Chapter 1

Western Europe

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For much of the modern period, Western-centrism was a characteristic fea-ture 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 ap-propriated 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 dis-cussed 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 con-ceptual 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.[1]

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.[2] 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 bath 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 nine-
teenth-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 twenti-
eth 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 civiliza-
tion) that it had been constructed as being from around the late fifteenth cen-
tury 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 in-
terest in the reception of a "European way" throughout much of the modern
period. Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000, 27) has coined the term "hyperreal Eu-
rope" 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 inad-
equately 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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