

# A COMPANION TO WORLD HISTORY

*Edited by*

Douglas Northrop



**WILEY-BLACKWELL**

A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# Region in Global History

PAUL A. KRAMER

Region has a peculiar status in the writing of world histories. Whereas the other principal scales of historical analysis – the local, the national, the global – each have a taken-for-granted meaning that has allowed them to be assembled in a convenient, nested triad, region fits uneasily. Of the four scales, it is arguably the most ambiguous and free-floating in its reach, able to embrace and define spaces from the just-larger-than-local to the multinational and continental. This is, perhaps, one of the main benefits of bringing an account of region to the writing of global histories: its very slipperiness and evasion of a single, agreed-upon definition points to the arbitrariness of scholars' spatial categories themselves. (See McKeown, this volume.) If the local, national, and global can sometimes threaten to harden into reified realities, region's elusiveness brings with it fruitful, ontological disruption.

If there is a reason that region remains cloudy, it may be because historians have largely farmed out its definition to geographers, and because geographers have long been divided about what it means (Fledelius 1997). (See Simmons, this volume.) One way to think about these divisions is to turn to the origins of the term itself. Nathalie Cavasin (2005) notes region's dual etymological roots, in the Latin words *regio*, meaning "district" or "direction," and *regere*, meaning "to rule or direct." With perhaps not too much semantic stretching, one can use this conjoined origin to point to two different present-day academic approaches to region, which might be called positivist and constructivist. Positivist approaches, which can be associated with *regio*, take region as ontological fact: a territorial space that is internally similar, defined by a cluster of measurable traits that mark it as distinct from neighboring spaces; "nodal" approaches to region, for example, mark their "core" where these traits are manifested most densely, and their "peripheries" where they trail off into other sets of internal similarities. Here region is something like *regio*: a way of charting actually existing "districts" or "directions" in objective space (see, i.e., Grigg 1967). By contrast, constructivist approaches emphasize the historical production of regions: regions as imagined spaces generated and transformed through social and political processes across time.

Here region is more like *regere*: space defined less by its fixed, calculable elements and more by who “rules” it and how they define their rule and its internal and external boundaries. Constructivist approaches take region to be fundamentally processual, with region-making both the concerted and incidental result of migration, conquest, governance, cultural diffusion, and deliberate invention by history’s mapmakers; regions are not found by scholars but made by history. In turn, it can be useful to divide constructivist approaches into two subcategories, one stressing the material and spatial constructedness of regions (and venturing closer to positivism in epistemological terms), and the other emphasizing their ideological, cultural, and discursive construction, the study of what Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen (1997) call “the myth of continents.” While I mark a somewhat polar distinction here, my operating assumption is that when it comes to historical processes, these two dimensions of region-building are neither separable nor reducible one to the other.

This essay proceeds from constructivist premises: region as spatial and ideological practice. It does so with skepticism about the utility of “region” itself as an analytical frame or tool. This skepticism derives from my sense of region as a core element in the political and intellectual armature of modern state territoriality: it marks the outer limits of state efforts to homogenize space, registering (and sometimes institutionalizing and tapping into) differences that either are to be exploited, or cannot be made to go away. To the extent that “region” conveys a sense of physical and social coherence – the coterminous character of ecology, culture and sovereignty, for example – it was far less salient in premodern polities characterized by complex, overlapping domains. By contrast, it was somewhat organic to modernizing regimes dedicated to internalizing space by saturating it with fields of force, typologizing its diversities and harnessing its resources.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, region was built into modern territoriality as the residue of older forms of composite sovereignty; in other instances, particularly in the case of new states, it was installed in the territorial architecture of federalisms. Elsewhere, particularly in the late twentieth century, the term region (often followed by an -ism) was employed to characterize the embedding of individual states and national economies in multistate formations.

In all of these instances, if in very different ways, “region” remains tethered to state-centered modes of territory-making. Whether regions are defined as spatial components of larger polities, or conglomerates in which states situate themselves, region’s implicit reference point is still the theoretically integrated, homogeneous, Westphalian state. It is telling, for example, that while both the region and the modern state are “surface” formations – bounded, cartographic imaginaries – they are, by definition, not coterminous: regions are critical enough to the triangulation of states that they cannot be rendered identical to them (Warf 2009).

With these caveats in place, this chapter will trace some of the ways constructions of region can be said to have played a role in global histories. Precisely because of the term’s conceptual state-centeredness, I divide the piece into substate regions and multistate regions. Substate regions have been the by-product of either limited state-integrative capacities or federating strategies. Expressing either an unwillingness or incapacity to homogenize territory, here the “regional” marks both plurality and the presence of centrifugal, potentially fragmentary, forces. (Indeed, in common parlance, one way that areas become “regions” is to have territorial monopoly over them contested between adjacent states: Alsace-Lorraine and Kashmir would be examples in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.)

Multistate regions have been brought into existence for a range of purposes: as trade blocs, defense pacts, systems of arbitration, or imperial systems, for example. They have varied along axes of institutional “thickness” (enmeshing their member states in dense or sparse networks of power and constraint), in their internal political balances (which have ranged from egalitarian to hierarchical), and their geopolitical objectives (which have varied from anticolonial to neocolonial purposes). Not all multistate structures and organizations, of course, identify and bound themselves in terms of the regional: for precisely this reason, the question of when and how states decide they comprise a “region,” which notions of spatial connection they enlist, and to what ends, is a compelling one.

First, there are substate regions: territories within states that are characterized by their distinctiveness and multiplicity. Regional boundaries can be defined by particular natural elements, including physical barriers like mountain ranges, or by the presence of unique social and cultural practices and institutions, or by particular crossings of the social and the ecological, as in systems of agricultural production. Seen in this way, regions may or may not correspond to a government’s territorial subcategories such as “provinces,” “districts,” or “states.” In some cases, states have organized regions as a federalist strategy to absorb and stabilize separatist tendencies; in other cases, regionalization at the substate level has been a way to avoid overconcentrated state power. Substate regions can develop distinct ways of connecting to the global environment and this, in turn, can profoundly shape a region’s relationship to the state of which it forms a part, while influencing that state’s global trajectory.

In some cases, a region’s intersections with world history run through political-economic and geopolitical channels. A good example is the US South. (That many of my examples here are drawn from the US context is a function of my expertise and its limitations, rather than any presumed exceptional relationship between the regional and the global.) While its distinctiveness as a region has been questioned, it is possible to identify the US South in broad terms as a region defined by racial slavery and struggles over legalized apartheid; staple crop production, capital dependence, and late industrialization; a volatile and resilient separatist politics; cultural formations defined by patriarchal authority, public religiosity and militarized honor; and, in the twentieth century, an intensity of militarization in the form of both basing and military-industrial development. The South’s regional identity was and is a political-cultural project closely tied to proslavery ideology, Confederate secession and, in the twentieth century, segregationist resistance to a centralizing racial liberalism.

But the South’s regionalism is also global, and its globalism regional. In the nineteenth century, its close ties to the British Empire as a cotton supplier to British textile mills encouraged secessionists to pursue a cataclysmic separatist path to a slave-based future. In the mid-twentieth century, large-scale migration from the Northwest and Midwest to the “Sunbelt” had a profound impact on US politics which, in an era of US global empire, had immense implications. In particular, this exodus – itself in part the result of Cold War investment patterns – shifted power towards polities that, both during and after the Cold War, tended to approach the world in highly unilateralist, manichean and militarized ways, inflected in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries by the region’s energy politics.<sup>2</sup>

Substate regions also connect to the world in unique ways through large-scale migrations in which a critical mass of long-distance movement and settlement produces unique cultures defined in part through their population’s ongoing ties to their “home”

societies. (See Ward, this volume.) A good example of a substate region that is also a transborder region would be the US Southwest, a region governed by four states since the early nineteenth century. Initially incorporated into the orbits of global empire as the northern extensions of Spain's American dominion, it was transmuted into the massive, thinly populated provinces of Mexican independence, parts of it broken off into the separate nation of Texas, then conquered and annexed by the United States following the US-Mexican War of 1846–1848.

But the military detachment of Northern Mexico did not completely transform this territory as region: until the 1920s, the US–Mexico border as a state institution remained highly porous, allowing migrants to make seasonal back-and-forth journeys. Meanwhile, US railroad capital approached Northern Mexico and the US Southwest as a single region: profits were to be made, from paying travelers or long-distance exporters, by girding the region together with track. It was also a single, regional labor market for the American owners of mines and ranches, who relied heavily on transborder Mexican migrant labor and who would, for this reason, resist some efforts to harden the border. Even as the enforcement of the US–Mexico border intensified after the 1920s, culminating in its late twentieth-century militarization, transborder investment and infrastructure, labor recruitment and migration continued to fasten Mexico and the US Southwest, lending this part of the United States a distinct, regional character, despite nativist campaigns for separation (Sanchez 1993).

If some regions are defined as parts of states, others contain multiple states. These multistate regions involve projects in coordination, cooperation and alliance, the pursuing of advantage, especially economic or geopolitical, through the mobilization of imagined contiguity. These “regionalisms” – constructed proximities rendered into ideology and organizational practice – have often involved highly varying levels of institutionalization, from “thick” integration involving the formation of supranational political structures, to “thinner” forms involving looser, issue-specific agreements. Regionalisms of this kind have involved, to one degree or another, the invention of cross-national, integrative modes of identification that are both spatially broader and historically “deeper” than states, such as common language or folkways, ties to land, histories of oppression, or notions of shared cultural or racial “essence.” Their shapes and strengths as formations have been determined by a number of factors: the infrastructural possibilities for cohesion, the convergence of economic and geopolitical interests across states, the prospects for ideological bridge-building, and the relative weakness of “outside” powers capable of fragmenting the would-be region and reorienting its parts “outward.”

Some multistate regionalisms have come into being as campaigns to secure greater autonomy and escape from global dependence and subordination. An early example is mid nineteenth-century pan-Americanism: drawn together by revolt against Spanish colonialism, a desire to prevent further European intrusions, and a sense of creole distinctiveness, Latin American nationalists sought to preserve their new states' fragile independence through a defensive regionalism, a key example being Simón Bolívar's campaign for a confederacy of Spanish-American states. While early pan-Americanism helped organize regional treaties and the regulation of interstate legal issues, the scope of its success was limited by the vulnerability of the new states, the racial and class boundaries of creole nationalism, and by intraregional conflict, such as the War of the Triple Alliance of 1864–1870 between Paraguay and Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. The question of whether the United States ought to participate in

pan-American congresses or not, whether it was an ally or a threatening (and defining) other, was also fraught (Snyder 1984).

Another, later example of a decolonizing regionalism is pan-Africanism. Born in the nineteenth-century Caribbean and United States as a diasporic ideology and forged in a context of slavery, colonialism and segregation, early pan-Africanism emphasized the collective identity of African-descended peoples, harsh realities of white oppression, and the status of Africa as both homeland and site of civilizing redemption. Beginning in the early twentieth century, it took on an organizational life both in international congresses dedicated to the reform of European colonialism and the pursuit of greater African autonomy, and in mass movements exemplified by the Universal Negro Improvement Association. With the collapse of European colonialism after World War II, these ideologies informed multilateral African organizations created to combat older and newer forms of colonialism and to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of new nation-states and promote cooperation and mediation between them.

These values were promoted most actively by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded in May 1963, which achieved a membership of 53 states in 1994, prior to its disbanding and replacement by the African Union in 2002. As elsewhere, continent-wide regional unity in Africa faced divisions: the left-leaning Casablanca bloc favored political federation, for example, while the more conservative Monrovia bloc preferred economic cooperation short of federation. The OAU brought together and mediated between these factions. It took on a wide range of undertakings, but it dedicated its most focused energies toward the efforts that its members could most agree upon. It played a major role in the settling of territorial disputes between African states, sending selected African leaders to serve as agents of arbitration. It supported the emancipation of Africa from European colonialism through diplomatic support and the delivery of financial, military and logistical aid to liberation movements across the continent. It played a vital role in the isolation of apartheid South Africa, relentlessly campaigning to block its participation in international organizations and sending observer missions to oversee the first free elections in 1994. In the 1980s, with the winding down of the anticolonial struggle, the OAU turned its attention to questions of poverty and economic development, adopting the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action, which called for industrialization, a decreased reliance on extraction, and increased development aid, and the 1991 Abuja Treaty, which created the African Economic Community, with goals to create free trade zones, a central bank and a common currency (Leonard 2006).

While many decolonizing projects pursued regional scale and organization, so too did imperial politics, as illustrated in the twentieth century by US-dominated pan-Americanism and Japan-centered pan-Asianism. Both projects were predicated on the notion of a region united by common struggle against colonizing Europe; both ideologies rationalized the hegemony of regional powers by casting them as liberating vanguards, against European encroachment (in the American instance) and white colonialism (in the Asian one). While US pan-Americanism and Japanese pan-Asianism differed along multiple axes – the violence of the former was more sporadic but longer in overall duration, for example – both employed region as the scale and rationale for empire-building.

US exertions to direct “pan-American” politics dated back to the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which asserted the exceptional role of the United States as guarantor of European noninterference in the Western hemisphere. Beginning in the late nineteenth

century, US diplomats attempted to play a leading role in pan-American organizing, beginning with a conference in Washington DC in 1889–1890. From that point until the end of the twentieth century, US participation in pan-American regionalism developed in three basic stages. From 1890 through 1933, US diplomats defined intraregional “cooperation” in terms of the prevention of European interference in the hemisphere and US commercial access to Latin American markets and raw materials; “pan-Americanism” was fully compatible with US colonial rule in Puerto Rico, a neocolonial protectorate in Cuba, and Marine occupations in Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. During the 1930s and 1940s, a desire to dampen Latin American criticism of US hegemony and build closer geopolitical ties to Latin America as a potential bulwark against fascist infiltration encouraged the pursuit of a “Good Neighbor” regionalism involving the end of military intervention and enhanced “cultural exchange”; the 1948 charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), successor organization to the Bureau of American Republics and Pan-American Union, upheld the “sovereignty” of all American states. Between the 1950s and the late 1980s, however, the OAS was profoundly shaped by Cold War politics, as the United States sought multilateral support for its interventions in Latin America; the OAS’s 1962 decision to exclude Fidel Castro’s Cuba from membership reflected this dynamic. US preeminence within pan-Americanism also faced challenges within Latin America across the twentieth century: in many respects, tensions between Bolívarian and Monrovia definitions of the Americas persisted (Snyder 1984).

Like pan-Americanism, pan-Asianism had its roots in an incipient anticolonial ideology, the work of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Asian intellectuals in pursuit of a unified past and present directed against Euro-American colonialism and white supremacy; in 1920, the first Pan-Asian Conference was held in Nagasaki. But organization was hampered by intraregional tensions, particularly involving Japan’s imperial ambitions. Many Japanese pan-Asianists presumed Japan’s leadership over a united Asia. Others were skeptical. Suspicions of Japan ran especially high in China, which advanced its own claims for regional dominance. Here, not unlike the pan-American case, one powerful state pursued regionalization as a way to advance its imperial interest. With Japan’s invasion of Manchuria in 1931, pan-Asianism collapsed as a multilateral ideal and was fully absorbed into Japanese imperial ideology. From this point forward, pan-Asianism played a central role in the Japanese state’s doctrine of regional “co-prosperity”: the first among conquered equals, Japan would helm Asia’s efforts to throw off the West’s colonial yoke. (See Lim, this volume.) The intense violence of armed “co-prosperity” delegitimized pan-Asianism as regional ideology. After World War II, Asia was spatially recast along the lines of Cold War “alignment.” Japan itself was integrated as the military and economic core of a US-dominated East Asia. The liberatory elements of early pan-Asianism were folded into the more global, aspirational solidarities of colonized peoples in Asia, Africa and the Middle East seeking an end to Western colonial rule that transcended Asia as region (Snyder 1984). (See Simo, this volume.)

Since World War II, regionalism in diverse institutional contexts has emerged as a core element of the global political order and capitalist world economy, developing at the intersection of a number of cross-cutting forces. It has taken shape as a structuring element of formally universal organizations like the United Nations. It has strong geopolitical dimensions: during the Cold War, both the Soviet Union and the United States cultivated what can be called strategic regionalisms, the former through the construction

of a “Soviet Eurasia,” the latter through the integration of Germany and Japan as the anchors of capitalist Western Europe and East Asia. Most recently, region-making has grown from competitive campaigns to aggregate resources and markets in a context of worldwide economic competition and, in particular, in response to European regionalization.

Despite its formal universalism, the United Nations built regionalism into its architecture at a number of levels from its beginning. At the insistence of Latin American and Arab states, the United Nations Charter included the right of self-defense at the level of multiple states as well as individual ones (Article 51) and the primacy of regional means of dispute settlement (Articles 33(1), 52(2) and 52(3)). The Charter also held open the possibility of regional subcommittees and a role for regional organizations as agents of UN action; regional distribution was to be a factor in the election of nonpermanent members of the Security Council. While regional substructures have not played a prominent role in the United Nations – five regional economic commissions being an important exception – regionalism has emerged in practice as a more significant feature than anticipated in the UN Charter, especially through the formation of caucuses that serve as settings for debate and consensus-building, mediating between the levels of individual states and the UN as a whole. The United Nations has also cooperated with external regional organizations, from the basic granting of observer status to joint exercises of military force (Schreuer 1995).

Between 1945 and 1991, however, the dominant regionalizing forces derived from Cold War competition, specifically, from Soviet and US efforts to create and integrate strategic geographies into their military, political and economic orbits. The USSR extended its control in Eastern Europe through military occupation, national communist parties, and the cultivation of highly selective linkages between its satellite countries, and formally organizing its regional dominance in the Warsaw Pact and Comecon; ideologically, constructing this region involved the Sovietization of earlier, pan-Slavic ideologies. Region-building by the United States was more global in scope, stretching from Western Europe to Latin America to East and Southeast Asia. It was also more pluralistic in character, involving the formation of multiple regional security pacts in Western Europe (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO), Southeast Asia (South East Asia Treaty Organization, SEATO), and the Southern Pacific (Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty). In each setting – in highly divergent ways – regional alliance structures extended US power globally, alongside military basing and overt and covert interventions in colonial and national politics. While US and Soviet globalisms were both anchored in regions, their ideologies transcended them, predicated on the exceptionalist status of the United States as first among “free world” equals and the Soviet Union’s as first among socialist societies (Katzenstein 2005).

The forging of regions in geopolitical struggle is convincingly illustrated by the strange Cold War career of “Southeast Asia.” As tracked by Donald Emmerson, the term was a comparative late arrival to scholarly, political and popular usage; while it was used sporadically and ambiguously prior to World War II, he argues, European colonial division shaped spatial and intellectual geographies in ways that erected barriers between colonies and fastened colonies to distant metropolises. Japan’s destruction of these colonial states during World War II and Allied reconquest violently remapped these areas: “Southeast Asia” circulated officially as the designation of a theater of war (the South-East Asia Command or SEAC, created in 1943), and popularly on *National Geographic* maps. This process of strategic regionalization continued after the war, as the Americans

caught up with the Europeans in their area studies. But where European scholars had approached "Southeast Asia" anthropologically, stressing "traditional" topics, the Americans emphasized the production of instrumental policy knowledge directed at a terrain presumed to be modern, organizing itself into nation-states, and an epicenter of Cold War military and ideological conflict and proxy war. Projects in regional organization reflected these geopolitical imperatives. Founded in 1954 in the neocolonial capital of Manila, SEATO defined the region in Cold War terms, limiting the treaty's ambit to areas threatened by perceived or actual Communist expansion. By the 1960s, local forces had taken the initiative in regional organization, but ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), founded in 1967, still defined its boundaries in anti-Communist terms (Emmerson 1984).

As the terminological invention of "Southeast Asia" suggests, regions during the second half of the twentieth century were in important ways the by-products of new ways of organizing knowledge in the United States, at the intersection of the academy and state power. As sketched by Immanuel Wallerstein, beginning during World War II, American academics and officials observed that the breadth of US power now stretched geographically far beyond the scope of its expertise; this critical gap was one of "regional" or "area" knowledge. At mid-century, the social science disciplines were, for the most part, profoundly Eurocentric. The disciplinary outlier, anthropology, was primarily concerned with synchronic accounts, and "Oriental" studies within the humanities concentrated on premodern pasts; the two modes of scholarship which virtually monopolized research on what were increasingly called "developing areas" were, in other words, not very interested in these areas' contemporary development. A modern, global knowledge was deemed necessary if the United States was to successfully manage its postwar global "responsibilities," from anti-Communist containment to the negotiation of decolonization. Sponsorship of what would come to be known as "area studies" came from both private philanthropy (the Rockefeller, Carnegie and Ford Foundations) and the federal government. One key mechanism was Title VI of the 1958 National Defense Education Act, which funded faculty hiring, program-building and library collections under the area studies rubric. Within the academy, there have since been ongoing tensions between disciplinary and regional/areal modes of knowledge and over the policy instrumentality of "area studies" programs; the latter controversy took a decisive turn in the late 1960s, when scholars and activists politicized the crossings of area studies research and interventionist empire. For present purposes, what was particularly important about the advent of "area studies" was the way its framing of social inquiry through new spatial imaginaries led to the ontological grounding of region; given the scale of US cultural power and influence in the late twentieth century, these regional containers had global implications.<sup>3</sup>

The 1990s saw an increase in regional cooperation and organization in many parts of the world, a dynamic identified by some commentators as a "new regionalism" (Fawcett 1995; 2004; Guan 2005). This process derived in part from the fall of the Soviet Union and with it an unraveling of Cold War regionalisms. It was also driven by the formation of the European Union, the first experiment in supranational state-building and one that, through dynamics of interaction, emulation and competition, lent impetus to region-building elsewhere. Especially in North America and Southeast Asia, regionalist organization was driven by fears that European economic integration would close out foreign imports to the benefit of European producers. One response was the creation of

counterregions like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), competing commercial blocs achieved by lowering or abolishing barriers to trade.

European regional integration grew out of the tense, catastrophic conditions of World War II and the early Cold War, as elites in multiple states felt their way toward peace and survival. Early institutions reflected the hopes and preoccupations of double containment: the suppression of German warmaking, on the one hand, and the prevention of continental Soviet expansion, on the other. A desire to render another intra-European war impossible was manifest in the European Coal and Steel Community, which would prevent the national (and nationalist) control of critical warmaking resources. The goal of a joint defense against Soviet expansion was pursued through an (abortive) European Defence Community. The securing of human rights and the rule of law across national borders would be pursued by the Council of Europe. Economic recovery and the pooling of markets – especially crucial as decolonization destroyed systems of imperial trade preference – would be realized by the European Economic Community (EEC) which, when it was inaugurated in 1958, created a common market of 167 million people. These agencies received US encouragement. The Marshall Plan, for example, required European states to design joint recovery plans and work together within the Organization of European Economic Co-operation. In terms of strategic defense, the United States favored the integration of Europe along Atlanticist lines. When the European Defence Community collapsed, West German rearmament took place under NATO auspices and Western Europe emerged as the frontline US strategic regionalization.

As had been true of earlier region-building projects, there was nothing easy or fore-ordained about the making of a united Europe. Differences over the appropriate "depth" of integration emerged early, with Great Britain favoring a free trade area only, and France and Germany pushing for more intensive political and economic integration, for example. There were also struggles over the "internal" balance of power: under De Gaulle, France asserted its leadership over the continental bloc, pressing successfully for veto power over such key issues as agricultural policy, blocking British membership in the EEC twice, and alienating many other Europeans in the process. States brought particular and diverging interests to the European table, resulting in elaborate incentives and horse-trading compromises: underdeveloped Italy was encouraged by a European Investment Bank and the free movement of laborers, for example; the protectionist French accepted a common market in exchange for a leadership role in the development of atomic energy.

Despite these obstacles, European integration widened and deepened. Britain achieved EEC membership in 1973, and the 1980s saw a wave of southern enlargement, with Greece, Portugal and Spain joining as they emerged from authoritarian governments. Regionalism also thickened along several axes, with the formation of a customs union in 1968, a push toward direct democracy in the election of the European Parliament beginning in 1979, and the creation of a European Monetary System and the defining of a European Currency Unit in the late 1970s. Efforts at commercial integration culminated in the Single European Act of 1985–1986 which established a single European market by eliminating policy discrepancies between national economies. These region-making institutions did not simply connect otherwise integral nation-state components: rather, regionalization and the building of European nation-states were entangled processes, with the national units shored up and transformed by the institutional deepening of the regionalizing whole.

European regionalization intensified in the decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, events which also transformed it. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty became the founding charter of the European Union, providing for a common currency and a European Central Bank and enhancing the power of supranational European institutions. Maastricht was the result of compromises that left many unsatisfied: the British remained deeply skeptical, for example, and refused to join the common currency, and while the treaty was eventually ratified by all 12 member states, it passed by slim majorities in some instances. The biggest shift in European regionalism was, however, its eastern expansion, with 10 countries joining in 2004 and two more in 2007, many of them former Soviet satellites. The EU's population was now 493 million, of which 215 million lived in the original six signatories to the Rome Treaty (France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg). As before, EU growth took place at the intersection of national and supranational interests: membership appealed to Eastern European states seeking access to rich markets and defense against outside powers (especially post-Soviet Russia), and to existing EU members eager for high growth rates, access to inexpensive labor forces and the stabilizing of Europe's edges.

In the first years of the twenty-first century, European integration faced numerous challenges. There were the ongoing difficulties of coordinating foreign policy, particularly when it came to engaging the United States. The consolidation of "European" modes of political identification remained shallow, with Europeans' disengagement – as measured in low levels of voting in European parliamentary elections – phasing into active hostility towards European regionalism. There was also a sharpening exclusionist politics: notions of "Europe" hardened around a xenophobia, crossed with class fears, directed against immigrant groups, many of them from Europe's former colonies and the Muslim world. It was ironic, perhaps, that a regional project born in the desolation of Nazi race war had resulted, a half-century later, in a Europe defined increasingly in terms of Christianity and "civilization" (Ludlow 2007; Christiansen 2001).

The formation of the European Union spurred regional organization in other parts of the world. This was primarily driven by economic competition: extra-European fears of being closed out of an economic Fortress Europe, and hopes of leveraging greater influence in multilateral institutions like the World Trade Organization. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, founded in 1989, reduced tariffs and duties and coordinated economic policies between 34 countries. ASEAN, which dated back to the 1960s, expanded its membership in the 1980s and 1990s, pursuing stronger, joint negotiating positions with the larger economies of China, Japan and South Korea. MERCOSUR, inaugurated in 1991, abolished tariff barriers between South American states. NAFTA, from 1992, progressively lowered tariff barriers between the United States, Canada and Mexico. Each of these groupings faced internal divisions and controversies. ASEAN membership, for example, straddled neoliberal and socialist transition economies, dictatorships and democracies. NAFTA was blamed for facilitating North-to-South capital flight in pursuit of lower-wage labor forces and weaker environmental regulations; weak "side agreements" on labor standards did little to assuage these concerns. Viewed in broad, comparative terms, the EU's regionalist project was a trigger to regionalism elsewhere, but it was exceptional in its "thick" integration of economic, political and social levels. By contrast, the world's other region-building efforts secured the mobility of capital and goods, while continuing to bound human mobility and

sociopolitical membership: what might be called corporate regionalisms, as contrasted with more sociopolitical regionalisms.

This chapter has attempted, somewhat paradoxically, to both account for region in global history and to deconstruct "region" itself as a category. While I have expressed skepticism about the assertion of region as an ontological reality, I have also attempted to suggest some ways that the study of region-making as a process with both material and ideological dimensions, unfolding both "beneath" and "above" the level of states, nonetheless presents possibilities to historians. While (not unlike nation-states) regions are to be approached with suspicion as analytical frames – why should scholars let past or present cartographers and their agendas gerrymander their maps of the world? – viewed as peculiar artifacts in larger histories of spatiality and territoriality, with complex roots, manifestations and effects, the ambiguity of which encourages a self-consciousness about spatial categorization, regions may, in fact, play a critical role in the writing of richer global histories.

### Notes

- 1 Here I am thinking of the modern territorializing projects described by Maier (2006).
- 2 On the South from a diplomatic-historical perspective through the era of the Vietnam War, see Fry (2002).
- 3 On the emergence of area studies in the US academy, see Wallerstein (1998).

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