collapse in European values, and at the same time a severe critique from several quarters of the traditional “civilizing value” of mainstream European Enlightenment thought (e.g., Adorno

and Horkheimer [1947] 2002). At the same time, literary history continued to produce new castings of Europe's literary heritage. Immediately after the war, two masterpieces of European literary historiography were published in quick succession by the same Swiss publisher (Francke Verlag of Bern). The first, Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* ([1946] 1953), is one of the great classics of historicist literary criticism, using the contextual analysis of primary works to establish realist description as a constant and constitutive element of Western culture. The second, Ernst Robert Curtius's *The European Literature of the Latin Middle Ages* ([1948] 1953), returned to the Latin medieval tradition in the search of cultural roots such as would provide a common European narrative after the ruinous effects of nationalist thought had been so discredited by the actions of the two World Wars (Jacquemard 1998; Konuk 2010). However, both *magna opera* appeared in widely-read English editions in 1953 (prepared by the same translator, Willard Trask) and thereafter in over twenty European languages, becoming important reference points in the search for a common European literary heritage. Through their anchoring in Greco-Roman antiquity, but also through their relatively circumscribed West European selections of texts, these two works continued to advance the implied identification of "European" literature with Western Europe, which coincided, intentionally or not, with the political institutionalization of "Europe" in the western bloc (Auerbach 1950, 237).

Briefer, but possibly even more influential, were the pronouncements of Anglo-American literary and cultural critic T. S. Eliot in the immediate postwar period. Elaborating his ideas first in literary magazines, then in a lecture on "The Unity of European Culture," published in German in Berlin in 1946, which was included as the final chapter of his 1948 book *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture*, Eliot's account effectively constituted a defense of the heritage of "Greece, Rome and Israel." The question of Eliot's attitude to Jewish culture, colored as it was by his own Christian beliefs—and, it has to be admitted, his casual anti-Semitism—has been controversial. Interesting in the postwar context is his cultural conservatism, effectively a reprise in a new conjuncture of the Arnoldian principles of "Hebraism" and "Hellenism" (Eliot 1946). Eliot initially sought to limit the relevance of Israel but changed his views after the end of the war (see Eliot 1942, 26–27; Eliot 1944; Julius 1995, 197–99). Another British cultural historian and political theorist, Ernest Barker, likewise reverted to nineteenth-century principles in the conclusion to his three-volume *The European Inheritance*, where he revived the Taineian concepts of *race*, *milieu*, and *moment* as "stock, space, and time" (Barker 1954).

There were significant mutations to the idea of a common European literary heritage in the 1950s and 1960s, notably through the promotion, espe-



cially in the United States, of the concept of “Western civilization” (as opposed to strictly European), which put forward an implied symbolic geography uniting American and Western European heritage in a common civilizational area (Allardyce 1979). As Franco Moretti (1994) has observed, what these accounts have in common is not just a negation of the nation-state, but an insistence that the only alternative to it is a concept of Europe (or “the West”) as “unity.” The ideas of continuity and antiquity were also paramount in all these accounts: they underwrote the idea of Western Europe as the heir to the Greco-Roman heritage, and in Eliot’s account especially, the religious tradition was also stressed.

### **Eurocentrism and Nationalism Critiqued**

After the 1970s, literary and cultural history in the United States turned quite firmly away from Europe, and the centrality of the European heritage to literary studies was challenged by official bodies (Bernheimer 1995). This was partly inspired by the postcolonial critique of “the narrow self-serving parochialism of Europe,” as Chinua Achebe (1974) called it (see also Césaire [1950] 2013; Fanon 1961). The critique of Eurocentrism was most clearly encapsulated in Edward W. Said’s *Orientalism*, which among many other things foregrounded the relationship between literature and geography, or, as its subtitle clearly states, on *Western Representations of the Orient*. Said claimed his own intellectual heritage from different sources in the various traditions presented hitherto—from Césaire, Foucault, Gramsci, and other writers critical of colonialism and Eurocentrism, but also from Auerbach and other upholders of a conception of “European humanism.” Controversially, Said omitted the study of German, Russian, and other European attitudes to the Orient, effectively confining his critique of the “West” to the Anglo-French tradition.

Here is not the place to revisit the extensive debates that that work generated (Macfie 2000; Apter 2011). More important for our purposes is the ambiguous legacy Said’s work might have held for theories of European literary and cultural regions. On the one hand, his critique gave prominence to the macrogeographical dimension of literary production and representation and is obviously one of the most important contributions to the “geographization” of literary history. On the other hand, by framing the argument exclusively around a dividing line between “Europe” and “the Orient,” he ignored potential divisions within European culture, including regional ones. Paradoxically, Said’s concept of Orientalism re-essentialized Europe, and to some extent marginalized the discussion about its regions and internal differences (Bracewell and Drace-Francis 1999).

However, it successfully inspired study of geographical imaginaries within Europe, where literary historians found images of the Balkans, the Celtic regions, or the North to be culturally constructed on relatively, if not absolutely, similar lines (Brown 1996; Sørensen and Stråth 1997; Todorova 1997; Goldsworthy [1998] 2013). This was again cast in most cases as the product of a vision of the literary center toward the peripheries, through the “image of the other,” rather than through structural commonalities within regions across national literatures. Studies investigating the latter phenomenon were generally limited to the study of motifs, or *Stoffgeschichte* (Muthu 2002).

Within Europe itself, however, there were important developments in comparative literary studies which favored a differentiated approach to literary history. Perhaps the most important of these was the rise of a critical approach to national character, through the study of stereotypes in literary works. With notable precedent in the interwar period, the branch of comparative literature called “Imagology” achieved institutional recognition at the University of Aachen in the 1970s (Dyserinck 1988). In Amsterdam, a book series dedicated to “imagological studies” was inaugurated in 1992; and in 2007, scholars Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (2007) published a comprehensive reference handbook theorizing and codifying the imagological method, with entries dedicated to the representation and history of national stereotypes in most nations and some regions of Europe. In their introductions, however, Beller and Leerssen disassociated their methodology from any sociological approach to the conceptual history of *real* regions: their task, they stressed, was to provide a history of imaginings, not to form the basis of any conceptualization of Europe’s geographical division, either on national or regional lines.

Other scholars addressed the problem of regional and structural inequalities in the production and consumption of literatures through a more sociological approach. In his *Atlas of the European Novel*, Franco Moretti ([1997] 1998) uses data concerning translation and dissemination of the European novel in nineteenth-century Europe to draw attention to the problems of unequal canon formation in different parts of the continent, but it does not evince a systematic approach to geographical regions (Bradbury 1996). At roughly the same time, Pascale Casanova ([1999] 2004) combined insights from postcolonial models such as Orientalism with Bourdieu’s sociology of art to produce an account of center-periphery relations in world literature. Her key work, *The World Republic of Letters*, is of significance in analyzing the historical sociology and geography of literature, and particularly the unequal relations between periphery and center. However, besides being on the borderline between literary history *per se* and sociology, both Moretti’s and Casanova’s approaches tended to reinforce the dominant center-

periphery paradigm even as they critiqued it (Orsini 2002; Prendergrast 2004).

### European Regional Literary History: A New Paradigm?

A third route to conceptualizing European regions through literary history emerged through the work of another intellectual project, the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages. This project, launched in 1967 and based in Antwerp, is funded by a number of national academies across Europe and has published twenty-five volumes of comparative European literary history since 1973.<sup>2</sup> The great majority of these volumes are dedicated either to particular genres (e.g., Romantic drama, poetry, or prose), movements (expressionism, symbolism, modernism) or periods (the Renaissance, the Enlightenment). But a few in particular use regions as their structural principle and object of interpretation. The *History of Literature in the Caribbean* and the two volumes on *European-Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa* treat extra-European literature composed in European languages, and therefore speak to debates about the external boundaries of Europe.

Only recently has the series presented volumes dedicated to medium-sized regions of Europe. These include the four-volume *The History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, edited by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer (2006–10; hereafter *HLCECE*), and the two volumes on *The Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula*, edited by Fernando Cabo Aseguinolaza, Anxo Abuín Gonzalez, and César Domínguez (2010). It is significant that this regionalizing direction, in many respects an important step for reconsidering the regional dimensions of literary history, begins with “peripheral” regions and does not propose to “regionalize” the center. They provide stimulating, and not dissimilar, conceptualizations of their respective regions, while remaining sensitive to local context.

In the introduction to the set of volumes on East Central Europe, one of the editors, Cornis-Pope, rejects the idea of the continent being divided into different cultural areas. This is particularly problematic, wrote Cornis-Pope, for East Central Europe, which has “often been held hostage to conflicting mappings” in the political sphere, or to notions of cultural hierarchy. He criticizes equally the political science approach of Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” model, and what he saw as the cultural essentialism and hierarchism of Milan Kundera’s 1983 essay “L’Occident kidnappé,” probably the best-known attempt to define Central Europe from a literary-cultural perspective (Kundera 2011, vol. 2, 739–44, 974–76; and François Ricard’s notes, *ibid.*, 1275). As an alternative, Cornis-Pope presents East Central Europe as a zone of literary interfaces. Through multilingualism, translation, “nodal cities,”

and liminal spaces, East Central Europe becomes a zone of convergences and disseminations rather than one of rigid boundaries. In this, optimistic reading, Cornis-Pope and Neubauer perhaps fashion their conception of the region rather in the light of the old Republic of Letters; closer examination would perhaps reveal the same kinds of inequalities and omissions that the latter has been charged with. At the same time, their literary history was admirable in the way that conventional teleological, influence-driven narratives were avoided, and the multivolume work is broken up into sections on topographies, key moments, and examination of urban and rural culture. Moreover, while it attended in detail to many, if not all, national myths and heroes, and also gave room to the problem of the region's representation from outside, it provided a significant challenge both to national narratives and to the classic center-periphery construal of Europe's literary relations.

Cornis-Pope and Neubauer's relative optimism about their regionalizing concept was not always accepted by writers themselves. Romanian author Mircea Cărtărescu, for example, wrote in 2004 that he found the concept of being an "Eastern" or "really Southeast European author"—as designated by a German publisher—to be demeaning, as it diminished his sense of belonging to the European heritage: "In *no way* am I an eastern European writer. . . . my content and its themes belong to the great European tradition, which encompasses both Euripides and Joyce" (Cărtărescu 2004, 63–64; Todorova 2005, 59–60). One does not exactly sense that the change from "Eastern" to "East Central European" would have assuaged Cărtărescu's indignation at the sense of marginality that such a label ascribes to writers from the region.

As regards the *Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula* (HLCECE), this includes extensive conceptual discussion of the problem of Iberia as a region (already initiated by one of the editors in a programmatic article from 2003; see Cabo Aseguinolaza 2003; Cabo Aseguinolaza, Abuín Gonzalez, and Domínguez 2010).<sup>3</sup> The program of the editors bears similarities to that of HLCECE, and they think along the same lines in several areas. Literary "Iberia" is understood as something partially conjured by the view from the outside, rather than a naturally internally-generated identity region; and a tension is identified between intraregional comparative study and a tendency to compare one literature of the region with one from the perceived center. At the same time, the editors make a fair case that a spatially-ordered literary history may also contribute successfully to a rethinking of the traditional teleological mode of historiography. As one of the editors, César Domínguez (2013, 101), stated in a related publication, the concept of Iberia "can function as a meta-geographical object whereby one may select and emplot literary material in a different way to the selection and emplotment provided by national literary objects such as Spanish and Portuguese literature."

## Conclusion

Writing forty years ago about “the shape of European history,” William McNeill (1974, 4) argued that, despite the obvious impact of twentieth-century political and cultural crises on the key concepts underpinning our ideas of Europe, certain structures remained in use, “like an echoing nautilus shell washed up on the beach after its living inhabitant has disappeared.” McNeill spoke especially about the historiographical frames which survived the crisis of the idea of liberty after World War I, but his metaphor may also be applied to the crises attending European literary history after World War II, and perhaps even to hidden assumptions in the otherwise laudable and highly ingenious research directions which have attempted to restructure thinking about Europe’s literary heritage in the late twentieth and early twentieth centuries.

Attempts to theorize mesoregions in European literary history have not been very frequent, even though “European literature” can itself be considered to be a clandestine regional concept. The dominant paradigms have been either “national” or “center-periphery” based or both, and in some sense the critiques thereof—whether from the perspective of postcolonial studies, cultural sociology, or imagology—in different ways tend to replicate these divisions at the same time as they deconstruct them. The tendencies of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century models of writing literary history have, like McNeill’s “nautilus shell,” provided a structure that seems to have survived the extensive attacks on its ostensible inhabited content. The appearance of genuinely innovative regional literary histories, particularly of Iberia and East Central Europe, as well as of critical approaches to the imaginative geography of the Balkans, Scandinavia, the Celtic legacy, and the South, is a relatively recent and salutary development. Scholars working simultaneously on different areas have produced valuable alternative models for rethinking Europe’s literary-historical legacy, not only for the regions they focus on but also in terms of the role of the perceived center in fashioning more or less valid regional concepts.

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## Notes

1. The linguistic division of Europe is the subject of chapter 15 by Uwe Hinrichs in this volume. I have reckoned as “literary-historical” and not “linguistic” any theory resting on interpretations of literary artefacts rather than of languages or linguistic phenomena. On the establishment of the concept of “Indo-European” languages (called “Indo-German” in German scholarship), see especially Olender 1992. Another subject that this paper is *not* about is the representation of space and place in literary works (for an introduction see, e.g., Dainotto 1999).
2. Full list at the University of Antwerp’s CHLEL web page: <http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.CHLEL&n=64469>.
3. The second volume of this title (Domínguez, Abuín González and Sapega 2016) appeared when this chapter was in press; the analysis offered here is based only on volume 1.

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## Chapter 17

# Art History

*Eric Storm*



True beauty does not know boundaries.<sup>1</sup> And the same applies to art. Painters, sculptors, and architects often work on commission in a variety of places, and small-scale art works travel frequently either because they change hands or are (temporarily) exhibited elsewhere. Like music, the advantage art has over literature is that it does not need words to express itself and therefore is not bound to a specific country or linguistic zone. Although part of the artistic infrastructure—such as art schools, museums, and art academies—is organized on a national level, in general the art world has been international. Connections between artists from various places, countries, and continents have been frequent and productive, while even without direct contact artists can take inspiration from art works, or their reproductions, from elsewhere. Nonetheless, art has largely been categorized according to clearly drawn geographical boundaries, which for the modern period have mostly coincided with national borders.

In regard to the role of regions in art history, four different tendencies or narratives can be distinguished, which will be analyzed in loose chronological order. However, it should first be made clear that the study of art history has its own particular geography as well. Art critics, museum experts, cultural historians, and amateurs have written widely on art historical topics, but the academic discipline of art history is relatively new. In 1844, the University of Berlin created the first chair of art history. Other German universities soon followed, and the same happened in the Austrian Empire (including the non-German speaking parts) and Scandinavia. The rest of Europe only followed suit substantially later: Italy in 1896, France in 1899, and in England art history only became an academic subject with the creation of the Courtauld Institute of Art in 1933. As a consequence, the focus will be on

the German-speaking areas and France, which until 1914—and maybe even until 1940—formed the indisputable cultural, scientific, and artistic center of Europe.

## Defining National Schools

The rise of national art schools was intimately connected to changing views on art, history, and geography. Perhaps more telling in this respect than the writings on art was the placement of artworks within collections. During the early modern period, art collections often were just one aspect of cabinets of curiosities which aimed to give an inventory of God's creation by showing both *naturalia* (products of natural history) and artefacts (human creations) of all kinds. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, in many princely collections artefacts were increasingly separated from the rest, although sculptures and paintings were generally shown together with scientific instruments, maps, furniture, decorative objects, weaponry, and gems (Olmi 1993, 110–11).

This situation did not fundamentally change in the eighteenth century, although now the emphasis was increasingly on systematically classifying all objects in a kind of encyclopedic, all-encompassing taxonomy. Under the impact of new enlightened ideals, these collections were to be made public. This was first done with the foundation of the British Museum in 1753, which contained a general repository of natural and artificial productions. However, during the eighteenth century there was a clear trend to separate the various branches of human activity, and thus give the arts, still in a very broad sense, their proper place. Geography and history, at least in our sense of the word, were not relevant in these universal taxonomies. In general, objects were classified by discipline and species, in which the direction was from the general to the specific and from the lowest to the highest degree of complexity (Meijers 1993a, 205–24).

Implicitly, however, history and geography mattered in regard to art. The highest standards of beauty in sculpture and architecture were supposedly reached in classical (thus, Greek and Roman) antiquity, and during the Renaissance (i.e., Italy) for painting. This was made explicit by Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who, in his *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, published in 1764, tried to understand the rise, flowering, and decline of ancient art by studying it in strict chronological order and by linking its development to its specific historical, and thus indirectly also geographical, context. Greek art could only be understood in the geographically defined framework of Greek history. Nonetheless, Winckelmann still considered beauty a timeless, eternal

category. His views were powerfully influential and would have consequences for the way art was exhibited.

Winckelmann's ideas were first applied in Florence and Vienna, where Grand Duke Leopold and his Habsburg brother and future emperor Joseph decided to change the arrangement of the art works in their collections. Although the new ideas were not adopted throughout the entire collection, substantial sections of it were now displayed as part of national schools. This had the objective of showing their growth, maturity, and decline to a wider public. This way it would be possible to understand the factors and conditions that fostered the flowering of the arts in the past, which in turn could help to improve the artistic situation in the present. This focus on national developments also had clear mercantilist motives. By improving the artistic taste of the nation, the arts (among which artisanal products were still included) would prosper, which in turn would increase the country's exports (Meijers 1993b, 225–44). In both cases, the emphasis was primarily on the domestic national school, which in Florence meant the art of the Tuscan nation and in Vienna of the German nation. In the eighteenth century, the term "nation" was still used ambiguously and could indicate both very small territories and even large stretches of the entire continent. After the French Revolution, this formula would also be applied at the Musée des Monuments Français and the newly created Louvre Museum (Kultermann 1997, vol. 2, 227; McClellan 1994).

Since the sixteenth century, however, geography and art had already been loosely connected in writings on art, primarily to distinguish between the various artistic centers within the Italian Peninsula. In the eighteenth century, authors also began to distinguish French, German, Flemish, Dutch, and, slightly later, Spanish schools (DaCosta Kaufmann 2004a, 26–35; Géral 1999). Both scholarly publications and exhibition practices thus slowly began to explore historical and geographical circumstances in order to understand the artistic developments of the past, although clearly embedded within an absolute standard of beauty and a universal taxonomy.

During the early nineteenth century a new, more radical historicist view, in which each period was judged on its own merits and thus not compared to the standard of classical antiquity, began to affect the way art was categorized. Art history was increasingly presented with a combination of chronology and geographically defined areas or cultures. In the age of nationalism, this meant particularly "national" cultures and art schools. Nations were thus projected back into the past and national schools were more closely defined. Progress was possible, but had to be embedded within the particular evolutionary path of each nation. Originality now became an absolute requirement for artists, while imitators were downgraded. These ideas had been anticipated by Jo-

hann Gottfried Herder, who already in *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (1773) opposed the dominance of French artistic taste while exposing his new theories on the spirit of nations (*Volksgeist*). The new view also largely determined the layout of the first art museum that was explicitly designed as such, Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin, which opened its doors in 1830. The basement showed minor objects from classical antiquity, the first floor sculptures from ancient Greece and Rome, while the paintings on the second floor were divided between an Italian and a Dutch-German school. Significantly, the Italian section ended in the then-less-valued academic art of the seventeenth century, while the Dutch-German school culminated in the highly original works of Rubens and Rembrandt, which implicitly were seen as part of the Germanic heritage and thus were intended to inspire artists from Prussia and other German states (Wezel 1993, 321–31; DaCosta Kaufmann 2004a, 43–51).

The new combination of historicism and nationalism also had a profound impact on art historical studies. If we take the case of the Spanish school, it becomes clear that initially these “national schools” were used vaguely and mainly applied to the art of the past. During the eighteenth century, authors produced a kind of inventory of all the artistic objects present in a specific country. This began to change drastically during the nineteenth century. First, the encyclopedic approach was replaced by a chronological approach; thus the story of an artistic evolution, increasingly defined in national terms, was constructed. Thus, in 1848 the British scholar William Stirling-Maxwell published his *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, which still contained the most important foreign artists that had worked in Spain, such as Titian and Rubens, although he tried to define the more general trends in the country's artistic development. However, the volume for Spain that was published in the French series *Histoire des peintres de toutes les écoles*, edited by Charles Blanc in 1869, only contained “Spanish” painters. Thus, the place of birth increasingly determined the attribution of an artist to a certain national school (Storm 2016, 8–38).

During the romantic era, this national reinterpretation of the artistic past was accompanied by a new appreciation for art that did not conform to the dominant canon of the early modern period. Artists who showed a peculiar style were now seen as authentic and original, and had a better chance of becoming part of the national heritage than those artists who imitated Italian art or participated in general European classicist tendencies. As a result, national schools were defined ever more strictly, in turn establishing a new national artistic canon, a national golden age, and a specific national style (Storm 2016). This new nationalist view was particularly explicit in the debates over Gothic art. Since Gothic art did not conform to the classicist canon and had its origins in the Middle Ages, it was appropriated by various nationalist authors. In fact,

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in one of his first publications, which dealt with the Cathedral of Strasbourg (1772) and was republished in Herder's *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*, already defined Gothic as "German architecture." However, it was also vindicated as the national style in France and Great Britain. Ironically, it was a German art historian who in 1850 discovered that Gothic architecture originated in Abbé Suger's church of Saint Denis in France (Kultermann 1997, vol. 2, 230–40; Bergdoll 2000, 139–70).

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historical overviews generally dealt with art in a chronological way, in which for each period the developments of the major European nations were described. One of the first examples is provided by Carl Schnaase's *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst* (1843–68). Influenced by Herder and Hegel, he presented art as an expression of the Volksgeist, the history of which had an internal logic while evolving in a progressive way (DaCosta Kaufmann 2004a: 50). This in fact meant that nations were projected back into the past and functioned as the main geographical division from at least the late medieval period onwards. In some cases, Romanesque and Gothic art were discussed not by nationality but by principality or dynasty, such as Carolingian or Ottonian (e.g., Frantz 1900). Some artistic periods were entirely identified with one country; especially the Renaissance and sometimes also the Baroque period were defined as being Italian (Schmarsow 1897). In some overviews, the Italian Renaissance was dealt with in one chapter, while the following chapter discussed the "Renaissance in the North," meaning the Low Countries, France, and Germany (e.g., Springer 1921). From the Renaissance onwards, however, art was primarily discussed by nation. Mostly, the author gave precedence to the contributions of his own country, and often the tone was openly nationalistic.

Occasionally the art of other parts of the world was also included; however, this was generally done as a kind of prelude to classical antiquity. Thus Franz Kugler (1856) included both European prehistory and the art of the Incas, the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sassanids in a chapter that also dealt with classical antiquity. Here, history seemed to begin, and the entire second volume discussed European developments since the Middle Ages. The focus in Kugler's *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* and almost all similar books was clearly on Italy and Western Europe. Chapters dealt with France, Germany, the Low Countries, and sometimes also Spain and England. Only in exceptional cases, and mostly for the nineteenth century, were other European countries, such as Sweden, Hungary, Poland, or Russia, mentioned. These paragraphs were generally very brief and only mentioned a few well-known artists or architects (e.g., Muther 1912; Springer 1921). Although this historicist and nationalist interpretation has remained dominant ever since, especially as the primary ordering principle for the hanging of paintings in museums, other trends have



had a considerable impact as well, while in some cases leaving more room for a classification system that used other geographical units.

### Search for Origins

The intellectual crisis of the *fin de siècle*, occasioned by a loss of faith in reason, progress, and international free trade, resulted in a new interest in intuition, spirituality, tradition, and national origins. The nation was no longer based on a shared interest of the citizens in the political and economic progress of the country; it was now increasingly seen as an organic community with common traditions and a shared past. In order to understand this national community, one had to study its “soul” and origins. Art had to be rooted in the nation and this could be done either by going to the ordinary people of the countryside, where the national spirit was assumed to be alive, or by studying the first expressions of the nation. In fact, this meant that the *Volksgeist* was not only a mysterious collective influence upon artists in the past, but was to be actively studied and incorporated into the work of living artists. Interestingly, this search for origins also led to a kind of dissolution of the existing national boundaries. Authors recognized both that there was a wide cultural diversity within existing nation-states—arguing for example that coastal regions had a different regional *Volksgeist* than mountainous areas—and that cultural spheres did not stop at national boundaries. Here the impact of Darwin and Nietzsche, various racial theories, new developments in the field of linguistics, ethnology, and archaeology, and above all new geographical ideas from Friedrich Ratzel and Paul Vidal de la Blache, can be detected (Arrechea Miguel 1993; DaCosta Kaufmann 2004a, 58–63).

A good example of this type of reasoning can be found in the German best-seller *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as educator), which was published by the cultural critic Julius Langbehn (1890). According to him, Germany belonged to the same cultural sphere as Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. The great heroes of this wider Germanic culture were, according to him, Shakespeare and Rembrandt. At the same time, he distinguished various Germanic tribes, each with its own particularities, thus making room for significant regional differences, even within the German Empire. Artists had to look for inspiration to the great Germanic geniuses from the past, such as Rembrandt, and to the remnants of the original folk-culture of the countryside. It was clear that his book was also a reaction to the artistic and cultural dominance of the Latin peoples and, regarding artistic matters, to Germany’s archenemy France.

The distinction between a primitive but authentic art of a Germanic Northern Europe and a more civilized and superficial art of the Latin South was

also adopted by many of the German expressionists. The theoretical foundation was provided by the influential art historian Wilhelm Worringer, who in his *Formprobleme der Gotik* (1911) compared the transcendental, Gothic inclinations of the Nordic countries with a more realist and “emphatic” art of the Mediterranean peoples (Bushart 1990). At the same time, in Italy, Spain, and France a Latin or Mediterranean heritage was defined and defended by prominent intellectuals, such as Charles Maurras, José Ortega y Gasset, and Eugenio d’Ors, while artists such as Aristide Maillol and Giorgio de Chirico, as well as Catalan *noucentisme* architects and artists, tried to express a new Mediterranean classicism (Gowling and Mundy 1990; Jirat-Wasiutyński 2007). And in the East, artists as diverse as Alphonse Mucha, Nikolai Roerich, and Wassily Kandinsky showed their fascination for primitive Slav, Scythian, or Eurasian artistic traditions (Figs 2002, 355–431).

This search for origins also affected the rapidly growing community of professional art historians, although the majority continued their empirical studies of classical antiquity, the Italian Renaissance or the various national schools. Some scholars began a nationalist-inspired response against the dominance of the classical heritage. An early example of this reaction can be found in the work of Louis Courajod, who in 1887 became a professor in the newly founded École du Louvre. In his lectures on art history, he argued that Romanesque art was not a mere offspring of Roman and Greek art, but had clear Celtic, Byzantine, “barbaric,” and Arab roots as well (Courajod 1899–1903). More importantly, the Renaissance was not the result of a renewed interest in classical humanism that first came into existence in Italy and then spread to other European countries, but was born in France. According to Courajod, the origins of the Renaissance could be found in the “Nordic” realism and expressiveness of fourteenth-century French-Flemish sculpture. This naturalist and individualist art, inspired by the early Flemish school, was born at the Valois court in Paris. Unfortunately, this tradition was interrupted by the Hundred Years War, but it continued to thrive in Burgundy. Only during a third phase did it reach Italy, where this Nordic realism was mixed with themes from antiquity, after which it was exported again to the rest of Europe. According to Courajod, both classical and Italian Renaissance art were contrary to French cultural “instincts”; nonetheless, Italian artistic preferences had been imposed from the sixteenth century onwards. Partly inspired by Courajod’s lectures, interest in the French, Flemish, and also German primitives rapidly grew and resulted in ambitious exhibitions in Bruges (1902), Paris (1904) and Düsseldorf (1902 and 1904) (Ridderbos and Van Veen 1995; Passini 2012, 9–26 and 79–112).

German authors also began to attack the accepted views. In a voluminous study that was published in 1885, Henry Thode located the origins of the

Renaissance in the teachings of Francis of Assisi, and not in the rediscovery of classical antiquity. Moreover, in later works he presented Luther's Reformation as a direct continuation of the Renaissance (Passini 2012, 62–68). In his studies on Gothic architecture published around the turn of the century, Georg Dehio (1914) went even further and, while not trying to redefine the Renaissance, presented the evolution of German art as a parallel but independent development. He declared that the classical influences from Italy and the Mediterranean region did not conform to the German artistic predispositions. As a consequence, he defined Nordic late-Gothic architecture as an autochthonous tradition, which later evolved into an equally idiosyncratic Baroque style and was the product of "the same Nordic peoples that in the Middle Ages had created the Romanesque and Gothic styles" (Passini 2012, 168–80, quote in note 35).

The most ambitious attempt to rewrite art history along different geographical lines, while casting aside existing nation-states as the main frame of reference, was made by Josef Strzygowski, an Austrian scholar who centered his attention on those areas that had been peripheral to the discipline of art history until then. In 1901, he launched a frontal attack on the classicist legacy by publishing *Orient oder Rom*. In this book he argued that early Christian art did not have its main roots in Greece and Rome, but in Syria, Egypt, and Anatolia. Oriental influences, especially from a Hellenic, Coptic, and early Byzantine origin, were much more important for the development of medieval art in Europe (Strzygowski 1901). In subsequent years, he moved his attention further eastwards by publishing a large number of books and scholarly articles on the early artistic developments in Anatolia, Iran, Armenia, and Central Asia.

His strong anticlassicist preferences, his petulant personality, and his forceful rejection of the positivist philological tradition followed by most of his colleagues in favor of stylistic analysis based on close observation of artefacts made him a highly controversial figure. Nevertheless, in 1909 he was nominated to the prestigious chair of art history at the University of Vienna, although after much debate two chairs were created to pacify the intense feelings aroused by the nomination. In later years he also turned to Germanic, Nordic, and Slavic art, while connecting their decorative forms and construction techniques with the Near East and Central Asia. As a result, he changed the traditional South–North orientation, with Italy and Greece being the cradle of European civilization, into a new East–West axis, in which Germanic or Northern Europe became connected with the Middle East and Central Asia. Strzygowski's attack on classical humanism was strongly inspired by the increasingly popular ideas on the linguistic ties between the Indo-Germanic languages and by the more recent views on their origin in a mythic Aryan race.

However, this would only come to the surface more explicitly in the heated nationalist climate of World War I (Arrechea Miguel 1993; Marchand 1994; see also Marchand 2009 and Rampley 2013).

During the war, the bombarding of the Gothic cathedral of Reims in September 1914 by German troops was widely condemned as an act of vandalism but also ignited an international art historical debate that would polarize opinions. The French art historian Émile Mâle was among those who criticized this act as proof of German barbarism. In earlier publications, he appeared to share the anticlassicist ideas of Courajod, although he primarily saw late medieval art as a French invention and not as a generic Nordic one. In 1916, he began a series of studies on German art, which opened with this provocative conclusion: "In the sphere of arts, Germany has invented nothing" (Mâle 1917). He now clearly rejected any German role in the rise of Christian art and argued that early medieval Germanic decorations were of oriental origin, while the Romanesque and Gothic buildings were imitations of earlier French originals. In 1917 his articles were translated into German by the *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, who also published the response of ten prominent specialists from the Central Powers. They obviously all defended German creativity and aesthetic originality (Passini 2012, 147–57; Lambourne 1999).

One could argue that these intellectual skirmishes were determined by the context of the war. However, Mâle did not change his views after 1918, and the Great War also seemed to have a radicalizing influence on other art historians. While before the war, French and German scholars could both defend a Nordic or Germanic heritage in order to subvert the artistic domination of the South, this was no longer an attractive option for French authors. At the same time, various German and Austrian art historians began to place more emphasis on the incompatibility of the Germanic and Latin heritage.

This was also the case with Strzygowski. Even more strongly than before, he rejected the traditional focus on the humanistic legacy of classical antiquity and the tendency to connect German or Germanic culture with Southern and Western Europe. Germans, according to him, were a Nordic people and, as Aryans, had more in common with their "tribal brothers" in Iran and India. However, the connection between the various Aryan peoples had been lost because of the intrusion of nomadic peoples, such as the Turks and the Slavs. As a result, the Germans had lost contact with their native roots and were increasingly distracted from the right path by the detrimental cultural influence of the Latin peoples (Strzygowski 1916, 1–2). He also rejected the almost exclusive focus of mainstream art historians on figurative art and monumental stone architecture by arguing that this definition of high art excluded the constructions and decorations of the Nordic countries, which were mostly constructed from brick, wood, and other perishable materials, and of the no-

madic peoples, which primarily consisted of tapestries and other decorative objects (Strzygowski 1917, 145–49; 1928, 1–5). Their art was seen as artisanal work; this view thus excluded vast segments of humanity from the history of art. Although his outlook was cosmopolitan and his interest in noncanonical art was unique, from early on he was a fierce nationalist; he expressed himself in anti-Semitic terms and toward the end of his life would openly support the Nazi regime (DaCosta Kaufmann 2004a, 70–73).

The main opponent of Strzygowski in France was Henri Focillon, who in 1924 succeeded Mâle as professor of medieval art at the Sorbonne. In the context of the war, Focillon had already written a book in which he dismissed German art since 1870 as bloated and vulgar. Shortly after the fighting ended, he also published his views on the origins of French medieval art. In a way similar to Courajod, he presented it as a mixture of Celtic, Roman, and Germanic influences, although now the contribution of the Germanic Franks was minimized. In the following years, he further developed his views on the origins of medieval art. Already in the introduction of his book on Romanesque sculpture, published in 1930, he implicitly rejected Strzygowski's interpretation of the presumably oriental and Germanic origins of medieval art. According to him, this was an autonomous art form that did not have its origin in Rome or the Orient, but was a creation of the West. In 1934, in the context of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations, he even engaged in a public exchange of letters with Strzygowski (Focillon et al. 1935) in which he defended his interpretation of Western Europe as the cradle of medieval art, while four years later this crystallized in the publication of his *Art d'Occident. Le Moyen Âge roman et gothique*. In this book, he presented medieval art as the original creation of an essentially secular, rational, and urban middle-class culture of Western Europe, in which France played a pivotal role. He thus located the origin of medieval art firmly in the West, while presenting France as the source and guide of an essentially modern Western civilization (Arrechea Miguel 1993; Passini 2012, 204 and 228–50).

As we have seen, in these debates various art regions were defined, the main division being the opposition between a Latin, classical, or Mediterranean South, a Germanic North, and a Slavonic or Byzantine East. In general, art historians defended the importance of their own part of Europe, emphasizing especially the pivotal role of their own country. This internal regionalization largely followed the linguistic borders between a Germanic, a Romance and, to a lesser extent, a Slavic Europe. Nevertheless, after World War I, in which the confrontation between the Central and the Allied Powers—at least from the French perspective—was largely framed as one between barbarity and civilization, it was difficult for French authors to continue in this vein. While

Strzygowski radicalized his views by seeing Nordic, Germanic Europe as part of a wider Eurasian “Aryan” cultural sphere, Focillon now explicitly defended the West as the cradle of European civilization.

Courajod, Strzygowski, and Focillon were not the only art historians who tried to develop an alternative geography of art. Others, such as Kurt Gerstenberg, Johnny Roosval, Hermann Aubin, and André Grabar, did the same. The broader cultural spheres identified by these authors during the inter-war period were either based on primitive tribes, racial ideas, the affinity between different peoples and their respective popular spirits, or geographical influences. These underlying causes were presumed to have determined the artistic creations of the people living in these areas, and, as a consequence, in the view of these writers living artists should try to embody them in their creations. Thus, in publications such as *Den Baltiska Nordens Kyrkor* (The churches of the Baltic North; 1924) Roosval developed the notion of a Baltic artistic sphere. Authors such as Jean-Auguste Brutails, Arthur Kingsley Porter, Josep Puig i Cadafalch, and Focillon studied the diffusion of Romanesque and Gothic forms in Southwestern Europe in which they underlined the role of pilgrimage routes, while the Russian émigré Grabar focused on Byzantine and Balkan art. However, most of the writings on artistic geography dealt with substate regions, such as the Rhineland, Bohemia, or Roussillon, rather than large continental regions. That this interest in artistic geography was a truly European phenomenon became clear during the Thirteenth International Congress of Art Historians, which was held in Stockholm in 1933. The theme was the origin of national styles in art, and racist and nationalist ideas were voiced by a large number of representatives from across the continent (Roosval 1933; DaCosta Kaufmann 2004a, 62–67).<sup>2</sup>

That this was not always a harmless undertaking becomes manifest in the case of the *Ostforschung*, which was used by the Nazi regime to underpin its claims to *Lebensraum* (living space) in Eastern Europe. Until the 1930s, art historians in East Central Europe had either studied traditional subjects, such as the Italian Renaissance or classical art, or local topics. In the latter case, one of the main questions had been the national attribution of specific artists or art works. German and Austrian scholars generally claimed that most artistic highlights had been created by German artists, for German patrons, or were imitations of German examples. Germans had brought civilization to these barbaric areas and, as a consequence, Eastern Europe clearly belonged to their cultural sphere. Obviously, these ideas were contradicted by art historians from the new Eastern European countries. However, these debates would have concrete consequences during World War II. Thus, prominent art historians, such as Dagobert Frey, justified German expansion to the east, while collaborating with the Nazi regime to secure and protect supposedly

German patrimony in the wake of the Wehrmacht's advance (Labuda 1993, 1–17; Born, Janatková and Labuda 2004).

## Modernist Dominance

Although a reference to the artist's nationality had become ubiquitous during the nineteenth century, there was also a more formal tendency within art history that did not primarily understand art as an organic expression of the nation's collective spirit, but preferred to study it as the product of an individual artist, while almost entirely ignoring geographical aspects. Giovanni Morelli, for example, embodied nineteenth-century connoisseurship by focusing on the hands and ears of the depicted persons to identify individual authorship. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, his formal approach was systematized and articulated in a more scientific idiom by prominent art historians, such as Berenson, Wölfflin, Wickhoff, and Riegl. This formal analysis of art became particularly associated with the influential Vienna School of Art History, in which Strzygowski remained something of an outsider. At about the same time, Aby Warburg introduced the method of iconology, which strictly focused on the interpretation of the content of images (Kultermann 1990).

The formal approach was very much connected to the new emphasis on the autonomy of art by the new avant-garde movements and by those art critics that favored them. This, for instance, was the case with Roger Fry and Clive Bell, both part of the Bloomsbury group. In his book *Art* published in 1914, Bell argued that good art did not depend on time and place (Gamboni 2005, 173–203). In Germany, there also was a strong cosmopolitan reaction against the nationalistic and deterministic influences on contemporary art. This was best exemplified by the famous critic Julius Meier-Graefe, according to whom art should be totally independent from politics and nationality. As early as 1904 he published his *Entwicklungsgeschichte der moderne Kunst* (The developmental history of modern art), in which he based his judgments primarily on formal criteria. In this seminal book, he sketched the rise of modern art, focusing especially on those artistic geniuses he considered most influential: Manet, Renoir, Degas, and Cézanne. Only painterly qualities mattered to him, not nationality. In this way, he defined a new canon of modern art in which French impressionism had a pivotal role (Storm 2008; Schäfer 2012).

Nonetheless, most of the pioneers of a formal approach to art history still firmly believed in the existence and impact of national differences. Heinrich Wölfflin's major art historical treatise, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1915), ended with a section on "national characters," in which he argued that within the unity of Western art different "national types" existed, and that these national sensibilities remained remarkably constant over time. Moreover, he also

concluded that the center of gravity of European art has shifted from Italy to the “Germanic North” (see also Passini 2012, 113–41). Even Meier-Graefe routinely framed artists according to nationality, and the second edition of the *Entwicklungsgeschichte* (1914–15) ended with a short, geographically ordered overview of recent tendencies. In it he defined Southern Europe as drowsy, while the North had only produced Edvard Munch, and the West had become artificial; the East, for its part, would not produce a Russian Rembrandt or Cézanne. Thus, salvation could only come from German art, which had remained true to itself, while Berlin had become the “kitchen of new formulas” (Meier-Graefe 1987, 680–93).

After World War I, the new formal approach to art became more widely accepted. This was directly related to the growing impact of the various new avant-garde movements, such as cubism, expressionism, futurism, dada, constructivism, surrealism, and abstract art. Although in general they focused on formal renewal, sometimes they also expressed a clear longing for national rebirth. This was especially evident in the case of German expressionism, Italian futurism, and the lesser known South-Slavic zenitism. In architecture, a similar movement was visible thanks to the rise of the International Style, with Le Corbusier as its boisterous propagandist. At the same time, it became increasingly common to show art on white, neutral walls, creating a kind of decontextualized “white cube” (Gamboni 2005, 178–81). After 1945, this view became hegemonic, mainly because the rival nationalist interpretation of authors such as Langbehn, Maurras, and Strzygowski had become tainted because of its association with fascism and Nazism.

The result was that, between about 1945 and 1980, geography was deemed irrelevant in most overviews of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, which was now generally presented as the triumphal march of avant-garde modernism. This, in fact, also meant that peripheral artists who did not have a crucial role in this story of artistic progress were largely ignored. The history of art, thus, became the story of the successive avant-garde movements in the heart of Western Europe (France, Germany, and a few important innovative artists from neighboring countries), and, after 1945, also the United States. For earlier periods, the traditional focus on classical art and the high art of the West was restored and this would only change toward the end of the twentieth century.

The new modernist interpretation was best exemplified by Ernst Gombrich, who after his arrival in London in 1936 obtained a position at the Warburg Institute. In 1950, he presented his overview of artistic developments, starting with the famous statement “There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists.” Like Meier-Graefe, Fry, and others, he presented the history of art as a succession of individual geniuses or masterpieces, which he



even dared call *The Story of Art*. Although he rejected a simplistic interpretation of the artistic past in terms of progress, he clearly valued originality and artistic innovation, and he structured his story as a succession of generations with different artistic ideals (Gombrich 1978, 1–4). Although Islamic and Chinese art were dealt with between classical antiquity and the European Middle Ages, the rest of the world only appeared in the first two chapters before the “great awakening” of Greek art, where history really seemed to begin.

Whereas historians of an earlier generation had been preoccupied with the (national) origins of art, especially in medieval times, Gombrich dealt with these issues in a factual way, indicating, for example, that while Romanesque churches adopted certain aspects of Roman constructions, such as the ground plan, the end result differed greatly from their classical predecessors. The Crusades fostered contacts with the Orient, and the sacred art of Byzantium was imitated in the West. But, and here the author clearly showed his Eurocentrism, “there is one respect in which Western Europe always differed profoundly from the East. In the East these styles lasted for thousands of years, and there seemed no reason why they should change. The West never knew this immobility. It was always restless, groping for new solutions and new ideas” (Gombrich 1978, 126, 133, and quote on 137).

Thus, although Gombrich was opposed to nationalism, he clearly advocated a Eurocentric interpretation of the history of art and uncritically accepted existing national boundaries as the main geographical framework to classify the past. As a result, almost 90 percent of the book dealt with the art of Southern and Western Europe, which from the later Middle Ages onwards was largely discussed by country. Only when dealing with the Renaissance outside of Italy did he cluster artists from various countries together by speaking of “northern artists.” Eastern Europe only entered the picture twice. First, when writing about the late medieval period, Gombrich (1978, 162–211) briefly mentioned the flowering of the arts in Prague at the court of Charles IV of Bohemia; second, he discussed the famous Veit Stoss altar in Cracow, although he maintained that its maker “lived for the greater part of his life in Nuremberg in Germany.” His discussion of the rise of modern art in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is entirely focused on Western Europe and the United States. From the periphery, only Munch, Chagall, and Kandinsky are mentioned, thus implicitly suggesting that Scandinavia and Eastern Europe did not partake in the progressive march of Western civilization. Other textbooks took a similar approach; not only those in the English language, but also those published in German, French, Italian, Spanish, and other West-European languages. Even books purporting to provide a global history were only slightly less biased. Obviously *A World History of Art*, by Hugh Honour and John Fleming (1982), paid considerably more attention

to non-Western art, but the Eurocentric approach was still visible in chapter titles such as “Wider Horizons,” “Eastern Traditions” and “Primitive Alternatives,” while the main body of the book still dealt with the rise and heydays of classical art in Southern Europe, and the rise of modernity in the West (see also Nelson 1997).

## **Postmodern Diversity**

From about the 1970s onwards, the existing interpretation of art history began to be criticized as being predominantly male, white, heterosexual, and elitist. Shortly afterwards, postmodern authors also began to criticize the excessive focus on Western Europe, high art, and modernism. By fundamentally questioning the entire concept of “progress,” they undermined the canonical story of the rise of modern art. Artists that did not adhere to the latest avant-garde trends, worked in more neglected fields such as the decorative arts, design, or photography, or those that lived in peripheral parts of the world now began to attract attention (Belting, Buddensieg, and Weibel 2013; Rampley et al. 2012). This is clear in the new interest in art from the more peripheral parts of Europe, a tendency reinforced by the end of the Cold War. On the one hand this resulted in a new orientation to the national past, especially in the new countries that came into existence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. On the other hand, it led to the rethinking of established categories and divisions.

Recently, scholars also began to question the national framing of the artistic past. Thus, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (2004a, 107–54; 2004b, 51–67) has shown how the dominant national frame has profoundly affected the art historian’s view of the past. By focusing, for example, on seventeenth-century Dutch painters and sculptors in Central Europe, he shows how these artists, who generally followed the Baroque taste of their patrons, did not fit into the canon of Dutch art, and thus were not included in any overview of artistic developments in the Netherlands. Because they were foreigners, they generally are also ignored by Austrian, Czechoslovak, Polish, and Hungarian art histories. Moreover, since art historians generally concentrated on painting to the detriment of the prestigious and costlier fields of architecture and sculpture—which were also produced by Dutch artists, especially those who worked abroad—we have in general a very biased view of Dutch art (see also Storm 2015).

Both the postmodern undermining of the canon of modern art and the recent questioning of established national frontiers have increased interest in larger regions. This becomes clear by looking at art from the Nordic countries (although sometimes the adjective Scandinavian is preferred), which together

with East Central Europe is probably the area one might say has profited most from the new developments. Thus, in 1982 a first exposition of Nordic art, titled *Northern Light: Realism and Symbolism in Scandinavian Painting, 1880–1910*, was organized in New York by the American art historian Kirk Varnedoe. This has been followed by a large number of exhibitions and books on Nordic art and design, mainly outside the Nordic countries (Burch 2010). The more commercially oriented shows, in particular, gave a kind of touristic image of the region, selecting those artistic expressions that were deemed characteristic, such as paintings that depicted the forests and lakes bathed in a northern light, or simple, bright, and functionalist design.

Interestingly, while during the early twentieth century regionalization was mainly an internal affair, this time it is primarily externally driven. Museums and art historians outside of these regions want to give an overview of the art of various European countries, and they do this by applying regional labels, such as Nordic, Baltic, or Eastern European. Nevertheless, in the case of Nordic art, there was also a lingering local interest that even found an institutionalized expression in the Nordic Council, which was founded in 1952 by Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Finland. It created prizes for literature (1962), music (1968) and film (1995). The Carnegie Foundation also instituted an award “to promote Nordic contemporary painting” in 1998. Moreover, in 1984 a Nordic Committee for Art History was founded. Since 2005 there has been a joint Nordic research organization, which also funds a Nordic Network on Visual Studies (Burch 2010; Karlholm, Christensen, and Rampley 2012, 421–39). This international scientific infrastructure will probably produce more sustained interest in Nordic topics.

A similar story can be told about East Central Europe and the Balkans. As in other regions, most art historical studies took the (new) nation-state as their main geographical frame of reference, and many scholars are currently engaged in constructing a suitable national artistic past (Born, Janatková, and Labuda 2004; Rampley et al. 2012). Eastern European art had not received much attention elsewhere. Before 1945, the region was either studied as part of a broad German cultural sphere or seen as a provincial area, which was only of interest for a few exceptional artists. Only in the late 1960s and 1970s did international art historical conferences in Poland, Hungary, and Austria begin to pay more systematic attention to the artistic developments in the region. This resulted in the publication of major studies, such as Jan Białostocki's (1975) *The Art of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe: Hungary, Bohemia, Poland*.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, this small stream grew into a great river. Nevertheless, the borders of the region are not very clearly defined and switch, according to time period and theme, from a strict focus on the Austrian Em-

pire to a much broader conception including parts of Germany, Russia, and the Balkans. Moreover, there was much debate over the right label: should East Central Europe or “the New Europe” not be preferred over the Cold War designation Eastern Europe? Several institutes, such as the International Cultural Center in Cracow and the Center for the History and Culture of East Central Europe in Leipzig, actively organize meetings and research projects on East Central European art, such as *Central Europe: Art Centers and Provinces* (1994), *Vernacular Art in Central Europe* (1997), and *The Jagiello Dynasty in the Art and Culture of Central Europe* (2000–04). Although some ambitious studies are published inside the region, such as Piotr Piotrowski’s (2009) *In the Shadow of Yalta*, most overviews are produced elsewhere (DaCosta Kaufmann 1995; Mansbach 1998; Clegg 2006). The same applies to art exhibitions: as early as 1994, the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle in Bonn organized *Europa, Europa: The Century of Avant-Garde in Central and Eastern Europe*; in 2000, the Parisian Jeu de Paume mounted an exhibition on *L’Autre moitié de l’Europe*; while in 2002, the Los Angeles County Museum showed *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910–1930* (Labuda 2010; Piotrowski 2005, 153–73). As a consequence, external regionalization, wavering between a very eclectic postmodern diversity and more homogeneous cliché images, seems at least as important as internal initiatives.

Partly as a consequence of the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, it became more in vogue as well to use the Balkans in order to categorize the artistic products from the region. Thus, in 2003 Harald Szeemann organized an exhibition titled *Blood and Honey: The Future is in the Balkans* at the Essl Museum in Klosterneuburg, Austria, in which he implicitly presented the Balkans as a region of profound contradictions. At the same time, René Block showed *In the Gorges of the Balkans* in Kassel to deconstruct existing prejudices about the region (Voinea 2007). Meanwhile, intellectuals discussed the Othering of the region, whether the Balkans should be seen as an in-between space that connected the West with the East, or if it should be treated just as any other region with talented artists that produce works of art in an increasingly globalized world (Avgita and Steyn 2007).

Thus, while “Nordic” seems to be a widely accepted label used for branding and regional cooperation, the use of “Eastern Europe” or “the Balkans” seems to be more contested and sometimes caused heated debates. Thus, one of the most ambitious attempts to map East Central European modernism, Steven Mansbach’s (1998) *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890–1939*, received both praise and criticism. His broad survey of avant-garde artists, ordered by post-1918 or even post-1995 nation-states, has been interpreted as a justified eastward extension of the modernist canon. Some critics, however, accused him of “projecting the Iron

Curtain boundaries” onto the past by assembling the diverse modernist artists from these countries into a separate Eastern European category. James Elkin even argued that by constantly comparing artists from the East with their established modernist sources of inspiration from the West, Mansbach implicitly Orientalized them as parochial, repetitive, and inferior (Elkins 2000; Murawska-Muthesius 2004: 39–40). Since these regional categorizations are nowadays seen as constructions, they can easily be deconstructed as well.

The same process of rather pragmatic external regionalization, combined with an internal susceptibility for exoticizing stereotypes, also seems at work in other regions, such as the Baltic and the Mediterranean. However, Iberia, Southern Europe, and particularly Western Europe do not seem to attract any particular attention. Thanks to postmodern critiques, Western Europe is no longer identified with civilization (or art) *per se*. However, it still is generally referred to as “the West” or as part of a still largely hegemonic “Western World.” Another consequence of the new critical attitude is that attempts to essentialize regional categories are now increasingly frowned upon, at least within academic milieus. At the same time, region branding—for instance, to sell entrance tickets for an exposition—clearly favors the use of cliché images; but often these are used with a postmodern ironic twist.

## Conclusion

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, a historicist approach, combined with a subdivision into national schools, became dominant in art history and still largely determines how art works are arranged in museums and at art exhibitions. But although the nation-state was and remains the main geographical boundary in art history, other geographical subdivisions have been made as well. Starting around the 1890s, mesoregions and substate regions were also used to classify art. In a search for origins, broader European regions, racial categories and civilizations were utilized, especially for pleas to provide contemporary art with new authentic roots in a wider collective identity. In reaction to these often deterministic views, a new cosmopolitan modernist interpretation came to the fore, which clearly focused on the high art of Southern and Western Europe from antiquity until the eighteenth century, while narrowing the history of modern art down to the rise of the avant-garde in Western Europe. Since the 1980s, thanks to postmodernism and the end of the political division of Europe into East and West, there seems to be more attention given to regional diversity, and regions are again used to classify art, although now without the determinist and organic views that accompanied them in the past.

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## Notes

1. This chapter has profited from valuable suggestions by Wessel Krul, Kitty Zijlmans and William McNeil.
2. For substate regions see also Storm 2010.

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