1. New consolidated regional geographies

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Region and territory have been major keywords of geographical thinking, methodology and research practice since the institutionalization of geography as an academic discipline at the end of the nineteenth century. Even before this, region and territory were fundamental categories, with some authors tracing the roots of Regional Geography to classical Greece (Claval 1998). However, it is in the modern era where Regional Geography was, for a long time, presented in many states as the crown of the discipline and a critical subarea for Geography's disciplinary identity (Peet 1998; Agnew 2018). But what is a region? How are they constructed? How do regions relate to territory? Are regions and territories still relevant in today's modern world characterized by all kinds of flows and networks? How are regions and territories affected and shaped by social forces? What does it mean to study the geographies of regions and territories? What does the future hold for these spatial categories? These are just some of the key questions which have shaped the long intellectual history of regions and territories in geography, and are as relevant today as they have ever been.

This is not to say that region and territory have been the exclusive domain of Geography and geographers. Both concepts feature prominently in history, international relations theory, area studies, political science, philosophy, cultural anthropology, legal studies, organizational studies, and so on. They are, in modern parlance, interdisciplinary concepts but with this comes often stark differences in how regions are conceptualized and mobilized by scholars working from different disciplines and perspectives. While the idea of the region is most commonly associated with the subnational scale, the regional concept has since its inception been used to refer to all spatial scales, ranging from the very local to the international. You are just as likely to hear the term region applied to a subnational scale (e.g. the north-west region in England, the northern Ostrobothnia region of Finland) as you are to a supranational scale (e.g. the Middle East region, Barents region). With this comes an appreciation that region and territory have important utility across disciplines, scales and contexts. It also highlights how both concepts are mobilized differently by scholars – for example, international relations scholars and area studies specialists tend to associate regions with spatial units larger than an individual state, often referring to assemblies of several states (Söderbaum 2003) – but also by people in their everyday lives (Entrikin 2018; Terlouw 2018), and in places and settings which demonstrate the increased utility of region and territory in different social, political and cultural realms (Paasi and Metzger 2017).

1.2 REGIONS AND TERRITORIES: HISTORY, TRADITION, PROGRESS

To account for the changing geographies of regions and territories it is, as Thrift (1994) neatly put it, necessary ‘to go back’ before we can move ‘forward’. History and tradition are integral to the study of regions and territory. To this end, we begin by tracing the evolving geographies of regions and territories through five distinct chronological phases. Yet we want to emphasize that the development of the conceptual basis in the research of regions and territories has by no means been an undisputed, straightforward evolutionary trajectory; such conceptual basis is a dynamic field characterized by theoretical struggles and ruptures. New concepts are invented incessantly. Some concepts have been used long-lastingly, some others abandoned permanently, while some others have been adopted once again after being rejected earlier from dominant discourses. It is also crucial to note that conceptual developments never occur *in vacuo* but in relation to wider economic and structural developments, societal interests of knowledge, and general philosophical and methodological developments. At times, these developments resonate with major societal upheavals like wars and ethnic conflicts (cf. Paasi 2011).

1.2.1 Traditional Regional Geography

This is the ‘classical’ period of regional geography, which existed during the long nineteenth century and continued into the early part of the twentieth century. It is important to remember that during this period regional geography was the crown of the geography discipline – the critical backbone for its academic identity. Integral to this in many national contexts was the link from regional geography to empire, the environment and maps. Rapid colonial exploration and the exploitation of continental interiors had placed a premium on acquiring regionally specific geographical knowledge. The foundations of regional geography thus came in surveying and mapping the features (topography, species, climate) of hitherto unexplored places to understand how imperial nations and merchants could establish and protect commercial and political interests there. Similar techniques were important in the nation-building processes of many emerging national states. It was in these traditions that regions were intimately connected to mapping and territory. Here, regions were typically regarded as absolute entities, with the surface of the Earth divided into distinct regions at various scales – be they ‘climatic regions’ (Herbertson 1902), ‘paysages’ (regional landscapes) or ‘*genres de vie*’ (regional lifestyles) (Vidal de la Blache 1918) or ‘human regions’ (Fleure 1919) – to create a world of different geographical types, and a framework through which geographical inquiry could be conducted.

Whereas the link to empire and the environment established the disciplinary foundations for regional geography, the decline of empire and the demise of environmental determinism in the early part of the twentieth century saw geography lose ground to emergent, widely regarded as more scientific and more relevant, subjects such as economics, sociology and meteorology. As the title indicates, in 1939, Richard Hartshorne’s *The Nature of Geography – A Critical Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past* was an earlier forerunner to Thrift’s (1994) mantra of ‘go back’ to move ‘forward’. Critiquing earlier accounts which focused on climate, in the case of Herbertson, or culture, with Fleure, Hartshorne argued that none of these regional geographies on their own were sufficient

for advancing regional study. Hartshorne proposed a more elaborate, all-encompassing, regional geography of 'areal differentiation', which was based on the synthesis of all types of regional knowledge. What made geography exceptional, Hartshorne argued, was that at its core it was a regional discipline, which through idiographic methods could comprehend local variations that saw the earth's surface subdivided into distinct unit areas.

1.2.2 Regional Science

The backlash to this came in the 1950s–1960s with the birth of regional science. Regional science killed off traditional regional geography as an idiographic discipline, arguing instead for a nomothetic (law-producing) approach. This owed much to the 'locational school' and the connection of economics, geography and planning that had been established in the wake of the Second World War. Assisted by the power of computation and a growing appetite for input-output techniques, linear modelling and gravity models, regional analysis centred on a quest to identify general ('scientific') laws to explain spatial behaviour. Seminal books by Walter Isard (1960) *Methods of Regional Analysis* and Peter Haggett (1965) *Locational Analysis in Human Geography* epitomized, on the one hand, a decline in place-based regional studies, yet, on the other hand, despite being often deployed in a discrete, bounded and uncritical way, regions provided the spatial backdrop also for this type of regional analysis because they continued to be 'one of the most logical and satisfactory ways of organizing geographic information' (Haggett 1965, p. 241). Regional geography as a subject has also continued its life in more or less traditional forms in geographic education and some themes of Northern American cultural geography, for example.

Until the 1960s the view on what a region is, was rather divided. As Minshull (1967, p. 13) observed, the region was either a 'mental device' needed in research or a 'real entity'. These views gave rise to questions such as how to discover regions, how to define regions, and how to describe regions. Most recent commentaries have suggested that the divide between mental device and real entities was simply false. This argument owes much to the new regional geography, which emerged in the 1980s.

1.2.3 New Regional Geography

Before the rise of new regional geography, regions were typically considered static and bounded territorial units, even if the representatives of regional science highlighted their functional nature (Haggett 1965). Current ways of thinking recognize that regions are produced and transformed through various forms of agency. Regions must be understood as social constructs based on social practice and discourse, and this is the real basis to evaluate their roles and functions. For what the new regional geography has done is to change the attitude towards regions from focusing on regions themselves, to social practices through which regions are constructed, gain their meanings, are reproduced, and ultimately destroyed or abandoned as part of wider socio-spatial transformations. This approach prerequisites that regions should be understood historically and their existence understood in relation to wider political, economic and governmental transformations as well as power relations. In general regions are now regarded as open or porous rather than strictly bounded *territories*, and such a relational point has become almost a new norm in regional thinking since the 1990s. As Allen et al. (1998, p. 2) encapsulate it:

[Regional] studies are always done for a purpose, with a specific aim in view. Whether theoretical, political, cultural or whatever, there is always a specific purpose. One cannot study everything, and there are always multiple ways of seeing a place: there is no complete “portrait of a region”. Moreover, we want to argue, “regions” only exist in relation to particular criteria. They are not “out there” waiting to be discovered; they are our (and others’) constructions.

Aligned to this, Gilbert (1998) outlined how regions were variously the product of local responses to capitalist processes, the focus on cultural identification, and the medium for social interaction (‘meeting points’) for human agency and social structures. Characterizing the new regional geography was the coming together of previously isolated subdisciplines (economic, social, political, cultural, historical) and philosophical approaches (Marxism, humanism, critical social theory, realism) in geography through a shared interest and common ground in a (re)new(ed) geography of regions (MacLeod and Jones 2001).

As the case of the European Union and many other supra-state regions effectively display, regions are increasingly ‘invented’ in planning offices and political decision-making processes, thus moving from loose ideas to wider, often normative discourses, then appearing in maps and ultimately shaping wider spatial politics. Such regions may be labelled as new regions whereas old regions tend to institutionalize slowly as part of the unfolding socio-spatial divisions of labour. A further distinction can be made here, where ‘old’ refers to regions which are territorially embedded, historical, established parts of planning and governance (e.g. UK regions, German *Länder*), and ‘new’ identifies typically ad hoc, project-based regions operating across less-determinate geographies often aimed at developing or increasing the competitiveness of the region (Paasi 2009).

Integral to the new regional geography was the combination of space and time. One solution for understanding the dimensions of region-building processes, that is, how regions emerge, gain meaning, are reproduced, and eventually disappear, was the theory of regional institutionalization. This theory abstracted four stages of mutually constituting, reciprocal and recursive processes through which regions become institutionalized as a recognizable ‘territorial unit’ and spatial division of society: (1) *territorial shaping*: the formation of boundaries, which can vary from ‘soft’ to ‘hard’, practically open and insignificant to more or less closed; (2) *symbolic shaping*: the invention of power-laden cultural signifiers (naming, traditions, memorabilia) and narratives to develop a collective identity, differentiating what is internal from that which is external; (3) *institutional shaping*: the creation of vehicles or mechanisms, both formal and informal, to embed and entrench these processes; and (4) *region established*: the institutionalization of a region as a territorial unit in the spatial matrix and social consciousness of society, accompanying the de-institutionalization of some other regional – or other spatial – unit(s) (Paasi 1986).

1.2.4 New Regionalism

Overtaking these debates, the 1990s saw the rise to prominence of a new regionalism. Working hand-in-glove with globalization discourses, this new regionalism became the poster child for how, *contra* earlier globalist accounts documenting an era of global deconcentration and deterritorialization, geography still mattered. Not only this, regions – not nations per se – were presented by the chief protagonists of the new regionalism as *the* territorial platform for economic success, democratic legitimacy, and social life

in twenty-first century global capitalism (Ohmae 1995; Storper 1997). It is important to note that at the same time IR scholars began speaking about a 'new regionalism', however, their spatial references were more often than not macro-regional – typically supra-state entities – and they were looking at various spatial forms of governance and the roles of civil society in shaping and building large-scale regional governance structures in a globalizing world (Söderbaum 2003; Fiarraconti 2014, Van Langenhove 2018).

At the centre of new regionalist debate in economic geography was a distinction between an economic and political logic for regionalism. Learning from the experiences of Silicon Valley (United States), Baden-Württemberg (Germany), and south-east England, among others, the economic logic drew on theories of agglomeration to explain why regions were emerging as competitive territories par excellence in this new era of globally oriented reflexive capitalism (Storper 1997). Fundamentally, information sharing and networking were seen to be replacing market-based competition, and regions – defined as localized economic agglomeration complexes – are the scale at which this occurs. The political argument centred on observations that a hollowing-out of the nation-state was taking place, with power being lost upwards through processes of Europeanization and internationalization, downwards through a resurgence in territorial identity, politics of assertion and devolution, and outwards through globalization and market forces challenging the very fabric of bounded entities (Keating 1998; Terlouw 2018).

During the mid- to late-1990s a new global policy discourse emerged around the new regionalism, linking the economic and political logic for regions in globalization (cf. Söderbaum 2003). Critics, however, argued that the new regionalism only offered a partial reading of unfolding patterns of regionalism and region-making. Lovering (1999) argued that the new regionalism told an 'attractive and persuasive story' but it was 'largely a fiction', while MacLeod and Jones (2001) drew attention to, among other shortcomings, a 'thin political economy' resulting from the absence of any sustained analysis of the state and the political economy of territory, scale and region-making. For Jones and MacLeod (2004) there was another problem: the economic and administrative geography of regions produces 'regional spaces', distinct from the political and cultural geography of regions which create 'spaces of regionalism'. Normative arguments saying that 'the region' is becoming the fundamental basis of economic, social and political life, or 'the region' is the ideal scale for policy intervention, were therefore challenged to consider 'which region?' The new regional geography taught us, regions are not out there waiting to be found; instead there are different ways of seeing 'the region' and their making such that it is more fruitful to talk about the 'geographies of regions' than a distinct 'regional geography'. As Ron Johnston (1991, p. 137) aptly put it, 'we do not need regional geography but we do need regions in geography'.

1.2.5 New Regional Worlds

Most recently, debate has centred on transitioning away from any one singular reading of region and territory, recognizing that these terms – as with most scientific terms – are perpetually transforming and subject to a growing plurality of philosophical, conceptual and methodological approaches in how they are developed, deployed and debated. As part of the evolution of the international, globalizing political landscape, academic scholars have launched many novel terms into the discussions on regions, territories and regionalism. New categories are doing much to broaden the spatial (city-region, cross-border region,

megaregion, panregional, polycentric region), economic (learning region, competitive region, creative region, resilient region), political (NUTS regions, supranational regions, geopolitical regions) and environmental (sustainable region, bioregion) debate (see Table 1.1). This mushrooming of widely circulated regional-conceptual hybrids in both academic literature and in practical planning circles witness how intellectual debates about the character of regions are embedded in complex and contestable socio-spatial dynamics.

Aligned to this, rather than privileging one kind of regionalism over another, new conceptual frameworks increasingly prioritize the coming together of different perspectives to shape regions and regional thinking. The most obvious example of this new way of thinking is Jessop et al.'s (2008; Jessop 2018) TPSN framework, which grasps the polymorphic, multidimensional character of region-making through simultaneously deploying the lexicon of territorial, place-based, scalar *and* networked geographies.

A further extension of this is derived from broadening horizons in regional thinking. Amplified globalization, especially following the collapse of the sharp dividing line between communist east and capitalist west, has contributed to the crushing of old regional patterns of socio-economic or cultural life and given rise to diverging social movements that want to revive or create new forms of economic, cultural and political identities. There is increased awareness and recognition of regions, territories and regionalism beyond the neoliberal heartlands of Anglo-American geography. Regional development and governance is a global challenge and new regional thinking is increasingly likely to emerge in the context of developments occurring in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and countries of the global South. Today, more than ever before, regional and territorial thinking is characterized by distinct regional worlds, diverse regional words, and decentred regional futures.

1.3 GLOBALIZATION AND THE REGIONAL RESURGENCE

1.3.1 Conceptualizing the Region – In What Sense Territorial?

As the previous section reveals, 'region' and 'territory' are integral to framing the world around us, but also to conceptualizing the other term. Moreover, the increasing economic, political and cultural complexities of the globalizing and networking world we live in mean that the geographies of places, regions and territories matter, now more than ever. At this moment, it is useful to briefly reflect on the difference conceptually between region and territory – the keywords of this collection.

There are significant dissimilarities between the connotations of the two terms, even if in the ordinary use of language – at times also in academic texts – they are oftentimes used as parallel terms. As with many other spatial terms, region and territory have several theoretical and practical undertones. Foucault (1980) once problematized spatial concepts and stated how territory is a geographical notion but first it is a juridico-political one. The Latin term *territorium* refers to specific land under the jurisdiction of a town or state. Region, for Foucault, was a fiscal, administrative and military notion, which stems from the Latin word *regio* that means direction. It is also derived from the Latin verb *regere*: to command or rule (Söderbaum 2003). In academic usage, both definitions are evidently in use.

A well-known theoretician of territory and territoriality Robert David Sack (1986) once suggested that all territories are regions but not all regions are territories. This argument is related to Sack's definition of territoriality which refers to the 'attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area' (Sack 1986, p. 19). Sack reminds that:

Circumscribing things in space, or on a map, as when a geographer delimits an area to illustrate where corn is grown, or where industry is concentrated, identifies places, areas, or regions in an ordinary sense, does not itself create a territory. This delimitation becomes a territory only when its boundaries are used to affect behaviour by controlling access. (Sack 1986, p. 19)

This control function and use of borders in control mean that such spatial entities or regions may be called the territory. An interesting question from the perspective of contemporary debates on relational spaces and open or porous borders is: how do we understand borders? Can the 'soft spaces' discussed by planning theorists have borders and, if they have, how should we understand them? Paasi and Zimmerbauer (2016) argue that the borders of regions must be seen not as mere lines but rather as spatio-temporal phenomena that can simultaneously be open and closed, depending on social practices and discourses that we are looking at.

Contrary to Sack's general ideas, for Elden (2013) territory is related above all to the State and state governance and he suggests that it consists of political-economic (land) and political-strategic (terrain) relations. Beyond these elements territory is also dependent on political-legal (law) and political-technical (calculative technologies) elements. He suggests that territory is thus part of a specific rationality that is a 'political technology' that is dependent on calculation as much as on control and conflict.

That territory is not merely a technocratic instrument of governance but is also related to social and individual identities becomes obvious in Hassner's (1997, p. 57) definition, covering a parallel element with debates on regional and place identities (see Entrikin 2018; Terlouw 2018). He notes that:

Territory is a compromise between a mythical aspect and a rational or pragmatic one. It is three things: a piece of land, seen as a sacred heritage; a seat of power; and a functional space. It encompasses the dimensions of identity . . . of authority (the state as an instrument of political, legal, police and military control over a population defined by its residence); and of administrative bureaucratic or economic efficiency in the management of social mechanisms, particularly of interdependence. . . The strength of the national territorial state depends upon combination of these three dimensions.

While the Latin term *regio(n)* comes from *regere* 'to rule, direct' 'direction, district', these meanings are only one dimension of regions which are usually mobilized not only in governance but also in economy, culture and politics.

The link between globalization, regional resurgence, and territory is also very evident. It is no exaggeration to suggest that both categories, region and territory, have experienced a renaissance. Since the 1980s these terms and their applications have been widely in use across the social sciences, from IR studies to political science, from anthropology to archaeology and economics. Several edited collections on regions have been recently published, typically with the intention to trace the evolution and perpetual transformation of regional thinking (Keating 2004; Entrikin 2008; Jones and Paasi 2015; Riding and Jones

2017). Similarly, territory has been an object of both conceptual-genealogical analysis (Elden 2013) and several efforts have been made to identify diverging scalar, practical and political meanings of territories and territoriality (Sack 1986; Storey 2001; Delaney 2005; Kolers 2009).

Debates on territories and regions have not been just academic exercises. Innumerable governmental bodies, committees and planning offices around the world have been involved in such debates and state and quasi-state governance arrangements incessantly are the key context for both sub- and supra-state regionalization and region-building efforts (Paasi and Metzger 2017). Much of the resurgence in regional-thinking can be traced back to the work undertaken by political geographers and political scientists in the 1970s and 1980s documenting regionalism as a political movement and insurgency demanding greater territorial autonomy (Rokkan and Urwin 1982). Set against the backdrop of ever-deepening processes of neoliberalism, globalization, and transnationalism, the rise of regionalist parties (e.g. the Lega Nord in Italy, SNP in Scotland) and the European Commission's advocacy of a 'Europe of the regions' led to a renewed focus on regions as singular, bounded, relatively fixed, non-overlapping political-administrative-governmental units articulated through the spatial grammar of *territory* and territoriality. However, the fact that the EU is ultimately supporting the power of states rather than regions becomes evident in the Catalanian plebiscite on 'independence' in autumn 2017. The EU supports the Spanish government rather than the Catalanian region, seemingly being worried about similar pro-independence tendencies in many European Union states.

During the 1980s, the conceptual link between region and territory was complicated as scholars became increasingly interested in *place* (and other terms such as locality). As Entrikin (2018) shows, place and related human experiences became prominent in the lexicon of regional geographers as social scientific thinking turned toward post-positivist approaches. Interpretative understanding of peoples and places (following Pred 1984) was integral to the development of the new regional geography and moves away from regions as static frameworks to regions as dynamic entities.

Likewise, a more controversial turn towards *scale* in 1980s and 1990s social scientific thinking was intimately linked to developments in regional thinking (Smith 1984; Herod 2011) and the new regionalism more precisely, both in geography and international relations studies. Attempts to understand the dynamics of how economic, social and political activity previously located at the national scale were increasingly being conducted at the regional (and other spatial) scale(s) was accompanied by a new vocabulary of geographical scale. Conceptual terminology, such as rescaling, multiscaled, politics of scale, scalar politics, multilevel governance, and global-local, became essential elements in attempts to account for the reterritorialization of capital and the state under conditions of deepening neoliberalism and globalization (Brenner 2004).

Multiscale territorial approaches were the cornerstone of the new regionalism and social scientific thinking in the late-1990s, but they faced a backlash in the early years of this century by the advance of *network* geographies. Seeing the world through the lens of relational thinking, front and centre of networked perspectives on the region was the insistence that regions, and space more generally, must be conceptualized as open, fluid and unbound; or to put it more bluntly, there is nothing useful in representing regions as 'territorially fixed in any essential sense' (Allen and Cochrane 2007, p. 1163). Relational thinking challenged the very essence of territorial regions and regionalism by

attempting to decouple the two terms. No longer were region and territory seen as two sides of the same conceptual coin; instead regions were being conceptualized as breaking free from the perceived constraints of territory and territorial thinking. For advocates of relational approaches to region-making (1) regions have no automatic promise of territorial integrity, (2) they cannot be communities in the truest sense of the term if they attach themselves to territorially defined or spatially limiting arrangements, (3) the conceptual vocabulary associated with territorial approaches to regionalism (scalar hierarchy, boundaries, borders) is limiting whereas the language of relational thinking (assembling, flow, connectivity, folding, topology) is better equipped to capture the dynamism of contemporary capitalism, and (4) any attempt to 'fix' spatial identities through policy intervention over-simplifies and therefore fails to engage with the world as it is.

This approach, in turn, produced again its own backlash from scholars who wished to retain regions and territories in geographical thinking and instead of confronting territorial and regional approaches wanted to scrutinize in more detail the nuances, interfaces and conceptual limits of such confrontations. For the next decade, a series of back-and-forth exchanges occurred between what Varró and Legendijk (2013) present as the 'radical relationalists' on the one side (those arguing to expunge regions, territories, and scale from the geographical lexicon) and the 'moderate relationalists' on the other side (those who concede that globalization and state restructuring are rendering regions more open and permeable, but counter that regionalism is also territorially defined and bounded in political space and we should never dismiss the role of territorial politics). Part of the problem in the first part of this century was the 'debilitating binary division' of territorial-scalar *or* networked-relational regionalism (Morgan 2007).

Today, the focus of regional and social scientific thinking is firmly centred on overcoming these binary divisions and reconciling regional geography within a territorial *and* relational world (Jessop et al. 2008; Jones 2009; Harrison 2013; Paasi and Zimmerbauer 2016; Cochrane 2018). This poses challenging questions for academic scholars and practitioners alike around the relations between spatial categories and processes, their relevance to regions and regionalism, and the implications for regional (as well as other forms of spatial) planning.

1.3.2 Regions as Competitive Economic Territories Par Excellence

Regional thinking has been forever linked to processes of economic development and related struggles over power. Students of regional change have long been drawn towards investigating the economic factors driving development. Throughout the era of traditional regional geography leading Anglophone scholars, from Halford Mackinder in *Britain and the British Seas* (1902) to D.E. Willington in *Economic Geography* (1927), attributed economic geography – or commercial geography as it was then often termed – to the influence of the physical environment on human activities in obtaining the life essentials and material goods. Industrial patterns were, in other words, seen as the result of regional geography. Through into the 1960s when regional science engaged closely with the locational school and economic thought, then the 1970s when Marxist inspired theorists drew attention to structural and strategic forces associated with the dynamics and contradictions of capitalism acting upon regions, regional thinking was for many years shaped by different phases of capital accumulation and the broader growth

dynamic of capitalism. This led to the rise of some influential ideas on regions. Massey (1978), for example, argued that the analysis of uneven development should never begin from some pre-specified, fixed regionalization of space. Instead it would be of critical importance to scrutinize the patterns of capital accumulation, from which geographical analysis must then produce the concepts in the terms of the spatial divisions of labour. She also developed the well-known 'geological metaphor': the development of spatial structures can be seen as a product of the combination of 'layers' of the successive activity (Massey 1984, p. 118). More recently Ray Hudson (2002, 2007) has pushed Marxist political economy approaches further in the analysis of the production of places/regions.

This connection became more powerful in the 1980s and 1990s when economic and industrial geographers became caught up in attempts to account for the spatial implications of deindustrialization, globalization and transition towards a post-Fordist growth dynamic. New modes of production led to new geographies of production and with it ever more uneven patterns of economic growth and development. Emerging from this have been claims necessitating the mantra of competitiveness and a purported, almost universal need for learning and innovativeness – labels that were quickly attached to groupings of exemplary regional economies noted above (Silicon Valley, Baden-Württemberg, Emilia Romagna, Rhone-Alpes, south-east England) which were harbouring these key attributes for post-industrial regional economic growth.

In globalization, the economic logic for regions and regionalization has remained strong. Fuelled by the intellectual arguments put forward by the 'new economic geography' and related theories associated with agglomeration economies, technological innovation and relational proximity have often served to popularize regional thinking both within and beyond academic circles. If the underpinning economic logic for regionalism has ostensibly remained constant over the years, the same cannot be said for the spatial focus of regional economic thinking. Over the past 40 years, the focus has switched from debates oriented towards a 'new localism' in the 1980s, through into the 1990s and the 'new regionalism' (1990s), the 'new city-regionalism' of the 2000s, before most recently a renewed focus on 'megaregions' and 'megaregionality' has taken hold (Florida et al. 2008; Ross 2009). The significance of this is a trend towards a smaller number of increasingly larger regional units, each of which appears less territorially defined than its predecessor. The result has been a mushrooming of, to a lesser or greater extent, regional and territorial reference points and framings for economic development. For critics, questions remain as to the perceived dangers of 'reading-off' regionalism through an apparently new economic geography of globalization, something they are keen to argue requires more political and historical perspectives (Harrison and Hoyler 2015).

1.3.3 Regionalism, Devolution and the Territorial Restructuring of the State

If one of the fundamental drivers of regional change is economic then the other is political. While often presented in this binary way, political processes are never distinct from social and economic interests. These drivers come together in the fact that the production and reproduction of regions are social acts (Johnston 1991). In the post-war years, the territorial region assumed prominence as a key unit for policy development in the period known as 'spatial Keynesianism'. Spatial Keynesianism was a largely technocratic process that saw regional policies rolled-out with the aim of boosting the national economy and

raising national welfare standards by supporting ‘lagging regions’ through redistributive programmes, a process which would then in theory benefit the ‘wealthier regions’ because there would be more consumers for their goods.

From the 1970s and into the 1980s, Europe became the focus for much of the work examining political regionalism. In large part, this was due to the manoeuvrings of – what is today – the European Union who created their own spatial map of territorial regions. First established in the early 1970s, NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) regions served two purposes: a *technical* role in enabling the collection, development and harmonization of European regional statistics from which to develop policy; an *integrative* role because through this analysis the EU have pursued various policies and programmes with the intention of creating territorial, economic and social cohesion across Europe by providing financial assistance to weaker regions. Aligned to this formalized, hierarchical and technocratic process of political regionalism, Keating (1998) also identified six types of insurgent, bottom-up and citizen-led regionalism sweeping across Europe at the same time – conservative, bourgeois, progressive, social democratic, populist and national separatist.

Moving into the 1990s, a political logic for regionalism rooted in the ideals of enabling piecemeal democratic rights, greater civic engagement and encouraging progressive planning combined with a strong economic logic for competitive regionalism to provide, what for many was, an undeniable argument for understanding the resurgence of regions and territory in globalization (cf. Fiamonti 2014). Enticed by this, political leaders and policymakers sought to put the new regionalism *into action* in what quickly became a global policy discourse of devolution and regionalization. For critics such as Lovering (1999), this was deeply problematic. He argued that the new regionalism quickly became nothing more than a ‘theory led by policy’ (Lovering 1999), while others pointed out that far from a total decline of state-led regional policy, the so-called resurgence of regions owed much to the role of the nation-state as a key orchestrator of how regionalization was being unfurled. To this end, the resurgence of regions was seen through the framework of a territorial restructuring and rescaling of the state, and an outcome of ‘state spatial strategies’ and ‘state spatial projects’ (Brenner 2004).

Most recently, Keating (2017) argues there are six competing dimensions in the social construction of territory and regions: integrative regionalism; competitive regionalism; welfare regionalism; identity regionalism; regions as government; and regionalism as a refraction of social and economic interests. Adopting a constructivist perspective, Keating argues that we must always consider the region as the outcome of political contestation over the definition and meaning of territory, because:

Regions as vehicles for state policy are in tension with regions as a form of territorial autonomy. Regions are arenas for playing out some of the most important political issues such as the balance between economic competition and social solidarity. (Keating 2017, p. 16)

1.3.4 Regionalism in Context: Towards a World of Regionalism

Globalization has brought with it a growing awareness of regionalism beyond countries in the global North. As the chapters of this book display, from Africa to the Arctic, Australasia to Antarctica, regions and territories matter and various forms of regionalism

are on the agenda. But with these global horizons in regional studies has come a series of methodological and conceptual challenges surrounding the need for more comparative analysis, balancing general theories with the particularity of individual cases, while avoiding both the dismissal of territory and territorial determinism (Hettne et al. 2001; Keating 2017). Today, regionalism is increasingly considered in a wider global horizon and the field of regional research is undeniably more global, but as Pike et al. (2017, p. 48) reveal:

Such strands of work have tended to run in parallel with limited interaction and cross-fertilizations of theory, evidence and policy . . . [As a consequence] such fragmented conceptual, analytical and policy perspectives limit one's understanding of local and regional development in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, constraining explanation, policy formulation and praxis.

Understanding regions and regionalism in context is one of, if not the, biggest single challenge facing scholars today. For this reason, in this Handbook, we dedicate a whole section to understanding how regionalism has unfolded and is conceptualized globally in different contexts. In effect, we reflect a world of regionalisms. This represents an important starting point for recognizing commonalities and differences in the geographies of regions and territories globally, but with this comes an appreciation that much work remains to be done if we are to achieve a truly global regionalism – taken to mean a global approach to the production of new regional knowledge and the practice of regional theory making. This is a common challenge for the regional researchers that has also been noted by IR scholars.

Appreciating regional context within the ever-expanding scope of globalizing regional research requires new tools and techniques for putting contextual accounts of the geographies of regions, territories and regionalism into conversation. This necessitates much more than recognition of a world of regionalisms – African, Chinese, Eurasian, Mediterranean, and so on – but an understanding that advancing global regionalism depends upon making these a more dominant part of the global narrative of regionalism.¹ Another important challenge is the recognition of the role of civil society organizations and local movements in the making of regionalisms – all too often regionalism has been seen as a process orchestrated by states and coalitions of states from above. This forces us to recognize how political and cultural come together with the economic.

For their part, Scott and Storper (2003, 2015) call for a 'common theoretical language' about the development of regions in all parts of the world vis-à-vis recognizing that 'territories are arrayed at different points along a vast spectrum of development characteristics' (Scott and Storper 2003, p. 582). Others, such as Roy (2009), have taken to arguing more strongly for 'new geographies' of imagination and epistemology in the production of regional theory; ideas which can debunk universal theories of regions and regionalism rooted in the EuroAmerican experience. Either way, there is an urgent task for scholars to engage with these different frames of reference – observations which are going to put more and more focus on the practice of how we go about 'doing' research into the changing geographies of regions and territories moving forward.

1.4 DISTINCT REGIONAL WORLDS, DIVERSE REGIONAL WORDS, DECENTRED REGIONAL FUTURES: FOUNDATIONS FOR CONSOLIDATED REGIONAL GEOGRAPHIES?

It hardly needs saying but the diversity of epistemological perspectives, geographical contexts and methodological approaches highlights the plurality within contemporary accounts showcasing the geographies of regions and territories. From the outset, the aim of this Handbook has been to bring together – through the contributions of high calibre experts – the cutting-edge knowledge and theoretical and empirical challenges related to these two categories and their contemporary conceptualizations, applications and challenges. In this final section, we take stock of the current state of debates on the theory and empirical dimensions of regions and territories, before making the argument for more consolidated – instead of fragmented – regional geographies.

Albeit necessarily selective, this introduction, alongside the list of contents, reveals the multiple geographies of regions and territories, in both theoretical debates and their mobilization in specific contexts in making sense of social, political and economic life. This has not always been the case, however; there is full recognition today that regional futures rely on moving beyond any singular conception of the region or territory, and investing in the plural of regions, regionalism and territories (Agnew 2013). Indicative of this is how Storper's (1997) conception of 'the regional world' has been replaced by recognition of multiple 'regional worlds' (Jones and Paasi 2015), and Storey's re-titling of *Territory: The Claiming of Space* (2001) to read *Territories: The Claiming of Space* by the time the second edition was published in 2012.

For all that these multiple ways of thinking about regions and territories has uncovered important knowledge, developed our understandings and stimulated debate, making sense of this complexity has presented researchers with a set of new challenges. To this end, contemporary debates are increasingly shaped by attempts to reconcile thinking around both the dynamically changing, as well as multiple, geographies of regions and territories. This is leading to work examining when, where and why different conceptions of regions and territories variously complement, contradict, overlap or compete with other regional, territorial and spatial imaginaries (MacLeod and Jones 2007, Harrison and Growe 2014).

Another consequence of the dynamically changing and multiple geographies of regions and territories is the observation that distinct regional worlds produce a diverse array of regional words (Jones and Paasi 2015). One indication of this can be seen in Table 1.1, which offers insight into some of the many regional words which are being currently used by academics and practitioners to comprehend new regional forms, new processes of regionalism, and new types of region. At one level, the explosion of new terms to go alongside some more established words in the vocabulary and lexicon of regional scholars reflects the dynamism and rapid change taking place within regional debate. But different regional words also reflect another increasingly important issue: the variegating meanings of such keywords in different languages.

It is clear that in different contexts geographical vocabularies may differ since they always reflect (even though are not determined) by social, cultural, political, economic and even physical geographic factors. Much of the contemporary, dominant conceptual basis of regional thinking – also discussed in this introduction – reflects largely the ideas

Table 1.1 150 concepts describing twenty-first century regions and regionalism

Names given to new regional forms	Names given to new processes of regionalism	Names given to new types of region
1 Bi-polar region	Aero-regionalism	Administrative region
2 City-region	Archipelagic regionalism	Ancestral region
3 Cross-border metropolitan region	Architectural regionalism	Anchor region
4 Cross-border region	Bourgeois regionalism	Autocratic region
5 Decentred region	City-regionalism	Autonomous region
6 Emerging mega economic region	Concentrated regionalism	Bioregion
7 Estuarial city-regional spaces	Conjoined regionalism	Border region
8 Fuzzy regions	Conservative regionalism	Capital region
9 Galactic region	Constellatory regionalism	Capitalist region
10 Global city-region	Cross-border regionalism	Civic region
11 Global metropolis	Cultural regionalism	Competitive region
12 Global region	De facto regionalism	Cosmopolitan region
13 Greater region	Economic regionalization	Creative region
14 In-between region	Environmental regionalism	Cultural region
15 Macro region	Extended urbanization	Devolved region
16 Mega-city region	Federalism	Ecological region
17 Mega-conurbation	Functional regionalism	Economic region
18 Megalopolis	Global suburbanism	Ecoregion
19 Megalopolis unbound	Identity regionalism	Fringe region
20 Megapolitan region	Insurgent regionalism	Geopolitical region
21 Megaregion	Integrative regionalism	Government region
22 Metro region	Interrregionalism	Green region
23 Metroplex	Localized regionalism	Growth region
24 Metropolitan region	Marine regionalism	Imagined region
25 Metropolitan scaled urban agglomeration	Metropolitan regionalism	Independent region
26 Monocentric urban region	Multi-city regionalism	Innovative region
27 Multi-city region	Nationalist separatist regionalism	Institutionalized region
28 Multi-nodal region	Networked regionalism	Learning region
29 Multi-polar region	New localism	Legal region
30 Networked metropolis	New regionalism	Made-up region
31 New megalopolis	Penumbral regional bordering	Military region
32 New metropolis	Planetary regionalism	Nationalist region
33 Non-metropolitan region	Political regionalism	Neoliberal region
34 Panregion	Polycentric regionalism	Non-capital region
35 Polycentric metropolis	Populist regionalism	Non-state space
36 Polycentric urban region	Pragmatic regionalism	Peripheral region
37 Polynucleated urban region	Progressive regionalism	Planning region
38 Post-metropolis	Reactionary regionalism	Political region
39 Post-suburban region	Real existing regionalism	Post-socialist region
40 Regional assemblage	Regional agglomeration	Productive region

Table 1.1 (continued)

Names given to new regional forms	Names given to new processes of regionalism	Names given to new types of region
41 Regional growth corridor	Regional assemblage	Resilient region
42 Regional network of cities	Regionalized urbanization	Rural region
43 Relational region	Relational regionalism	Semi-autonomous region
44 Soft space	Social democratic regionalism	Smart region
45 Stateless city-regional nation	Social regionalism	Supply chain region
46 Suburban region	Supply chain regionalism	Sustainable region
47 Supranational region	Supra-state regionalism	Technology region
48 Territorial region	Territorial regionalism	Transition region
49 World city-region	Transregionalism	Transport region
50 World super economic region	Welfare regionalism	Urban region

Source: Author's own, adapted from Taylor and Lang (2004).

outlined in the Anglophone world from where they have diffused elsewhere. As this introduction and the chapters by Agnew (2018) and Entrikin (2018) in this volume show, the origin of spatial ideas and concepts are much more diverse when we look at the evolution of these concepts historically. When geography became institutionalized, French and German geographers, for example, were in a critical position in outlining novel ideas. Since the Second World War and with the rise of quantitative revolution the situation has changed quite dramatically: Anglophone ideas associated with models, interaction and functional regions have spread extensively around the academic communities in various countries. While these ideas often had their background in the works of German economists and geographers such as Walter Christaller and August Lösch, new ideas were again travelling to other linguistic realms from the UK and US.

As we suggested at the beginning of this introduction, the development of the conceptual basis in the research of regions and territories has never been a straightforward evolutionary trajectory but a dynamic field of conceptual struggles and breaks. New concepts are continually invented, some concepts are in use long-lastingly, and some others are rejected permanently, while some others have been adopted once again after being aside from dominant discourses. It is also to be noted that conceptual developments never occur *in vacuo* but do so in relation to economic and structural developments, societal interests of knowledge, general philosophical and methodological developments, and at times these developments resonate with major societal upheavals like wars and conflicts (Paasi 2011).

There are also some new structural factors in the academia that need to be considered. Observations from science studies tell us that motives for research are both individual and institutional or 'systemic' (Becher and Trowler 2001). Current neoliberal pressures on institutional interests in the form of evaluations and assessments accentuate today more than ever publications and citations and claim for novelty and innovation. These systemic forces certainly help, in part, to understand the existing tendency to perpetually invent new keywords and attempts to attract attention. In the contemporary academia individual and systemic motives become fused in the fact that science is rapidly globalizing: ideas,

concepts as well as students and researchers are increasingly mobile which very likely tends to homogenize the conceptual terrain. While knowledge is incessantly under negotiation, it is never made completely in one place and consumed elsewhere, and it tends to transform when it circulates (Agnew 2007). However, the regional world is uneven: ideas from linguistics power centres tend to flow to peripheries that are typically located outside of the Anglophone context.

At another level, one more recent observation in science studies has been the fragmentation of academic disciplines into federations of subdisciplines and sub-subdisciplines (Billig 2013). This certainly explains, partly, the mushrooming of new regional and territorial words and concepts in various subfields of Geography. Rather than being merely beneficial, such fragmentation points towards the need for a more *consolidated* approach towards regional thinking. The constant quest for new regional theories, concepts and words needs to halt and instead the field be reimagined in ways which allow them – taken to mean both new and existing – to be stress-tested and their explanatory veracity in accounting for the changing geographies of regions and territories. As Peck (2017, p. 332) has recently taken to arguing, the latter requires ‘stretching and remaking received theoretical understandings, provisional conceptualisations, and working categories of analysis’.

In producing this Handbook our aim is not only to reflect the broad cross-section of current perspectives on the changing geographies of regions and territories, but for authors to explore the explanatory veracity of key theories, concepts, approaches and categories. For us as editors, the process has made us more aware of certain divides, challenges and trends which we feel need a new round of debate and broader engagement about the changing geographies of regions and territories. To spark such debate, we see this Handbook as highlighting the need for *consolidated regional geographies*. What follows is necessarily selective, but points towards a series of new horizons for regional and territorial thinking that go beyond both singular and ‘business as usual’ approaches.

Consolidating regional theories: a process of consolidation began ten years ago, marked by Jessop et al.’s (2008) plea for consolidating social scientific thinking around the multidimensional character of territory, place, scale and networks vis-à-vis the privileging of any one single dimension. Regional thinking has undoubtedly made significant strides forward in this regard; nevertheless, much remains to be achieved. First, developing holistic frameworks is, as with so many things, more easily constructed in theory than operationalized in practice – both empirically and in policy. Second, consolidating regional theories in a single discipline or approach is one thing; it is quite another to consolidate geographical theorizations with planning theories, IR theories, economic theories and so on. Extending this further, third, there is more work to be done in integrating the different processes and drivers of regional change and development – economic, political, historical, institutional – and better analysing the ‘interplay’ of geopolitics and geoeconomics (Moisio and Jonas 2018; Calzada 2018; Sparke 2018; Storper 2013).

Consolidating a world of regionalisms: the geographic expansion and territorial coverage reflected in this Handbook exemplifies how regional thinking has come to be shaped by understandings of how regions and territories evolve and adapt in different contexts. One consequence has been a growing demand to ‘provincialize’ dominant theories, and to move beyond the one-way diffusion of EuroAmerican theories, policies and practices to the world (Roy 2009). This raises important questions about the travel of concepts, theories and practices in regional and territorial thinking, but more than this, we need to

consolidate our approaches in important ways. Beyond the important step of recognizing and adopting theories, concepts and ideas which emerge from beyond the global North, it is imperative that these different regionalisms (northern, southern, post-socialist, and so on) are put into conversation and not viewed as false opposites that are somehow always different and distinct. Consolidation of regional thinking, from this perspective, requires new tools, vocabularies, and frameworks that enable comparative regionalism: by this we mean, establishing mechanisms and networks, which promote greater engagement across contexts and territories. This said, we must also never lose sight of how these different perspectives are themselves not internally coherent, however much they might appear and be caricatured in this way.

Consolidating regional worlds: it goes without saying that there is an ever-increasing array of new regional imaginaries, new regional maps, and accounts documenting the unfolding of new processes of regionalism across a whole array of different geographical contexts and territories (see Table 1.1). Much endeavour goes into revealing these new and emerging geographies of regions and territories, but in and of itself what does this tell us about how meaningful these geographies actually are? Consolidating regional geographies would require less focus on documenting the rise of all new geographies, instead focusing more on how much significance we can attach to them by asking what makes these activities regional in any meaningful sense. To put it another way, following Metzger and Schmitt (2012), we see the need to focus on consolidating thinking around understanding which spatial imaginaries are likely to be short-lived and ultimately disappear, which are becoming stronger institutionalized forms, and which will remain 'soft' over time. Rather than spreading our attention across the full spectrum of new geographies, this sifting will enable intellectual energy to be devoted to those new geographies likely to develop the spatial integrity and deeper-rooted sense of regionalism necessary to become meaningful in significant ways.

Consolidating regional words: as noted above, there are many reasons for the mushrooming of regional concepts, words and terms but here we turn to the question of consolidation. Consolidation of regional terminology and conceptual refinement is important because to achieve consolidation across disciplines and contexts requires precision in how we deploy, define and distinguish regional concepts. All too often concepts and words are taken for granted, without the necessary conceptual scrutiny required of rigorous social scientific inquiry and public policy making. As a result, it is now commonplace for established concepts to be captured, glorified and reimagined in ways which create too much distance from the original intellectual claims. Add to this competing notions that are attempting to explain the same processes and examples, and new fashionable concepts, which are sometimes difficult to distinguish from more well-established ideas, and the result is an inevitable cocktail of complexity.

Consolidating regional methods: ultimately our argument for consolidating regional geographies rests and falls on how we 'do' regional research. Here we can again point to the plethora of different methodological approaches adopted by researchers to account for the changing geographies of regions and territories. Often these differing approaches reflect institutional and disciplinary tendencies – the economic-side of regional thinking adopting more quantitative methodologies whereas political perspectives generally adopt more qualitative approaches – but if we are to move beyond increased fragmentation, consolidated regional geographies will require more exchange, debate and deliberation between researchers working with different methodological tools and approaches. The

trend towards interdisciplinary research, allied to a growing appreciation of the need to consider the interplay of economics, institutions, social interaction and politics in shaping regional and territorial development (e.g. Storper 2013), identifies the need for this type of research. The challenge if we are to genuinely consolidate approaches to regional and territorial thinking is to be more open to the explanatory veracity of different, often opposing, methodological approaches.

What this Handbook reveals is how regions and territories are multiple entities. Indeed, if the new regional geographies of the past generation have been characterized by investing in a plural logic that has seen regions, territories and regionalism as distinct, diverse, and different, a 'new' new regional geography is dawning where the emphasis is on consolidation, combination, and the conjunctural. As David Matless (2015, p. 8) recently instructed:

Geographical description concentrates attention, gathers experience, observes and inscribes. To account for a region, move across its varieties.

1.5 NOTE

1. It should be noted that in recognizing these different world regionalisms, we must understand that they are not singular approaches to regionalism and it will be important to consider plurality within as well as beyond.

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