

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Europe as a Culture Realm

It's a typical summer morning in Strasbourg, France, the Alsatian city of nearly 300,000 situated on the upper Rhine border with Germany. On the Place Gutenberg, which fronts Strasbourg's imposing red-hued 12th-century cathedral, crowds of tourists are beginning to queue to ascend the 328 steps to the viewing platform atop the ornately filigreed Gothic spire. From this vantage point, visitors can look down upon the steep-pitched roofs of the well-preserved half-timbered medieval houses that cluster below in the city's historic center. Or, casting their gaze a bit farther afield, they can take in the sprawling surrounding urban landscape of modern high-rises and residential suburbs. Farther out across the Alsatian Plain to the east lies the bluish-gray ridgeline of the Vosges, ending at its southern extremity in the Belfort Gap leading to the south of France and the Mediterranean. Far to the east in Germany lie the dark heights of the Black Forest, and stretched out before them is the broad upper valley of the Rhine, which flows north to the Rhineland and the North Sea. As the historic meeting place of water and land routeways from all corners of Europe, the city has long been reputed, as its name implies, to be one of the major crossroads of Europe. The ex-

pansive view in all directions from high atop the cathedral tower is dramatic confirmation of that fact.

Strasbourg is, in many ways, the perfect place to begin this book, for it epitomizes much of what we may think of as important to an appreciation of today's Europe. While historically known as one of Europe's great crossroads, the city today likes to think of itself as the "capital of Europe," an icon of European unity and cooperative integration. In the aftermath of World War II the city became the headquarters of the Council of Europe, the continent's oldest intergovernmental organization, which was headquartered here on the border between France and Germany as a symbol of the postwar rapprochement between these two warring rivals. It is also the permanent home of the European Parliament, which makes Strasbourg, along with Brussels and Luxembourg, one of the main centers of the European Union (EU), the federalized organization of 27 states dedicated to the democratic integration of decisions at the European level governing matters of mutual interest to the member states. Strasbourg is also home to a host of other international organizations, including the International Human Rights Institute, the European Sci-



FIGURE 1.1. The Cathedral Quarter of Strasbourg. Tourists gather before the towering Gothic west front of Strasbourg's 12th-century Cathédrale Notre-Dame. The single tower, which rises to a height of 142 meters, was the tallest in Europe at the time of its completion. It is visible from much of the Alsace Plain.

ence Foundation, the European Center of Regional Development, and the Assembly of European Regions. The city likens itself to Geneva and New York as a world city and home to major international organizations, without being a national capital.

But the city may be thought of as representative of Europe in many other ways as well. It is a provincial capital (and certainly looked upon as no more than that from Paris) and a regional center. Like many other such places in today's Europe, the city takes special pride in its historic heritage, its cultural leadership of its regional hinterland, and its modern economic prosperity and development. Strasbourg was founded more than 2,000 years ago as a Celtic settlement and later served as a Roman camp. It rose to commercial prominence in the Middle Ages, when it became a free city within the Holy Roman Empire, and it remained so for a

time even after its incorporation into France through the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. As the capital of Alsace, tucked between Germany and France, sovereignty over the city and its region has bounced back and forth between these two rivals. After two centuries of French rule, it was annexed by Germany between 1871 and 1918, and again from 1940 to 1944, before being finally returned to France. The culture features a local living language, Alsatian (*Elsässisch*), which is a High German dialect; a cuisine that is distinctively German but influenced by French practices and tastes; a rich folklore; and a unique vernacular style of architecture. The city and its region have both a strong Catholic and Protestant tradition and a prominent Jewish minority as well as, more recently, a sizable community of Muslims of immigrant origin.

Thus, as in so many European places, the citizens of Strasbourg belong to many Europes. Their city plays an active role in the new supranationally integrated Europe epitomized by today's newly enlarged European Union, and to which we will return so often in the pages to follow. At the same time, and certainly just as importantly, it is an integral part of an established national state. Europe, after all, is the birthplace of the modern nation-state, and every European and European place is therefore an active participant in a national economy and culture. Yet, at another level, the city is unique in the context of its own regional and cultural environment. Strasbourgiens interact with one another in a way that is reflective of their distinctive past, they work and recreate together, and they look to the future with much the same perspective. Like most Europeans, they live very modern lives and are affected daily by the homogenizing effects of today's economy and society. Nonetheless, they do what they can in the face of such trends to preserve some sense of their own local history, culture, and identity.

This book is about the geography of a people—the Europeans—their culture, and the environments in which they live. It is a regional geography, that is, an exploration of a particular part of our world, the region (or cultural realm) that we call *Europe*. Our



FIGURE 1.2. The European Parliament in Strasbourg. In sharp contrast to the highly decorated Gothic west front of Strasbourg's medieval cathedral is the modern headquarters of the European Parliament, opened in 1999.

treatment of these people and their region is organized topically and is both contemporary and historical in its approach. And, as our brief opening comments about the city of Strasbourg and its inhabitants suggest, we focus on the multiplicity of influences and conditions that underlie the way in which Europeans live their daily lives and see their place in Europe and the world.

We begin in this chapter by defining and delimiting Europe as a cultural space and examining the cultural variation within that space. In subsequent chapters we explore the environmental contours of the region and the ways in which Europeans have come to inhabit and interact with their environmental surroundings, both in the past and in the present. From there we turn to discussions of language, religion, and polity, three topics that help us to delve more deeply into the cultural traits and historical traditions that we believe lend Europe its distinctive regional personality and help to define the important subregional differences that exist among its people and places. Later in the book we examine the evolution and contemporary features of the urban environments within which the vast majority of Europeans live their daily lives. We follow that by treating two of the most salient aspects of daily life:

the ways in which people make and prepare to make a living, and the ways in which they use the fruits of their labor to consume and recreate. Finally, in an epilogue, we try to look ahead a bit to see what the future may hold in store.

THE CONCEPT OF REGION

A region may be defined as a bounded segment of earth space; yet, the term is used by different people to mean different things. Because the notion is so important in geography and so central to how we wish to introduce Europe as a geographical place, it is worth beginning with an examination of its meanings. We will discuss three kinds of regions here: *instituted*, *naively perceived*, and *denoted*. It is important to recognize that all regions are products of the human mind. Regions do not exist without the agency of humankind. They do, however, differ in who creates them, why they are created, and how they function.

Instituted Regions

Instituted regions are perhaps the most familiar to the lay public. Open any atlas and the pages are cluttered with them. They are

created by authorities within some organization—for example, national, state, or local governments, religious organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church, private businesses, and so on. The regions are created so that the organization can more easily administer whatever activity it is engaged in, whether carrying out planning for the future, collecting revenues, assembling data, or the like. Once instituted, these regions are recognized as existing entities and have boundaries that are clearly demarcated, on paper if not always on the ground; these are usually, but not always, agreed on by everyone.

Systems of instituted regions are often *hierarchical*; that is, they nest within one another. The secular instituted region at the highest level of the hierarchy is the independent state. In the United States the second level is represented by the constituent state (e.g., Minnesota); below that is the county, then the city or rural township. The regions at different levels have different functions, but it is not easy to generalize about their importance. In the United States, for example, local authorities control education, while in European countries decisions about education are typically made at higher levels. In Switzerland the greatest power over most matters is held by the communes and the cantons into which they are grouped rather than by the federal government.

Naively Perceived Regions

In contrast to instituted regions, which are the formal creations of authorities, naively perceived regions are created informally. They come into existence through popular recognition and without official sanction. Recognition may come from people living either within the region or outside of it. In the first case the regions are *internally perceived*. They are closely associated with the notion of *community* in that they are the result of a closely knit group of people identifying in their own minds a territory that “belongs to us rather than to them.”

Before the development of modern transportation technology, when movement over space was costly and time-consuming, small spatial communities, each with its own

cultural traits and dialect, were common, especially in long-settled areas. The boundaries between these communities were seldom formally drawn, but they were well known to the community members. Often a grove of trees, a pile of rocks or perhaps a stream was recognized as the limit of “our land.” Beyond it one entered “foreign” territory. Regions of this kind have been far more numerous in Europe, with its long history of settlement, than in North America. Yet, urbanization and modern developments in transportation and communication have begun to erode their significance for people. As we move more widely and easily across earth space, our identification is with ever larger regions.

Similar to the naively perceived region or community, and central to much current writing on the identification and demarcation of informal places and regions, is the “imagined community.” The emphasis here is on the idea that regional designations are socially constructed and therefore subject to continuous debate and reinterpretation. The imagined community may often reflect the views of an elite that wishes to foster the idea of a bond between a group and a place to realize certain political, cultural, or economic goals. The role of language, rhetoric, and naming can therefore be critical in forming these spatial frameworks and communicating them to others. We see this often in the struggles for political recognition waged by ethnic minorities in European states. It also has played an important role in the development of a sense of nationhood.

Denoted Regions

Maps of denoted regions are commonly found in geographic and other academic writings. They are created by scholars, perhaps most frequently by geographers, in order to reduce the complexity of the real world so that it can better be understood. For this reason they might also usefully be designated as *pedagogical* regions. The process of creating denoted regions (regionalization) is exactly analogous to the process of *classification*. When any area (piece of space) is being divided into regions, what is actu-

ally happening is that the *places* that make up that space are being grouped together because they have something in common. It is important to note that such regions are entirely the product of the mind of the person who has created them and have no independent existence.

Denoted, or pedagogical, regions are of two kinds. *Uniform regions*, sometimes called formal, are homogeneous (or uniform) with respect to certain selected phenomena. Such a region may be defined, for example, by the dominance of Lutherans within its boundaries or by the fact that most of its agricultural land produces wheat, or by a combination of such factors. *Nodal regions*, sometimes called functional, are also denoted but differ from uniform regions in that the places included in them are defined as similar not because they are homogeneous with respect to certain selected criteria but rather because they are all tied to the same central place by the movement of people, ideas, and things. In other words, they all experience more spatial interaction with the same central place or node than they do with any other.

EUROPE AS A CULTURE REALM

With the term *region* defined we can now turn to the question of how Europe meets the definition of the term. Our prime purpose here is to define Europe as a uniform denoted region, to identify those traits that distinguish it from the eight or nine other major culture realms of the world. Before doing so, however, it may be useful to review the history of Europe as a naively perceived region and to comment on its conception as an instituted region.

Naively Perceived Europe

In general parlance Europe is often called a continent. This word is derived from the Latin and is cognate with the words *continuous* and *contain*. It means literally “a *continuous* body of land *contained* within water.” A cursory glance at the map tells us at once that Europe does not qualify for the appellation *continent*. It is, rather, only a small western

peninsula of the great landmass we call Eurasia. The reason people have come to think of Europe as one of the seven continents of the world is because it is perceived, both internally and externally, as a distinctive culture region.

It was the Greeks who invented Europe. The Greeks were given to dichotomous thinking—that is, the penchant for dividing things into two mutually exclusive groups. Their primary division of the world was into the *ecumene*, the known, inhabited world, and the *anecumene*, the unknown, presumably uninhabited, world. The *ecumene* occupied the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, where the Greeks themselves lived, while the *anecumene* occupied the rest. The *ecumene* was also divided into two parts: *occidens*, the land to the west (associated with pleasure and happiness), and *oriens*, the land to the east (associated with uncivilized peoples). *Occidens* developed into Europe and *oriens* into Asia, although the derivations of the terms are not clear. Greece, then, occupied the center of the *ecumene*, an ethnocentric but not unusual cosmological view for human societies. Europe probably originally referred to northwestern Greece, but the concept was expanded as the Greeks colonized the western Mediterranean and learned more about the lands north of the Alps.

With the rise of the Roman Empire, the Greek distinction between east and west, Europe and Asia, became blurred. The Empire occupied the lands all around the Mediterranean Sea, even in North Africa, on the fringe of the fiery Sahara Desert. For the Romans, Europe, Asia, and this third realm, Africa, were drawn together by “our sea,” *mare nostrum*. Although the Greek dichotomy had no meaning for the Romans, they too divided the world into two parts. Their distinction was between Civilization, the Empire or *Romania*, and all the land that lay beyond the Empire, *Barbaria*. Civilization was associated with urban life (both the words *city* and *civilization* come from the Latin *civis*, citizen). *Barbaria* was rural and non-Roman (the Latin word derives from the Greek *barbaros*, foreign). For the Romans, then, Europe was not a useful concept, and it was simply discarded.

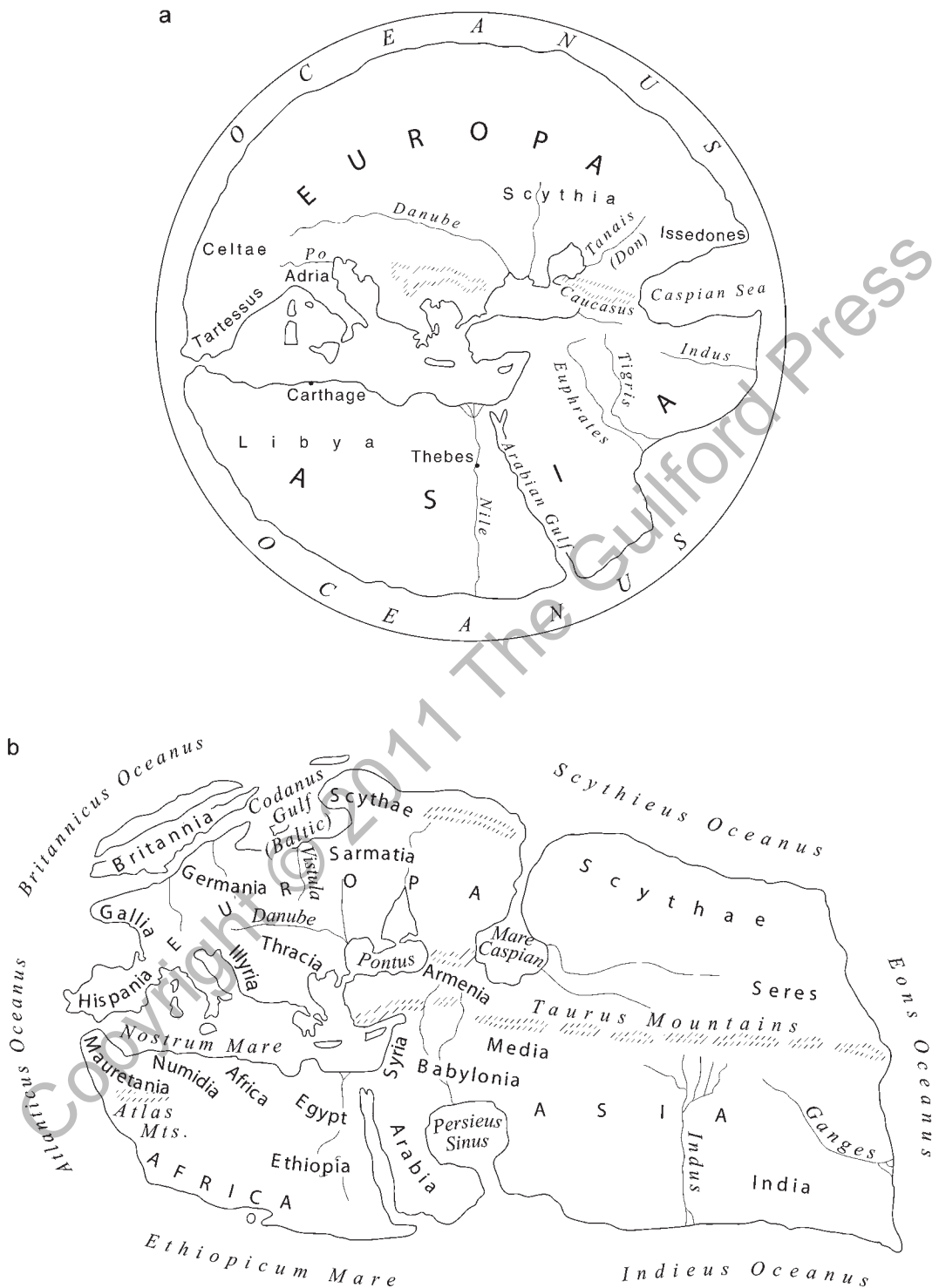


FIGURE 1.3. (a and b) The Greek and Roman worlds. These two maps represent Greek and Roman perceptions of the known world. The first is from Hecataeus, a geographer and traveler from Miletus, a Greek city in Asia Minor. The second is from the Roman Pomponius Mela, who created a geography of the world in the first century CE.

When the Empire fell apart, however, the Roman dichotomy, too, lost its relevance. Although the Empire in the East continued to exist for many centuries, at least in fragmentary form, in the West a variety of new “empires,” creations of the barbarian invaders from the north, came and went. One institution, however, did preserve the legacy of the Roman Empire, the Christian Church. Civilization now came to be identified with Christianity. The new, medieval, dichotomous distinction was between *Christendom*, the world of the universal Christian Church, and the *pagan* world (the word *pagan* carries the same rural or “uncivilized” connotation as *barbarian*, coming from the Latin *paganus*, country dweller).

One cannot stress too much the role of the Church in the lives of “Europeans” during the Middle Ages. Its territorial administrative system was far more stable than that of the secular kingdoms, principalities, and other states, and people identified more strongly with the parish in which they lived than with the territory of their secular lord. An individual enjoyed full civil rights only if he was a member of the Christian community. Excommunication was synonymous with outlawry.

Initially, Christianity had global aspirations; it is a universalizing religion. However, with the spread of Islam, beginning in the seventh century, Christianity became spatially confined, largely to the area the Greeks had called Europe. Contacts with the Indian and Chinese civilizations to the east were few and those with the sub-Saharan African civilizations to the south virtually nonexistent. The great ocean to the west prevented communication with the American civilizations of the Mexican highlands and the Andes.

At the end of the Middle Ages, however, three important things happened to change the medieval view and to restore the idea of Europe. First, the east–west split that had developed between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic worlds took on the appearance of irrevocability. Second, the unity of Western Christendom was shattered by the Protestant Reformation. At the same time secular states rose to attain equal or greater importance than the Church as foci for the loyalty

of their subjects. Religion became for most people just a part of life rather than the focus of life itself. Third, with the Great Discoveries that took Europeans and their religion to distant shores as explorers, conquerors, and colonists, Christianity broke out of Europe and achieved its goal of worldwide distribution.

Even as the Christian populations of Europe spread their religion, their social and cultural values, and their technology beyond the confines of medieval Christendom, they became aware that their part of the world was still quite different, a very special part of the new and wider Christendom. It has been said that “in discovering the world Europe discovered herself.” And so the ancient Greek designation of “Europe” returned. In the modern world, then, as in the world of the Greeks, Europe is a naively perceived region. As such it stands as one of the seven continents of the world. Its boundaries may be a topic of some dispute, but its existence is not questioned.

Instituted Europe

Now, in our times, Europe bids, for the first time in history, to become an *instituted region*. World War II put an end to European hegemony around the world. From the late 1940s to the middle 1960s the great European colonial powers lost almost all of their overseas empires. It is interesting that this is exactly the period during which the states of Europe began to explore the possibility of creating a larger economic and political community. Ironically, just as the peoples of Asia and Africa celebrated a newly won national independence, the peoples of Europe started to look for ways in which they might profitably limit, or give up entirely, their own national independence.

The quest for a more broadly instituted Europe has been one of the major strands of European political development over the post-World War II period. Originating in the West—first as a simple customs union, then as a larger economic bloc known as the European Community—today’s European Union (EU) represents a seemingly inexorable force destined to bring most of Europe

together under some kind of federalized political structure. This is particularly true since the demise of European communism in the 1990s. Indeed, for some, “Europe” has become synonymous with the European Union, which with the latest enlargements of 2004 and 2007 has expanded to include many, but not all, of the former Soviet bloc countries. The EU is now an institution that pervades the lives of Europeans, a fact that will be amply and repeatedly demonstrated in the discussions in subsequent chapters.

Nonetheless, the realization of a completely unified Europe still lies in the future. The region continues to be a composite of smaller instituted regions—the nation-states—that in many cases cling tenuously to their individual identities, powers, and prerogatives. For our purposes, then, we prefer to define Europe for now as a uniform denoted region, a realm whose people share a cultural tradition that sets them apart from peoples elsewhere in the world and gives



FIGURE 1.4. Europe and the European Union.

them their own personality. It is to this Europe that we now turn.

Europe as a Denoted Region

We pointed out earlier that a uniform denoted region is a delimited piece of earth space created by grouping together places that share common characteristics. At the world scale culture realms are usually formed through the amalgamation of whole countries, which then are taken to be discrete places. The region we will define as Europe consists of 44 independent states. This is more than one-third again as many as existed just about two decades ago (32) before the collapse of Soviet power in eastern Europe. These states occupy the western peninsula of the Eurasian landmass, bounded on the north by the Arctic Sea, the west by the Atlantic, and the south by the Mediterranean. In the east we include Belarus, Ukraine, and that part of Russia lying to the west of the Urals. The latter has historically been known as European Russia and has been sharply distinguished from Asiatic Russia, or Siberia, to the east. In our view Siberia is neo-Russian in the same sense that Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand are neo-British and Latin America is neo-Iberian.

In addition to the European space defined above, from time to time in our discussion we will consider a number of peripheral countries. These include, in the southeast, the secular Islamic state of Turkey, which has recently begun formal negotiations for entry into the EU. Also on the periphery, and figuring into our discussion on occasion, are the Arab Islamic states of the Maghreb in North Africa—Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia—with their strong historic ties to France. In general, however, because our discussion is focused on Europe as a region in its specific geographical context, we will not consider the overseas possessions and territories of a few European states around the world. They are the last remnants of a long, highly controversial, and often painful history of European colonialism and imperialism that still very much informs the present, but from a geographical perspective they belong above all to other, diverse, and quite literally

“exotic” environmental and cultural realms. In the following section we discuss the cultural traits and historical traditions that we believe give the European core a personality distinct from that of any other major world region.

THE PERSONALITY OF EUROPE

The Middle Eastern Heritage

At the outset it is important to note that the basic fabric of European civilization has been borrowed from the Middle East. Anatolia, Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Egypt comprise the homeland of the complex of intellectual and technological innovations that occurred during the so-called Environmental Transformation and that subsequently gave rise to European or, more broadly, Western civilization. In every realm of human activity—economy, government, religion and morality, science, the arts, and the humanities—the cultures of the Middle East had achieved high levels of development at a time when most Europeans were eking out a living as hunters and gatherers, or primitive farmers.

These innovations began with the domestication of plants and animals that led initially to the development of a shifting form of cultivation. The hill lands surrounding the Mesopotamian basin provided very favorable conditions for experimenting with plant and animal breeding. This “Fertile Crescent” offered a variety of biotic niches, each with its own complex of plant and animal communities. Archaeologists have uncovered farming villages as much as 10,000 years old and discovered remains of barley, wheat, peas, lentils, and bones of domesticated goats, sheep, and possibly cattle and pigs.

Before 5000 BCE cultivators began to move down the mountain slopes into the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Here they had to adjust to a new environment. The floodplain soil was very fertile, but the climate was dry and the heat in summer fierce. The agriculturalists learned to manage water and to irrigate their fields. The greater yields obtained in this new environment enabled them to settle down and abandon the shifting cultivation that they had practiced in the

hills. Here the plow was developed, and domesticated oxen were used to pull it. Thus, a system of field agriculture was established that was based on the growing of grain and the use of the plow and the draft animal.

Plant and animal domestication was the core of the Environmental Transformation, but a number of other major innovations followed. Metallurgy started with the use of native copper, followed by silver and gold. More important was the discovery, around 3500 BCE, that a mixture of copper and tin produced a hard alloy, bronze, from which superior weapons and tools could be made. These were expensive, however, and most people continued to use stone, wood, or bone. Between 3500 and 3000 two revolutionary developments in transportation occurred: the invention of the wheel for use on land and the invention of the sail for use on water. Another major development in transportation was the domestication of the horse, perhaps in the steppe lands to the north of the Black and Caspian Seas. It probably was introduced into the Middle East during the early part of the second millennium BCE.

As agriculture became more efficient, fewer workers were needed in it. Occupations became more specialized and division of labor increased. Surplus populations began to concentrate in towns, even large cities. By 4000 BCE the trend toward urban living was well under way in Lower Mesopotamia, the region south of modern Baghdad. The urban places became centers of states, of trade, of philosophical religions, and of scientific inquiry. The art of government, designed to organize and protect society, was raised to a high level. In the realm of commerce, business contracts and credit systems were established, and gold and silver adopted as standards of value. Philosophy, the inquiry into the first causes of things and their final significance, led to the elaboration of complex religious systems and to the establishment of religious institutions and priestly castes. Systems of writing were developed; mathematics, astronomy, and the calendar were invented. The invention of writing led to the creation of poetry, drama, and history and to the development of schools.

One of the crowning achievements of the Environmental Transition was the development of a successful way of extracting large amounts of iron ore from the earth and a means of converting it into a useful material. This metal was used to produce a multitude of things, from pots to swords and plowshares. It is thought that iron-working techniques were first developed in eastern Anatolia or Armenia in about 1500 BCE. Another achievement of great magnitude was the invention of the alphabet, again in the second millennium BCE. It was devised by Semitic peoples living in the Sinai Peninsula and was much superior to the older Sumerian cuneiform or Egyptian hieroglyphic systems. Its principal advantage was that it could be easily learned and was applicable to any language. The alphabet would eventually displace all the other writing systems developed in the Old World except the Chinese. It is truly remarkable what the peoples of the Middle East achieved in the years from 8000 to 1500 BCE. All of these innovations were transmitted to the peoples of Europe, principally through the agency of the Greeks and the Romans.

Greek and Roman Thought

More than any other people the Greeks were responsible for adapting Middle Eastern culture to the European scene. Perhaps they acknowledged these foreign cultural origins and borrowings when their mythology gave the name of Europa to a Phoenician princess abducted by Zeus and transported to the Greek island of Crete. The Greeks advanced science and philosophy in almost every way, developing both theoretical and empirical work. But perhaps the greatest contribution of the Greeks to European culture was their invention of the *individual*. The states of the east were monumental, bureaucratic, and autocratic. The weight of the state lay heavily upon its subjects. The Greek *polis*, by contrast, was small, a community in which all members (at least free men) could participate. The Greeks conceived of the freeman as a citizen rather than as a subject. They endowed citizens with political liberty, civil rights, and a great deal of mental and moral

freedom. Essentially the Greeks created democracy and established reason as the guiding principle in government and all other aspects of life. Of course, they did not know democracy as we know it today, but they laid the groundwork for later developments in this area, which would be among the major ingredients distinguishing European culture from other cultures of the world. Greek thought found its way into later European culture via three channels: Roman thought, Christianity, and the Renaissance.

The role of Rome was to take the culture of the Greeks, both what they had inherited from the East and what they themselves had invented, spread it throughout the Mediterranean world, and then transmit it through the Latin language and literature to the peoples of northern Europe. The Romans made some contributions of their own, among them a new, more independent status for women, never known in the Greek world, and new principles of political organization and social security expressed in a law code, which is still the foundation of many European legal systems. They also developed a hierarchy of cities and bequeathed much of that hierarchy, albeit in a weakened condition, to medieval Christendom.

Christianity

It was a converted Greek Jew, the apostle Paul, who interpreted Christ's teachings to the Gentiles (as the Jews called them) and laid the foundation for Christian dogma. Greek thought, and Neoplatonic philosophy, in particular, imparted a structure to Christian doctrine that had no biblical foundation. Nonetheless Christianity has contributed much to European culture that is not Greek in origin. Most important, perhaps, is the Judeo-Christian code of ethics, which elaborates what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behavior in European societies. This ethical system is founded on the notion that there is a moral code of law handed down by God. Out of this law came the seven virtues and the seven deadly sins. Jewish tradition emphasized the necessity to follow this code to the letter; Christ emphasized rather the spirit of the law, especially love of God and one's neighbor. This ethic is radically different from that of the Greeks and Romans, who had no conception of a divinely dictated moral code. For them, everything that one did was a matter of practical reasoning. One could do well or poorly. In the Judeo-Christian view doing badly in school or at sports is entirely different from failing to help someone in need. The former is a fault,



FIGURE 1.5. The Athenian agora. The agora was at the heart of ancient Athens—the place where citizens participated in the cultural, political, commercial, and administrative life of the *polis*. The agora was also a religious center. The building at the top center of the photo is the Temple of Hephaestus, dedicated to the two gods Hephaestus and Athena during the fifth century BCE.

but the latter is a transgression against the virtue of charity. This distinction between a divine and a human moral code affects the very way questions are framed in European and neo-European cultures.

Christian ethics also emphasizes the equal moral status of all human beings. This is because all are potentially immortal and equally precious in the sight of God. This led to sanctions in European culture against infanticide, abortion, and suicide. It also led to the abolition of slavery in Europe by the High Middle Ages, although the practice was to return later, applied not to Europeans

but to black Africans. Early Christians accepted slaves into their congregations. This was not difficult to do because for Christians the highest virtues were meekness, obedience, patience, and resignation. The Greeks and Romans, on the other hand, respected independence, self-reliance, magnanimity, and worldly success. As they conceived virtue, a “virtuous slave” was a contradiction in terms. For Christians, however, there was nothing in the state of slavery that was incompatible with the highest moral character.

Like most philosophical religions, Christianity has been susceptible to theologi-



FIGURE 1.6. Religions in Europe.

cal disagreements that have led to schisms. These rifts in the Christian Church have meant that many subsequent cultural developments were specific to particular regions. The most prominent cultural boundary in Europe is that between Western and Eastern Christianity. Western Christendom took its heritage from Greece through the medium of Rome. Eastern Christendom also took its heritage from Greece but via Byzantium, a Greek civilization that had been only very slightly Romanized. In the East, Christianity remained Orthodox; that is, early Christian doctrine was little changed. In the West, however, points of theology were constantly questioned, and the tenets of the faith underwent steady change. In time the Eastern Church came to view many of the beliefs of the Roman Church as heretical. Partly for this reason many of the Western philosophical movements that we have described as fundamental to European culture were rejected in the East. Thus, the cultures of Western Christendom often appear more European than those of the Orthodox realm.

One must also remember that the Orthodox realm stands on the eastern boundary of Christendom, where it has been more open

to Asian influences than most of the rest of Europe. The Russians held the gates against the Mongols, and, although they were forced into submission for two centuries, they ultimately triumphed and themselves subdued all of northern Asia. For several centuries the Byzantines held the Ottoman Turks at bay before finally succumbing. Greco-Christian culture survived both the Mongols and the Ottomans. There can be no question that the Orthodox world is a part of Europe.

The second major schism occurred within the Western Church in the 16th century and led to the establishment of a variety of “national” Protestant Churches. A defining element of the Protestant world is often said to be an ethic in which hard work and the accumulation of capital holds a central position. This has been explained by some as a result of the Calvinist belief in predestination, the idea that the salvation of any individual has already been decided before that person’s birth. Success in this world was seen as a sign of a future in heaven among the “elect.” Proponents of this idea see this work ethic as closely linked to the development of the capitalist commercial-industrial society in northwestern Europe.



FIGURE 1.7. St. Peter’s Basilica. St. Peter’s is the hub and principal shrine of the Catholic Church, which has attracted the largest number of Christians in Europe. The present structure, which is the largest in all Christendom and is said to stand on the final resting place of St. Peter, was built during the 16th and 17th centuries. The obelisk that marks the center of the immense piazza in front of the Basilica was brought there from the Roman circus where Peter was martyred.

Some cultural differences have resulted not from theological disagreements but rather from the different attitudes of the Churches as social institutions. Much evidence suggests that, in the early Middle Ages, the Western Church strove very hard to sever the lateral ties in the extended family (to siblings and their families) and to establish the stem family (grandparents, parents, and children), as opposed to the extended family, as the primary economic unit. Some scholars believe that this was done to decrease the lateral flow of resources and increase the probability that wealth would be left to the Church during life and at death. Under the stem family system, a young man had to wait until he had personal access to land before he could start a family. The result, they argue, was to produce, by the 17th century, the European marriage pattern, in which both men and women married late and many did not marry at all. This had an enormous effect on birthrates, which were much lower than those in the rest of the world. That this is a uniquely western European phenomenon may well be due to the fact that no other world religion had so strong or centralized an institutional organization as the Roman Catholic Church.

The Indo-European Legacy

The overwhelming majority of Europeans speak languages of the Indo-European family. Most of these languages belong to the Germanic or Balto-Slavic subfamilies, or are descended from Latin, a member of the Italic subfamily. Fewer than 3% of the European population speak the five autochthonous languages (Hungarian, Finnish, Estonian, Saami, and Basque) that do not belong to this group. Language would then also appear to be a factor unifying the culture realm, though it must be pointed out that many more Indo-European speakers live outside of Europe. Nearly half of the world's population speak languages belonging to this family, and just over a quarter of these are Europeans. Roughly the same number of Indo-European speakers live in the state of India alone.

It is difficult to pinpoint the ways in which a common language family lends

unity to a group of cultures. However, it can be argued that, more than any other cultural trait, language reflects culture because it is the bearer of culture. Thus, the way in which any people express themselves is shaped by the view that their culture has of the world. This is reflected both in the way that the language is structured and in the vocabulary. There are commonalities among the grammars and lexicons of Indo-European languages that are not shared by other language families. It is easier for an English speaker to learn Russian than Chinese not only because the former languages share some similarities in vocabulary and structure but also because English and Russian speakers are closer to each other in the way they think about the world than either is to speakers of Chinese.

A common linguistic heritage also implies similar mythologies and customs. Christianity has absorbed not only many elements of Greek and Roman culture but also a great many features of other pre-Christian Indo-European cultures. Our celebration of Halloween goes back to the pagan Celtic observance of New Year, which for the Celts began on November 1. The festival of Samhain was observed on October 31, the last day of summer. It was a time when the herds returned from summer pasture and laws and land tenures were renewed. The souls of the dead were also said to revisit their homes on this date. It was a night when ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, fairies, and black cats were thought to be roaming about. To frighten these evil spirits away, the Celts hollowed out turnips, carved faces in them, and placed them in their windows with lighted candles inside. Rather than proscribe this deeply ingrained celebration, the Christian Church incorporated it into its festival of All Hallows Eve, celebrated on the same date. Gradually Halloween became a secular observance and was introduced into the United States by Irish immigrants in the 19th century.

Lucia, martyred in Sicily in the early fourth century and later canonized, is, because of her name, associated with light (Latin *lux*). In Sweden her feast day, December 13, came to replace the pre-Christian celebration of the winter *blot*, a festival marking the winter solstice, when the days become longer



FIGURE 1.8. Indo-European languages in Europe.

once again. Today the tradition specifies that the youngest daughter in the family dress in a white robe and wear a crown of lighted candles (both symbols of light). Similarly, the revelries associated with the summer solstice, or the ancient, pagan “Midsummer,” often celebrated with communal bonfires and dances, were replaced in the Christian Church with a feast honoring St. John the Baptist on June 24. European cultures are replete with examples of this kind of survival of pre-Christian Indo-European myths and practices.

The Renaissance and Humanism

Although Greek thought had a great impact on European culture directly through both Roman society and Christianity, much of it was incorporated during the rebirth of interest in classical learning that occurred toward the end of the Middle Ages, a development conventionally referred to as the Renaissance. Its earliest expression was in the intellectual movement known as humanism, led by secular thinkers in reaction to what they saw as the failed Scholastic philosophy of the Catholic Church. Its first successes

were in Italy, and it received an enormous boost from the many eastern scholars who fled to Italy as the Ottoman Turks advanced against the Byzantine Empire. These refugees brought with them important books and manuscripts and, of course, a knowledge of the Greek language, which had become rare in Western Christendom.

As its name suggests, humanism emphasized the potential good in human beings rather than their sinful nature, which was the preoccupation of the Scholastics. Whereas medieval thought began with the idea that man was flawed and needed to do constant penance in order to gain his reward in heaven, humanist thinking started with the inherent worth of human beings and viewed life as a precious time of inquiry and discovery. Humanism marks the beginning of the transition from the Age of Faith to the Age of Reason. The Renaissance, then, was a return to the true Hellenic sources of Western culture that had been corrupted by the Scholastics and their distorted Latin translations.

The Renaissance scholar, following the ancient Greek model, espoused the objective analysis of perceived experience and exhib-

ited a concern for detail and a highly critical attitude toward all knowledge. This kind of empiricism led ultimately to the development of modern science and, above all, promoted the study of mathematics, which was viewed as the key to human understanding of the universe. Underpinning all of this new intellectual exploration was the Greek notion of the worth of the individual and the dignity of humankind. There was, however, one important Christian addition, and that was the stress on social responsibility as the goal of learning.

This empirical and critical movement, which freed the individual from conformity to the group, set the stage for the many discoveries that launched the Scientific Transformation. The Scientific Transformation began with the Great Discoveries and continued with the revolutions in transportation, agriculture, and industry that gave Europe two or three centuries of hegemony over the rest of the world.

Not until the very end of the 15th century did Christian civilization, pent up for a thousand years in this small western peninsula of the Eurasian continent, finally break



FIGURE 1.9. Cambridge University. One of the great seats of learning and a hotbed of Protestant thought at the time of the Reformation, Cambridge University was founded in the midst of a great wave of university establishments that spread across Europe from Italy between the 12th and 16th centuries. King's College and its famous Gothic chapel are viewed here across the "Backs," the name given to the lush meadows that line the River Cam.

out. Through long ocean voyages Europeans discovered the rest of the world and, either politically or economically, conquered most of it. Only two peoples are known to have made persistent voyages far into the open ocean before this time. One was the Vikings, the Scandinavians of pre-Christian times, who sailed to the Shetlands, Orkneys, Iceland, Greenland, and North America. The other was the Polynesians who settled the Pacific islands, but this feat is thought to have been more the result of drift voyages than of intentional navigation. Neither had an appreciable impact on the history of the world.

One French-speaking Swiss historian, Denis de Rougemont, sees in these voyages of discovery something he feels is crucial in defining European culture, and that is the willingness to take risks. This is arguably a result of the emphasis on the individual over the group. When group security is given high priority, the individual is discouraged from taking risks and the tone of the society is highly conservative. De Rougemont argues that, of all the peoples of the earth, the Europeans are the only ones who have consistently gone beyond the limits set by nature, beyond the traditions fixed by their ancestors. A strict interpretation of this claim would deny technological innovation in other societies, which would be absurd. But it might be justified to say that no other people took such giant strides across the boundaries set by nature.

The Philosophy of the Enlightenment

The European enthronement of the individual continued during the 17th and 18th centuries in the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment. Central to the Enlightenment was the celebration of reason as the principal power by which human beings can understand the universe and improve their condition. The goals of rational mankind were considered to be knowledge and understanding, freedom and happiness. It was thought that correct reason could discover useful knowledge. The 18th century is the acme of the Age of Reason. Together with humanism, the Renaissance, and the Refor-

mation, which shattered the monolithic authority of the Roman Catholic Church, this movement fueled the Scientific Transformation in Europe.

Unlike humanism, however, the Enlightenment separated science from theology. The Reformation and the Thirty Years' War had destroyed the hope that the Christian faith and scientific learning could be reconciled. The Enlightenment totally divorced the realms of scientific and theological thought and prepared the way for the secularization of European culture. The privatization of religion, its removal from the public sphere to the sanctity of the home, was to have an enormous impact on European culture, including fertility behavior in the 19th century. Another major element of the Enlightenment was the development of a set of ideas about the fundamental freedom of the individual, formulated largely in England in the 17th century, which led to new definitions of political democracy and parliamentary government. Finally, the Enlightenment fostered the idea of education for the masses, laying the ground for the establishment of truly democratic political institutions.

From the Renaissance through the Enlightenment what we have seen, then, is (1) the rediscovery of Greek notions about both the dignity and freedom of the individual and rational thinking in humanism, which tries to reconcile these two ideas with Christian thought; (2) the disillusionment with Christian teaching brought about by the Protestant Reformation and the subsequent century of wars; (3) the separation of reasoned thinking about nature from theological teachings; and (4) the application of the idea of individual freedom in the political arena, paving the way for the development of the democratic state.

Nationalism and Romanticism

The new theories of political democracy insisted that states and their governments belonged to the people, not to ruling families. This led ultimately to the uniquely European idea of nationalism, the notion that if political states coincide exactly with homogeneous peoples, or nations, the tensions between

the people seeking freedom of action and the governments seeking public order will be minimized. Briefly put, people who feel themselves to be related will want the same things. This represents an extension of the idea of freedom of the individual to freedom of the related group.

Although it had its origins in the spirit of the Enlightenment, nationalism became deeply involved with the Romantic Movement of the late 18th and 19th centuries. Romanticism was a reaction against the rational thinking of the Enlightenment, a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, and reason that typified that movement. Romanticism stressed the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional. It also emphasized the common people, rejecting high, cosmopolitan culture, which was Pan-European, in favor of the simple popular cultures of nations, attached to their native soil. Its association with Romanticism greatly changed the shape of nationalism, as we shall see in Chapter 7.

The Commercial–Industrial Society

One further element of European culture needs to be mentioned. Europe, and Europe alone, developed an economic system that freed the great bulk of its people from the task of producing the basic necessities of life and produced a division of labor that allowed enormous specialization. Initially this took a capitalist form. Subsequently it was translated into a Marxist form. Both are European.

This economic system was, of course, made possible by the Scientific Transformation, whose roots we have explored, and by the rise of the middle class to great importance, a feature of the Enlightenment. Born in the northwestern part of Europe, it ultimately spread in some form to all other areas of the region and, eventually, on the wings of European imperialism to most of the rest of the world. Its impact on less developed regions (the former Third World), has often been called “Westernization” or even “Americanization” and today may lie at the core of what we call “globalization,” but it often is

unaccompanied by other aspects of European culture. However, the fact that European culture, alone among all the cultures of the world, is available as a model to be accepted in part or rejected in toto is also something that makes this region distinctive.

CULTURAL VARIATION WITHIN THE REALM: DIVERSITY IN UNITY

These, then, are the main elements of the culture that we now call European. Clearly, not all Europeans share to an equal degree in every one of them. Europe has been called a “family of cultures,” its historical traditions and cultural heritages overlapping, each figuring in a number of examples but not in all. Before leaving our discussion of Europe as a culture realm, it will be useful to look briefly at how culture varies across the realm.

Just as it is useful to distinguish Europe as one among a number of culture realms in the world, so it is also useful to identify relatively homogeneous culture regions within Europe. Again, the point is to reduce the complexity of reality, making it easier to comprehend the diversity within European culture. The regional scheme presented here has been constructed with a mind to cultural similarities among people, especially with regard to language and religion, common historical experience, and the role that major cities have played in providing foci for human activity. Our intent has been to create regions that reflect enduring associations rather than modern political or economic alliances, which are important and cannot be completely ignored but also may be quite fleeting. The “places” grouped together to form the regions are whole countries. This is at variance with some of the current thinking, which we will discuss in a later chapter, about the decline of the nation-state and the transfer of political and economic power to the supranational and local levels. However, our scheme reflects the fact that, for the foreseeable future, the lives of Europeans are still most affected by the institutions, laws, and cultures of the states within which they live.

The regional system adopted here rec-

VIGNETTE: EUROPE “EAST” AND “WEST”

During the Cold War decades of the late 20th century, the most common way of denoting broad internal differentiations within the region was to divide Europe into a “West” and an “East.” This bipolar division seemed to work well for nearly everyone, satisfying naïve or popular perceptions, as well as accommodating the elite perspectives of political, economic and academic institutions. While the notion of an “Eastern Europe” existed long before 1945, afterwards it became synonymous with and was strengthened by the marked political, economic, and social characteristics of the countries located east of the metaphorical “Iron Curtain.” Late 20th-century “Eastern Europe” included the Soviet Republics of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; the so-called German Democratic Republic, the eastern part of a divided Germany; the states of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary; and the entire Balkan Peninsula, with the exception of Greece. Finland was a unique case: Its relatively isolated northern location, Nordic or Scandinavian culture, and unique geopolitical relationship with the Soviet Union, generally kept it apart from “Eastern Europe.”

The notion of an East–West divide in Europe has roots that run much deeper than the recent political and economic



FIGURE 1.10. Cold War Europe.

divisions of the Cold War. For centuries the main cultural innovations and developments that gave shape to the individuality of modern Europe have tended to emerge first in the West before diffusing, sometimes slowly, toward the East. For instance, it is around the western Mediterranean, where it had its origins, that the Roman Empire left its strongest imprint. It was in northern France and England that feudalism, the dominant form of social and political organization of Europe's medieval era, emerged in the 9th century before diffusing towards the East. While feudalism had virtually disappeared in the West by the 1600s, it remained in place far longer in the east: The abolition of serfdom in Czarist Russia occurred only in 1857. In a similar vein, the Industrial Revolution that began in the British Isles in the late 1700s brought with it a general "modernization" process that swept swiftly across the West, but spread only slowly to the East (as well as the Mediterranean). In truth, the societies and economies of "Eastern Europe" were still predominantly viewed as rural, traditional, not to say "backward," until well into the 20th century.

Also significant is the fact that the eastern periphery of Europe was repeatedly and for prolonged periods of time under the political and cultural influence of entities based outside of the region. Just as it explains the presence today of autochthonous Muslim communities in the area, Ottoman rule in the Balkans between the 15th and 19th centuries has often been blamed for the lack of an early modern economic "takeoff" in the region. The Russian Empire and its successor state the Soviet Union, whose territorial center of gravity began shifting eastward toward the heart of Eurasia in the 1600s with the conquest and colonization of Siberia, Transcaucasia and most of central Asia, represents perhaps a more complex but nonetheless obvious case of non-European influence in the region with important social and cultural ramifications.

Such considerations may lead us to question the very idea of a pan-European identity. If one were to map out the multiple traits forming the "personality of Europe" or the various layers of what constitutes a specific European cultural heritage, the resulting map would consist of areal gradients that would give to the West, rather than the East, the overall appearance of being more characteristically "European." This sensitive and disputable insight, as presented for instance by the French geographer Jacques Lévy in the 1990s, has of course its detractors. In his all-inclusive, broad-sweeping 1996 survey of European history, British historian, specialist in Polish affairs, and "Polophile" Norman Davies downplays the disproportionate importance traditionally granted to western European countries. As a means of correcting this bias, the maps in his book turn Europe unconventionally sideways, with the West appearing at the top of the page in apparent peripheral relationship to a broader eastern base at the bottom, with Poland at its center!

More than a decade after the fall of communism, 10 of the "Eastern European" countries have demonstrated their eagerness to leave behind them the legacy of the Cold War by joining the European Union in 2004 and 2007. In doing so, they have satisfied much of their resolve to embrace a revitalized sense of European belonging. But the contrasts between these new EU member-states and their western counterparts, deriving both from their recent socialist past and from much deeper and more long-standing cultural differences, have not disappeared overnight. They are likely to remain for some time to come, isolating the European East in its distinctiveness and perpetuating the common perception of a divided European area.

recognizes eight regions within Europe proper and four peripheral regions, which are transitional to other culture realms. In addition, we identify a European "heartland," a region whose people demonstrate the traits of the European culture realm, as they were defined above, more completely than any other Europeans. This "heartland" region includes the London and Paris basins, much of the Low Countries, the Rhineland, the Bavarian

and Swiss plateaus, and the western part of the Po Basin in Italy. It is somewhat reminiscent of "Lotharingian" Europe, the middle portion of Charlemagne's empire as it was divided among his three grandsons. It also somewhat approximates the area known as the "Blue Banana," identified by a group of French geographers in the 1980s as the modern economic and industrial spine of western Europe. While occupying only a relatively

small portion of the total area of Europe, it contains almost a fifth of its population.

The heartland, which defies the conventions of national boundaries, lies mainly in what we will identify in our regional scheme as the British Isles, western and west-central Europe, suggesting a twofold division of Europe proper into an inner and outer zone. The inner zone contains the three aforementioned regions, while the outer zone is composed of the other five. This scheme is not meant to suggest that the peoples of the inner zone have been more important than others in European history but rather that they have

been more exposed to those ideas and movements that we regard as central to European culture.

EUROPE PROPER: THE INNER ZONE

Western Europe

In a sense, since the end of the Middle Ages western Europe can be considered the “head-quarters” or “cornerstone” of Europe. From a historical perspective, this is largely because of France, which was one of the most



FIGURE 1.11. A regionalization of European culture.

important players on the European scene from the late 16th to the early 20th century. For much of European history Paris was the largest or the second-largest city in Europe. In the Middle Ages the University of Paris was the greatest center of learning in the world, and by the 17th century French culture had become the model for *haute culture* everywhere. French became the language of choice at many European courts and by the 18th century was the international language of diplomacy. The French Revolution was an important early step in the establishment of the rights of the individual and the evolution of the idea of nationalism, two keystones of European culture. Secularized postrevolutionary France was the first country, as we shall see in Chapter 3, to institute family-size limitations and led the transition from high to low fertility, which totally transformed European life.

Paris remained the cultural focus of Europe and the world well into the 19th century, and with just under 10 million inhabitants Paris today is officially Europe's largest city. It has grown mainly as the capital of a highly centralized French state. As new territories were added to the state, their cultures were suppressed by the central authorities, and their economies were tied very closely to the capital city. The road and railroad systems

were focused on Paris, and it is hard to travel any considerable distance in France without passing through the city. In recent years there has been some decentralization, but Paris remains the hub of the French state. To a great extent Paris has also been the center to which the French-speaking Belgian Walloons have looked for cultural guidance.

While Paris has been denied any of the administrative functions of the European Union, all of these are nonetheless located within what we have defined as western Europe. Brussels has housed the headquarters of NATO since 1967. The Berlaymont building in the Belgian capital is the seat of the European Commission, the most powerful body of the EU. Every year one meeting of the European Council is held in Brussels, and the city hosts regular meetings of European parliamentary and political groups. Luxembourg is the seat of the European Investment Bank, the Court of Justice, and the Secretariat of the European Parliament. And, as we have seen, the meetings of the European Parliament are held in Strasbourg, which is also the seat of the Council of Europe, a non-EU institution.

The other urban focus of western Europe is the cluster of cities north of the Rhine delta in the Netherlands known as Randstad (Ring City). The Randstad conurbation is



FIGURE 1.12. Champs-Élysées.

Open to strollers on a Sunday afternoon in May, the Champs-Élysées carries on in its legendary role as the French capital's most elegant promenade and triumphal way. Crowning the avenue is the Arc de Triomphe, completed in 1836 to celebrate the victories of the Napoleonic Empire.

anchored by Rotterdam with its Europort, the continent's largest port in volume of goods handled; Den Haag, the seat of the national government; and Amsterdam, the nominal capital and cultural center of the Netherlands. Amsterdam is the creation of merchants who built the Dutch Empire between the 16th and 18th centuries, fostering an independent spirit that won, first Holland, and then the other northern counties their independence. Just as Paris has been the cultural capital of western Europe, Randstad has been its mercantile capital.

Culturally western Europe sits astride the boundary between what we will later identify as the Germanic and Romanic linguistic subrealms. French is spoken over most of the region, but Dutch prevails in the north, and forms of German may be heard in eastern Belgium, Luxembourg, and Alsace. The populace is predominantly Roman Catholic, though both the French and the Dutch Catholic Churches have been among the most liberal in Europe for many decades. However, islands of Protestantism may be found, especially in the Netherlands. Here both the Dutch Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches are strong in the northern counties, and there is a large Humanist community. A second cultural boundary might be that which separates metropolitan France and the Low Countries from the western and southern peripheries of France. Western France looks toward the Atlantic and has traditionally lagged behind in terms of economic development. It has certain affinities with other Atlantic-facing lands in Britain, Scandinavia, and Iberia. The Mediterranean south of France also maintains its cultural distinctiveness from the center and lately has increasingly allied itself economically, as we shall later see, with its neighbors along the northern rim of the western Mediterranean.

Britain and Ireland

Britain and Ireland have traditionally been seen as separate from western Europe because they are islands. The British, especially, have regarded the Channel as something that keeps them apart from the rest of Europe, which they refer to as “the continent.” Some

years back a headline in the *Times* of London read “Fog in Channel, Continent Isolated,” a telling commentary not only on Britain's sense of standing apart from Europe but also on its assessment of the relative importance of the two. This is to a large extent based on the aloofness that the British have historically strived to maintain from the turmoil in the lands across the Channel. While armies have swarmed back and forth across the continent, Britain has not been invaded since the Normans did it back in the 11th century CE. That same aloofness may be said to characterize British dealings with today's EU. The government in London often seeks special consideration or exemptions for Britain with regard to decisions that may be generally amenable to the rest of its continental neighbors.

Nonetheless, the British broke out of their island fortress in the 16th century and created the greatest overseas empire the world has ever known. Between 1500 and 1600 London tripled in population. Over the next 300 years it became not only the most powerful political capital in the world but the world's premier commercial and financial capital as well. The 20th-century collapse of colonialism and the decline of British industrial might have taken their toll on the economy; yet, today London, along with New York and Tokyo, is still one of the three leading financial centers of the world. This has nothing to do with the British stock and bond markets or the strength of the pound sterling, but is related to the international connections forged by London bankers during Britain's period of world hegemony.

Like western Europe, this region shares more fully than most other regions in the characteristics we have identified as defining European culture. English philosophers of the Enlightenment laid the groundwork for modern democracy, and the English are arguably the first modern nation to emerge. Britain is the home of both the Agricultural and the Industrial Revolutions, which brought about the commercial-industrial society as we know it today. Its leading role in shaping what has become our modern global economy is a major reason why English became



FIGURE 1.13. The London Royal Exchange. This building with its neoclassical façade was erected in 1842. It is the third building to occupy the site since Sir Thomas Gresham founded the Exchange in 1566 with the intent of supplanting the Bourse of Amsterdam as Europe's foremost marketplace. The Exchange is a symbol of London's long supremacy in the world of finance.

the language of science and commerce and has surpassed French as the prime medium for international communication.

Just as western Europe is a zone of contact between Romanic and Germanic cultures, this region is a meeting place between Germanic and Celtic cultures. Before the Roman occupation of Britain, the population of the two islands was entirely Celtic. Romanization did not penetrate the society very deeply, and the Latin language did not persist after the Roman troops left. It was the Anglo-Saxon invaders of the fifth century CE. who brought with them the ancestral West Germanic dialects of English and drove the Celts into the western parts of the islands and across the Channel into Brittany where Celtic is still spoken today. Later the settlement of Norwegians and Danes brought further (this time North) Germanic influence. Linguistically the region today is English-speaking, though there are still some speakers of Celtic, mostly Welsh, but also Gaelic on the western fringes of Scotland and Ireland. While western Europe is mainly Catholic, this region is predominantly Protestant with the exception of a rather conservative Catholic Ireland and Irish Catholic enclaves in the major industrial cities of Britain. For cultural as well as political reasons, a fairly

sharp divide still persists between Catholic Ireland and the island of Great Britain.

West-Central Europe

West-central Europe is German-speaking Europe, largely Catholic in the south and west (except in many urban areas), Protestant in the north and east. Politically it corresponds to the core of the German state as it emerged in the late 19th century plus the core of the Austrian Empire and the Swiss Confederation, which is mainly German-speaking. While thus possessing some cultural unity, the constituent parts of the region have traditionally looked in different directions.

The Rhineland, with its major urban foci at Frankfurt and the Rhine-Ruhr conurbation, has long been oriented toward western Europe. Frankfurt is one of Europe's leading financial centers, while Rhine-Ruhr developed into Germany's greatest center of heavy industry. Hamburg has historically looked to the North Sea and the world at large. Its title of "Free and Hanseatic City" recalls its deep involvement in trade and shipping over the centuries. Even today Hamburg contains more consulates than any other city in the world apart from New York. Berlin's traditional orientation has been eastward. It

originated as the capital of Brandenburg, a marchland that guarded the eastern frontiers of the German lands and fostered the further advance of German settlement in the east. Vienna, founded at the strategic point where the Danube flows into the Great Hungarian Plain, played the same role with regard to the German advance to the southeast. In its role as capital of the Austrian Empire, its involvement has been mainly with the Danubian lands. Although Munich and Zurich are smaller cities with historically more local regional associations, both, by virtue of their proximity to the Alpine passes, have been more open to influences coming from the south.

Although often lacking cohesion historically, and prone to looking in different directions, west-central Europe constitutes the third regional leg of our inner zone. The German-speaking lands have always been full, if not leading, participants in the advancement of Western culture, science, and political

development. As such, it would be difficult to separate them from the West. Politically, this has been especially evident over the decades since World War II, as Germany—by far the major player in the region—has made partnership with the West the cornerstone of its national policy and identity. This has included rapprochement with its traditional western enemy, France, with which it has attempted to share leadership in the building of a larger European community.

The effect of German reunification since 1989 has been to draw the land and people of former East Germany, however painfully, out of their long isolation under socialist rule and into the western economy and life of the larger German nation. Despite the transfer of the German capital from Bonn, on the west bank of the Rhine, to the former capital of Berlin, a mere 50 kilometers from Germany's eastern frontier, and the lure of new markets and opportunities in east-central Europe, the postwar political and economic alignment



FIGURE 1.14. The new Reichstag. Originally opened in 1894, this controversial building survived World War II only as a hollowed-out shell of itself. Although restored after the war, the building lost its parliamentary function with the removal of the capital of West Germany to Bonn. Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, Berlin has once again become the capital city, and a newly refurbished Reichstag building, with a striking new glass dome, is the home of the German Parliament, or *Bundestag*.

of Germany with its western neighbors has not changed. What has changed, however, is perhaps an eastward shift of the center of gravity within what we have delimited as the Inner Zone of Europe proper. Germany's absorption of the formerly socialist *Länder* in the East, along with the absorption now of nearly all of east-central Europe into the EU, has made west-central Europe, and Germany in particular, a more important part of Europe's political and economic core than may have been the case just a decade or so ago.

EUROPE PROPER: THE OUTER ZONE

East-Central Europe

East-central Europe is the region within which the Germanic and the Slavic cultures have historically met. Once almost wholly Slavic, much of the region became Germanized during the medieval "Drang nach Osten," when large numbers of German crusaders, merchants, landowners, and peasants settled here. Some of the territory became part of the German and Austrian empires, but even in other parts of the region Germans came to dominate the economy and to define high culture. The deep penetration of Germans and German culture into this region contributed to the idea of *Mittleuropa*, which came into fashion among German geographers following the unification of Germany in 1871. The term was used to mean "greater Germany," a vast German Folk Area (*Volksgebiet*) centered on Berlin and Vienna and including nearly all of what we define here as west-central and east-central Europe. The notion provided an important rationale for German political expansionism, which brought on the two great world wars. However, with the defeat of Nazi Germany and the forced migration of millions of ethnic Germans out of east-central Europe, the *raison d'être* for *Mittleuropa* was largely laid to rest.

Language was not all that divided the German invaders from the indigenous population, however. While the Germans, except in the Austrian south, turned to Protestantism during the Reformation, the Slavs remained Catholic or were reconverted during the

Counter-Reformation. From the 14th century on, the region also became home to large numbers of Jews who found refuge from the pogroms of western Europe in the lands of more enlightened east European rulers such as Casimir the Great of Poland. Thus, before World War II very large numbers of ethnic Germans and Jews lived in these eastern territories. Almost all of the Jews died in Hitler's extermination camps. After the war some 12–13 million ethnic Germans were forcibly ejected from their homes and resettled in the West, and only a tiny minority live in east-central Europe today (e.g., 500,000 in Poland). These two separate acts of "ethnic cleansing" increased the Catholic and Slavic dominance in the region and thus gave it far more cultural unity than it ever previously possessed.

More than the regions we have discussed so far, east-central Europe lacks clear urban foci. After the partition of Poland in the late 18th century, the great imperial capitals of the East—Berlin, Vienna, and Moscow—all lay beyond its borders. Prague was a great city in the Middle Ages when it served for a time as the seat of the Holy Roman Empire, but its incorporation into the Austrian Empire greatly reduced its status. Budapest rose to prominence in the late 19th century when the Hungarians were given "equal" status with the Austrians in the new Dual Monarchy, but the breakup of the empire following World War I was to leave the city with little territorial influence. The only other candidate for leadership is Warsaw. However, since Warsaw was not made capital of the powerful Polish-Lithuanian state until the late 16th century, the city on the Vistula never achieved more than national importance.

Today the states of this region look to the European Union to give them focus. For decades during the long postwar period of socialist rule, there was a sort of nostalgia for a bygone "central Europe," which was kept alive for the most part by exiles from the region living in the West. This nostalgia was of a romanticized central Europe of the Hapsburg era, rather than of the German ideal of a *Mittleuropa*. After the fall of communism there was some talk of a renewed central European identity and a number of

efforts at regional cooperation were initiated between some of the states in the region, but this sentiment seems to have died away before a wave of enthusiasm for joining the EU and becoming part of the West. Nonetheless, even with the accession now of nearly the entire region to the EU, east-central Europe will likely remain a distinctive European region by virtue of the differences in culture and economy between these countries and the rest of the EU.

The one anomaly within the region is Kaliningrad, the isolated piece of Russian territory situated on the Baltic coast between Poland and Lithuania. Kaliningrad oblast consists of the port city of Kaliningrad and its immediate hinterland, and has a population of just under a million. Until the end of World War II, the area, part of the province known as East Prussia, belonged to Germany, and the city was known as Königsberg. After the war East Prussia was partitioned

between Poland and the Soviet Union, the German population moved out and in the Soviet part was replaced with Russians. Under Soviet rule, Kaliningrad became an important industrial city and, as the Soviet Union's only ice-free Baltic port, the home of the Russian Baltic Sea Fleet, a function it still retains. Today, Kaliningrad stands out strikingly from the rest of east-central Europe. It has become an enclave of smuggling and other illicit activities, industrial decay, unimaginably difficult pollution problems, and abject economic ruin. Even by Russian standards Kaliningrad is poor, having one of the worst economies in the Russian Federation. It has become surrounded entirely by countries that have been successful in raising their political systems and economies to a level acceptable for membership in the EU. As a lone and troubled Russian outpost, it is likely to remain outside the mainstream of development and a source of concern for its



FIGURE 1.15. Budapest. The capital of Hungary and one of the largest cities of east-central Europe, Budapest straddles the Danube just as the river passes through the hills of western Hungary and opens onto the vast Hungarian Plain. It consists of two parts: Buda on one bank is the old medieval center; Pest on the other bank is the newer, more commercial, part of the city. This view looks upstream from the castle hill in Buda with the neo-Gothic-style Parliament building on the right in Pest. The city gained a reputation during the socialist years for its openness to Western influences, which in turn gave it a head start in making the transition to a Western-style market economy.

east-central European neighbors and for Europe as a whole.

Nordic and Baltic Europe

The core of this far northern region is Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), whose peoples speak very closely related Germanic languages. In the Viking period the Norwegians extended Scandinavian settlement far out into the Atlantic (the Færoes, Iceland, and Greenland), and in the early Middle Ages the Swedes gained political domination over most of the Finnish population to the east and established Swedish colonies east of the Gulf of Bothnia. Denmark later gained control of Norway and its possessions, while Sweden extended its empire into the lands of the Estonians and Latvians. Thus, the Scandinavians have historically faced in two directions: the Norwegians, and until recently the Danes, have looked to the west, while the Swedes have been concerned with the east. This “bipolar” Norden, with Copenhagen and Stockholm as its two foci, persisted from the end of the Middle Ages to the early 20th century when, first Norway (1905), then Finland (1917), and later Iceland (1944) gained complete independence.

After centuries of war between Danes and Swedes, the peoples of northern Europe began to foster cooperation among themselves in the 19th century and following World War II. Especially important in this process was the founding in 1952 of the Nordic Council, an international consultative body dedicated to promoting a spirit of cooperation and mutual self-interest within the broad areas of cultural, political, and economic affairs. Also important was the reinforcement of this effort in 1971 through the creation of the Nordic Council of Ministers to serve as an intergovernmental vehicle for cooperation in specific policy areas. The Nordic Council and Council of Ministers have done much to promote the concept of Norden and its definition as the five Nordic states plus the three autonomous areas of the Færoes, Greenland, and Åland. These efforts have led to the establishment of many common institutions, such as a passport union, common labor market, common diplomatic

representation, and a common stance in the United Nations, as well as a rather comfortable sense that Nordic institutions and culture represent a sensible alternative to what goes on elsewhere in Europe.

Now that three of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, and Finland) belong to the EU and two (Norway and Iceland) do not, the future of the Nordic Council and of Nordic identity and unity has been called into question. Some have even pointed to signs of a crisis of confidence. Growing integration with Europe threatens to reduce the sense of Nordic distinctiveness. It replaces the belief in a “Nordic alternative” with a sense that the region has now become peripheral to an increasingly dominant European core and as such needs to find new ways to assert itself. The answer seems to lie, in part, with the Baltic, which has emerged since the breakup of the Soviet Union as an attractive new focal point for regional identity and cooperation in northern Europe.

At least two of the Baltic republics (Estonia and Latvia) now appear to be moving toward becoming integral parts of an expanded Nordic/Baltic realm, although their addition also serves to highlight historic East–West differences in orientation between the Nordic states. The interest in generating ties with the Baltic republics, which have now also become new members of the EU, has come mainly from eastward-facing Finland, Sweden, and Denmark. Estonia is the most easily integrated of the Baltic republics. The Estonians are close cultural relatives of the Finns, and Finland has been quite active in promoting economic development in that country since independence. More questionable is the position of Latvia. The Latvian language is related to Lithuanian (both are Baltic), but Latvians, like Estonians, have historically been mainly Lutherans. A further complication is the large number of ethnic Russians still living in Latvia. They are not Russian citizens, but, since independence, have been having difficulty getting Latvian citizenship. The same is true, of course, of ethnic Russians in Estonia. Because of the long involvement of the capital and port city of Riga in Baltic affairs, however, it seems reasonable to include Latvia also in what we

have termed Nordic and Baltic Europe. Because of its Catholic religion, long historic ties with Poland, and considerable Polish minority, the third Baltic republic and new EU member, Lithuania, fits fairly comfortably into our east-central Europe region.

The Western Mediterranean

This region consists of two peninsulas, the Iberian and the Italian. The situation of the Iberian Peninsula in Europe bears some striking similarities to that of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Both have for most of history lain outside the mainstream of European life. Just as the peoples of Scandinavia have looked both to the west and to the east, so have those of Iberia. At the close of the Middle Ages, when the Reconquista (reconquest of the peninsula from the Moors) had been completed, Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, became increasingly involved in the trade and politics of Italy, and the southern part of Italy fell under Spanish domination. The Portuguese, on the other hand, pioneered the navigation of the Atlantic and established the colony that would grow into the fifth-largest country in the world (Brazil). Castile joined in the great venture across the western ocean when Isabel agreed to underwrite Christopher Columbus's epic voyage in 1492. The position of Castilian

(Spanish) as a world language is a legacy of this venture.

Both the Italian and the Iberian Peninsulas are culturally diverse, but almost everyone except the Basques, who occupy a small region in the north of Spain, speaks a language derived from Latin, and both areas have historically been centers of Roman Catholic orthodoxy. That conservatism has drastically changed in the past few decades, however, and it is revealing that today, because of widespread family planning, Spain and Italy are two of the countries with the lowest fertility rates in the world.

The cultural diversity of the western Mediterranean has manifested itself in the granting of autonomy to a large number of regions. Spain is completely divided into 17 autonomous regions, while in Italy autonomy has been granted to five regions. These are the culturally distinctive islands of Sicily and Sardinia, two regions in the northeast, one with a large German-speaking population and one with a significant Friulian minority, and one, French-speaking, in the northwest. Spanish regional autonomy is the result mainly of pressure from the Catalans and Basques, who have historically felt the greatest oppression from the Castilian center but to some extent also from the Galicians.

There is also great economic diversity within the region. The contrast in wealth between northern Italy and the Mezzogiorno, the popular name since the 18th century for the south of Italy, is enormous. There are even some voices in the north that have called for secession from Italy because of the perceived burden on the north of supporting an "indigent" south. Even culturally the Po Basin is far closer to the "European heartland" than the Mezzogiorno, as our inclusion of the Milan and Turin regions in that area indicates. The contrast is not quite so great in Spain, but Andalusia is far less well off than Catalonia. A recent boom in "Sun Belt" high-tech economic development has been instrumental in drawing parts of the region together. The main beneficiaries are the cities that form an arc following the Mediterranean coast from Catalonia through the south of France and down into western Italy as far as Rome. Known variously as the



FIGURE 1.16. Neste service station in Narva. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, car owners in the Estonian border city of Narva have been able to gas up at this modern Neste service station. Like many other Finnish companies, Neste has invested heavily in Estonia, as well as in Poland and Russia.



FIGURE 1.17. Tower of Belém.

Built in 1515–1521 as a fortress to protect the entrance to the Tagus River, the Tower of Belém is a symbol of Portugal's historic orientation to the western seas and its seminal role in the great maritime discoveries of the 16th century. The building is decorated in a late Gothic style peculiar to Portugal, known as Manueline.

“Latin Crescent,” “Med Arc” or “Second Banana,” economic cooperation and development along this strip has made it one of the fastest-growing areas in Europe.

Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe comprises the two republics of Ukraine and Belarus and the European part of Russia. Russia, of course, also embraces territory in Asia—more, in fact, than in Europe. Siberia is, however, treated here not as a part of Europe proper but rather as a peripheral region. These three republics, though independent, are linked to nine other former Soviet republics through membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The CIS was proclaimed by the leaders of the three Slavic republics on December 8, 1991, at the same time the death of the USSR was formally announced.

The region is East Slavic in language and historically Orthodox in religion and thus has more cultural unity than the other regions we have discussed. As we have already pointed out, the most prominent cultural boundary in Europe is that between Western and Eastern Christianity. Orthodoxy has long stood on the eastern boundary of Christendom where it was most open to Asian, principally Muslim, influences. From the middle of the 13th to the end of the 14th century, the Rus-

sian principalities endured what came to be known as the “Mongol Captivity,” giving rise to the myth that, because of this Asian legacy of despotism, Russians could not truly understand democracy and thus lay outside the European realm. During the early 18th century, Peter the Great, keenly aware of this perception of his people, opened Russia to ideas from western Europe in an attempt to “modernize” his country. While much of his work was successful, significant portions of Russian society, including the Orthodox Church, resisted his reforms. Because of the rift with Western Christendom and long interaction with Asian cultures, eastern Europe, together with the Balkans, demonstrates the smallest number of culture traits we have defined as European.

The region's focus is unquestionably Moscow, which became the capital of an expanding Russian empire in the 16th century and remained the political heart of the region until Peter the Great built his new capital, St. Petersburg, on the shore of the Baltic Sea in the early 18th century. Moscow's prominence was reestablished after the Bolshevik revolution with the return of capital functions, and the city continues today to be the major urban focus, not just of Russia but of most of the former USSR. St. Petersburg, Peter's “window on the west,” has been historically just that: eastern Europe's point of contact

with the rest of the realm. To most Russians it seems far too “western,” especially visually, ever to vie with Moscow as the center of the region.

Eastern Europe today continues to grapple with the conversion from a centrally planned to a “free-market” economy. Most obvious to the visitor in Moscow are the tremendous contrasts in level of prosperity. As we shall see, there is also ample evidence of new investment and wealth, much of it, however, gained by illicit means in Russia’s virtually unregulated capitalist economy.

The Balkans

The Balkans constitutes the poorest region we have yet discussed. Over the past decade or so the region has been highly unstable politically, in large part due to the efforts of the new nationalist Serbian government (then the Republic of Yugoslavia, now known as Serbia) to create an ethnically pure Serbian state at the expense of neighboring Bosnians, Croats, and Kosovars. Linguistically the region is highly varied, and this, of course, is one reason for the political instability. It is, however, religion that is at the root of the ethnic strife. Although dominantly Eastern Orthodox in religion, the Balkans contains substantial Muslim minorities, the result of centuries of dominance by the Ottoman



FIGURE 1.18. Moscow. The city of Moscow was founded here along the banks of the Moskva River in the 13th century. The early settlement, sheltered alongside the Kremlin citadel, grew to be the capital of Muscovy, and eventually a Russian Empire that covered large parts of two continents. The Kremlin walls, shown here along the river embankment, encircle the historic administrative and religious center of the city.

Turks. The Roman Catholic communities, most located just to the north, further complicate the picture. Even as the Russians in the 18th century were attempting their rapprochement with the West, the peoples of the Balkans were still largely cut off from cultural developments in the rest of Europe by their inclusion in the dying Ottoman Empire. Not until the 20th century did many of the ideas we have earlier defined as “European” penetrate this region.

The Balkans has no clear focus. Under the Turks the political capital was Istanbul (then Constantinople), but this city today is in the Turkish Republic, which we treat below as part of the Southeastern Periphery. Greece, as the richest country in the region would seem to be the natural focus, and Athens is the largest city in the region. The Greeks have, in fact, invested fairly heavily in Bulgaria and have taken up the slack left by western European companies that have been leery of investment in the region as a whole. Some parts of Greece have long had strong connections with the lands that directly lie to the north. Thessalonica is closer to Sofia than it is to Athens.

Greece has a real problem, however, in playing the role of leader in the region. First, the Greeks do not like to be associated with the term *Balkan*, even though they brought the Eastern Orthodox religion to the other Balkan peoples. They regard themselves as the heirs of classical Greek culture and see the peoples of the rest of the Balkans as culturally inferior. Second, they are too much at odds with their neighbors to be credible in a leadership role. Confrontation rather than diplomacy has most often been the route taken by the Greek government in its approach to disputes.

A case in point is that of Macedonia. With the breakup of the state of Yugoslavia, Catholic Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence. Fearful of total Serbian domination, both Bosnia and Macedonia declared theirs. Macedonia, in particular, was in need of international recognition, but the Greeks made every effort to block this attempt because they could not tolerate an independent state bearing the name of a region sacred in Greek history as the birthplace of both So-

crates and Alexander the Great. This incident was seen in the rest of the EU as more evidence of Balkan pettiness, and the Greek government was chastised severely for it. Nevertheless, in deference to the Greeks, the country is now known officially as “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” and while spokespersons for the EU are careful to use this term, it is clear that they regard the Greek position as deplorably small-minded.

Another case is that of Turkey. The enmity of the Greeks toward the Turks goes back, of course, to the Turks’ long subjugation of the Greeks within the Ottoman Empire. So bitter was the feeling on both sides that massive population exchanges were arranged between the two countries after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The situation of Cyprus, where one-fifth of the population is Turkish and the rest Greek, has long kept the sores open. This has been the case since a coup on the southern and predominantly Greek side of the island during the early 1970s provoked a Turkish occupation of the north. This led to a partition of the island into a Greek–Cypriot Republic of Cyprus (internationally recognized) and a Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (recognized only by Turkey). Only now with Cyprus’s recent admission as a member of the EU does there seem to be a chance for a healing process that may reunify the island after 30 years of discord and for a grudging acceptance of the fact by the Greek and Turkish governments.

THE EUROPEAN PERIPHERY

Beyond the boundaries of the European realm, as we have delimited it, lie four regions that may be considered transitional to the non-European world. These regions either contain large numbers of Europeans in their populations or have contributed significant numbers of their own populations to Europe. Although they lie outside the focus of this book, and only occasionally figure into our discussion, it is important to recognize their presence. One is Siberia, an integral part of the Russian state but clearly also a part of the landmass commonly under-

stood as Asia. Two regions, Western Turkestan and the Southeastern Periphery (Turkey and Transcaucasia), include territories that were formerly parts of the Soviet Union, and the last of these regions, the Maghreb, is a former colonial domain of France.

Siberia

It can be argued that Siberia, Asiatic Russia, constitutes a culture region of its own. Like Anglo-America and Latin America, it may be thought of as a neo-European realm. This vast region was absorbed into the Russian Empire between the middle of the 16th and end of the 17th centuries. It was during this same period that the Spanish, French, and British were building their American empires. The only real difference between Siberia and the Americas is that the colonies in the latter were separated from their mother countries by a large ocean and were eventually able to assert their independence.

Culturally the situation in Siberia is similar to that in Anglo-America. The indigenous population, largely Turkic-speaking, was sparse, and the institutions and language of the region became, and remain, those of the mother country. As in Canada, the population is highly concentrated along the southern border of the region, especially along the routes of the Trans-Siberian and Baykal-Amur rail lines. The indigenous population is scattered in the vast lands of the Arctic north, particularly in the basin of the Lena River.

Western Turkestan

“Turkestan” is an old regional name applied to the largely Turkic-speaking, Muslim parts of inner Asia (*stan* is an Iranian word meaning “country”). During the Soviet period the western part of this region was known as Kazakhstan and central Asia. The eastern part lies mainly in the Chinese province of Xinjiang, the home of the Turkic Uighur people. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union the five former republics of western Turkestan have declared their independence. The native peoples of four, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, are linguisti-

cally Turkic, while the people of the fifth, Tajikistan, are Iranian.

Under the Soviets the pressures of Russification were strong. Russian was the language of the schools, and the native languages all received Cyrillic scripts. In addition, large numbers of Russians and Ukrainians moved into the region, especially into northern Kazakhstan, where the Soviets established a major iron and steel center on the Karaganda coalfield. Communist ideology, including atheism, was here, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, a staple of the educational system. Despite the antireligious propaganda of the Soviet period, however, Islam survived and is now enjoying a revival, much as Christianity is in eastern Europe. Thus western Turkestan forms a cultural bridge between Europe and the Islamic world.

The Southeastern Periphery

This region, containing the four states of Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, provides another such bridge. Turkey and Azerbaijan are secular states with populations that are nearly 100% Muslim. Armenia and Georgia are very old Christian states. Georgia is Eastern Orthodox; Armenia has its own separate Apostolic (Monophysite) Church. Armenians are generally ostracized by the other three populations. There has been some rapprochement between Turkey and Azerbaijan, but the Turks belong to the Sunni sect, which dominates the Islamic world, while the Azeris are Shiites, their bitter rivals. Thus, even though the governments of both countries are secular, doctrinal differences pose some problems. Also, the Caucasus region contains literally hundreds of peoples who are ethnically distinct from the four major groups.

The Turks are by far the most numerous people in the region. They are also the best represented within the European core (especially in Germany), where several million reside today as a result of the guest worker migrations initiated during the early 1970s. One can argue that the Turks are neither fully European nor fully Middle Eastern but take an intermediate position between the two cultures. The Turks are an Altaic

people, closely related to those of inner Asia, whence they originally came. In the 13th century they invaded the Byzantine Empire and in 1453 dealt it a final deathblow when they seized Constantinople. Rather than accepting the legacy of Greek culture, however, the Turks have vehemently rejected it. After finally subduing the city of Constantinople in 1453, Mehmed the Conqueror declared that he had avenged the Trojans by defeating the Greeks. The long-standing bitter rivalry between Turks and Greeks remains the principal problem in the Aegean region.

Nonetheless, the Turkish intelligentsia today firmly believes that the future of Turkey lies with Europe. On the other hand, as a Muslim, non-Indo-European society, little touched by European philosophy, many (especially the Greeks) would argue that the Turks do not belong in the European family. It is true that they did not share in the great European intellectual movements of the 15th through the 18th centuries, but neither, it should be remembered, did those Balkan subject peoples of the Ottoman Empire whom we unhesitatingly call European today.

If the Turks are not Europeans, then, who are they? They certainly do not fit comfortably with the Islamic peoples of the Middle East. Modern Turkish national identity is a creation of the Ottoman elite of the 19th century and the Kemalist Republicans who seized power from them in the early 1920s. This nationalism is neither strongly Islamic nor ethnically Turkish. The Ottoman rulers, in spite of their political power, were always viewed by the Arabs as inferior newcomers to Islam and, as such, were marginalized in the Muslim world. It is therefore natural that the Republicans who shaped modern Turkey would promote a secular ideology that prioritized the state over religion and rejected a society organized exclusively on religious principles. Religion was made a private matter, personalized, individualized, and secularized, much as Christianity was during the European Enlightenment. The growth of Turkish Islamist movements since the 1980s has not done much to change this situation. In spite of their anti-Western stance, most Islamists accept the need for coexistence with the institutions and values of the secular establish-



FIGURE 1.19. Monument of the Republic. Erected in 1928 in the center of Istanbul's sprawling Taksim Square, this monument commemorates the birth of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's modern Turkish Republic. The soldiers with flags, who stand on either side of the monument, symbolize Atatürk's motto of "Peace at home, peace abroad." One is an unknown soldier who guards the Turkish nation, the other a soldier of peace.

ment and reject the kind of fundamentalism evident in some Arab countries and in Iran.

We would argue here that the Turks are more European than Middle Eastern and that their future lies with Europe. The greatest danger is that the Europeans will reject them. This has happened a number of times, and as we shall see was repeated again when Turkey was left out of the most recent expansions of the EU. Turkey is not being offered any concrete assurances of accession in the near future despite recent Turkish efforts to institute a host of legal and political reforms that bring them close to meeting the minimal democratic norms required of applicants for EU membership.

The Maghreb

For the Arab conquerors and bearers of Islam this was the "land of the setting sun" (*maghreb*), the far western reaches of the empire they established during the seventh and eighth centuries across North Africa, the Middle East, and into south Asia. Most of the region was conquered by the Ottomans in the 16th century, but in the 19th and early 20th centuries much of it became a part of the French colonial empire, and it is this association that links the three countries of the Maghreb—Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia—to Europe today. During the colonial period well over a million French citizens moved

into the region, especially Algeria, where they became a vital part of the economy and established the French language as a *lingua franca*.

Although all three states achieved independence after World War II and most of the French returned home, the ties with France have remained strong. Almost 1.5 million Arabic speakers live in France today, the great majority of them from the Maghreb. All three countries have expressed an interest in joining the European Union, although economic and other problems would seem to indicate that EU membership lies quite a long way down the road. A ray of hope for the Maghreb states did appear in March 1998, however, when Tunisia attained associate status with the EU. The potential for unity in the region is underscored by the Arab Maghreb Union (including also Libya), which was established in the late 1980s but has been largely inactive since. Both Tunisia and Morocco have recently encouraged its revival. Like western Turkestan and the Southeastern Periphery, this region provides a bridge between Europe and the Islamic world.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EUROPE: IDEA AND REALITY

Since their emergence in the ancient Greek world, conceptions of "Europe" have had a

long, complex, and multilayered history, the course of which we could only briefly survey here. While the name “Europe” has been around for almost three millennia, what it designates has always been an evolving reality, as much as a dynamic idea. Defining Europe is more than an intellectual or academic exercise: What “Europe” means, what it is or should be, who or what belongs or does not belong to it, what role the region should play in the world, are topics for discussion and debates that continue to inform decisions and actions both within the region and throughout the world.

Surely knowledge about Europe matters a great deal for achieving any understanding of our contemporary world. Indeed, and for better or worse, the region has contributed enormously—some would say, disproportionately considering its areal size and share of the world’s population—to influencing or shaping the lives of people worldwide. Leaving aside the region’s contribution to material culture and technology, we should at least note that most of the core ideas and processes that govern contemporary globalization were European innovations. They were tested first in the region before diffusing to virtually all corners of the world where they were often adapted to new settings and circumstances. As a result of Europe’s past expansionism and world dominance, and the historical migration of millions of Europeans overseas, vast areas now speak or practice European languages and religions. The ideas of “democracy” and “human rights” or the phenomenon we call “nation” are prime examples of European inventions in the social, cultural, and political realms that now fuel the hopes and fears of billions. The birthplace of capitalism, Europe was the launching pad of the processes that have led to our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world economy, joined only in the second half of the 20th century by the other two avatars in a leading “Global Triad” of “Western” civilization, the United States and Japan.

This, however, does not mean we should adopt the stance of blind Eurocentrism, understood as an exaggerated and exclusive focus on a presumed preeminence of Europe and its historical and cultural influences. Nor should we assume that there is or has always

been any such thing as a single, integrated Europe. In so many global perspectives and comparisons, the name “Europe” tends to suggest a uniform, cohesive, and almost homogeneous area and culture. One important ambition of this book is to qualify such superficial or convenient perceptions by focusing not only on what currently gives the idea of Europe meaning, but also on the very real diversity and complexity of the contemporary European scene. As geographers we do so by examining what life is like for Europeans today; that is, we seek to understand how Europeans perceive and interact with their immediate physical surroundings, how they culturally, socially and politically define themselves and the places where they live and work, and how in these places they go about negotiating the routines of work and play that make up their daily lives. We also pay careful attention to the past, employing a historical perspective whenever appropriate to illuminate the present. From this book, we hope that readers will gain a broadly based and nuanced appreciation of Europe and its people.

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