Chapter 12

Political Geography and Geopolitics

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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, Moisio 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-

THE NATURAL SEATS OF POWER.
Pivot area—wholly continental. Outer crescent—wholly oceanic. Inner crescent—partly continental, partly oceanic.

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 wissenschaftilichen 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 *Mitteleuropa*, which referred to the lands tinged with German civilization since the Franconian Monarchy (see Schultz 1989). The *Mitteleuropa* 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 *Mitteleuropa*, 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 *Mitteleuropa* 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
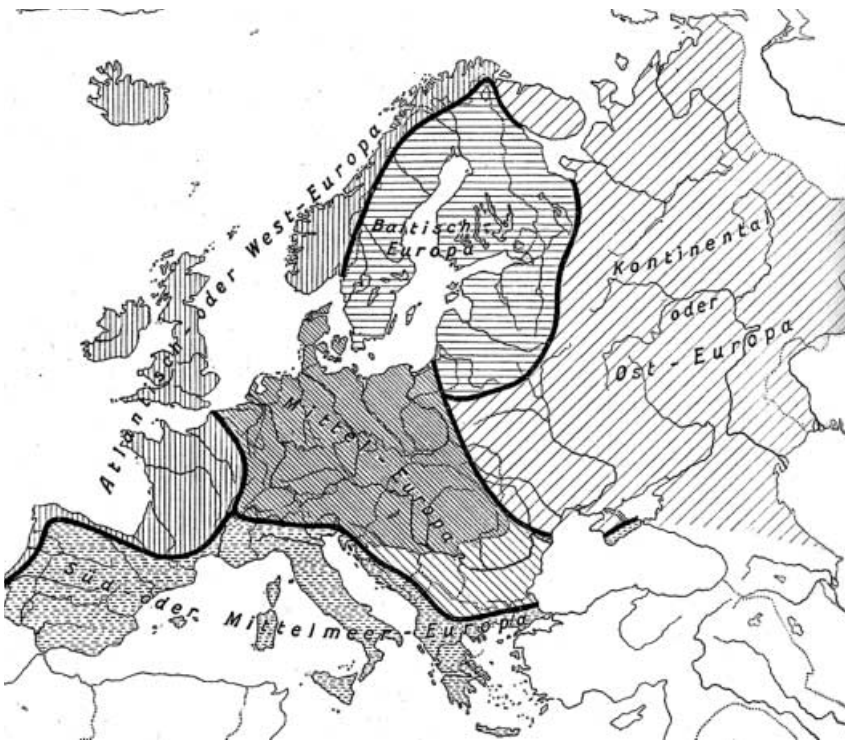
Figure 12.2. Hassinger's (1917) division of Europe with *Mitteleuropa* at the center (black area) and a nascent, emerging *Mitteleuropa* depicted in the shaded area

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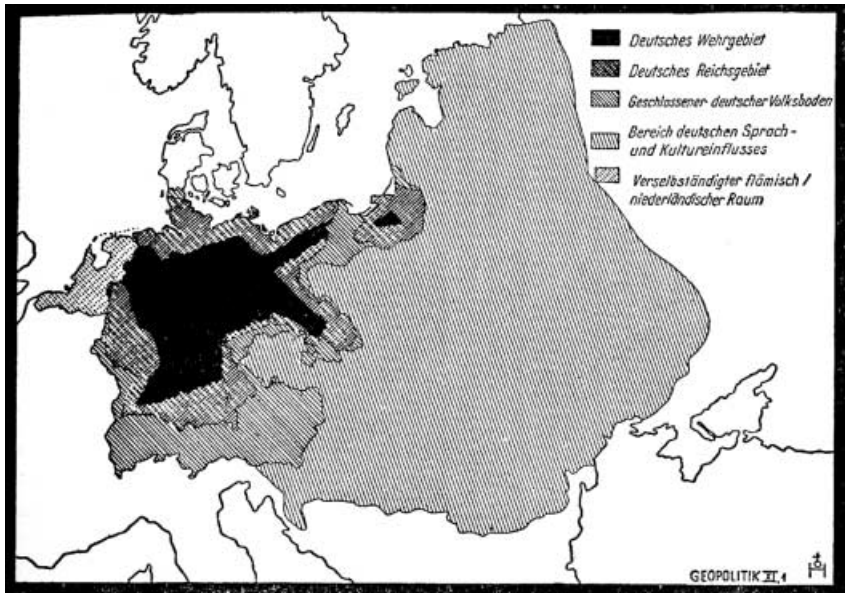
Figure 12.3. Haushofer's widely popularized map contrasting the German military area (according to the Treaty of Versailles, black) with the German *Volks- und Kulturboden* (large shaded area) (Haushofer 1934, 57)

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 *Mitteleuropa* 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 *Mitteleuropa,* "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 oppo-
sition 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 para-
digm 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 mak-
ing 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 posi-
tion 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 orig-
inating 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 sub-
versive 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 multi-faceted 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, EUrope (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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