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Andreas Behnke ^a

^a Departmental of Political Science, Towson University, Maryland, USA

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The Politics of *Geopolitik* in Post-Cold War Germany

ANDREAS BEHNKE

Departmental of Political Science, Towson University, Maryland, USA

INTRODUCTION: THE THEME THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME

The end of the Cold War in Europe created the necessity to re-define the spatial structure of international politics in the wake of the wide-ranging transformation of power and space. Within this context, a new framework of European geopolitics had to be articulated, which would reflect the demise of the bipolar order that had structured European as well as global politics since the late 1940s.¹ David Campbell has described this moment of geopolitical aporia as an ‘erasure of certainty’, as an ‘irruption of contingency’ which ‘not only renders problematic the traditional spatializations of power, . . . it renders problematic the discursive practices that have made those spatializations of power possible’.² Such a moment, in other words, becomes a chance to trace the emergence of new discursive techniques and strategies through which this contingency is mastered and some sense of geopolitical order re-established. This process, as Campbell points out, is hardly ever accomplished *de novo*. Instead, these processes tend to render the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, that is to say, in terms of extant or historical discourses that provide the elements for this re-articulation.³ Indeed, in many countries, above all in East and Central Europe, we can see in this time a ‘renaissance of geopolitics’.⁴ In countries such as Estonia, Russia, Hungary, and in the West in Italy, geopolitical traditions were invoked to redefine the spatial order for politics in Europe.

There is a notable exception to this development. In post-Cold War Germany, specifically on the level of what Gearóid Ó Tuathail calls ‘Geopolitical Discourse’, that is, the storylines and scripts by institutions and practitioners of foreign policy, the reference to *Geopolitik*, the specific German version of geopolitics, remained notably absent.⁵ This is not to say that geopolitics was completely absent from academic and popular discourse. Quite to the contrary, as this article will show, the moment of aporia was seized

Address correspondence to Andreas Behnke, Department of Political Science, Towson University, Towson, Maryland, USA. E-mail: abehnke@towson.edu

by a number of its proponents in Germany to push their case for a revival of the *Geopolitik* tradition. Yet, for reasons to be explored in the following, no official recognition was forthcoming from the political leadership in post-Cold War Germany. Its geopolitical narratives avoided the topics of *Geopolitik* in fact on purpose. This rejection can be seen in both the Kohl as well as the Schröder administrations. A recent search for ‘*Geopolitik*’ via the search engine of the Internet site of the German Foreign Office produces only one hit: a speech by Karsten Voigt on ‘German-French relations and the new geopolitics’ in July 2002.⁶ In this speech, Voigt introduces a theme, ‘namely geopolitics [*Geopolitik*], that since the end of the Second World War wouldn’t be called by this name in Germany’. Now, the problem of translating his line here correctly already illustrates the very problem at the heart of the German geographical imagination. Clearly, geopolitics is relevant, yet *Geopolitik*, its proper term in German, must not be mentioned.

This suggests the existence of different levels of geopolitical imagination. It is therefore helpful to turn to Ó Tuathail’s model, outlining three such levels.⁷ On the most basic one, the fundamental assumptions about international politics—the spatial sovereignty of states and its consequences—are located. On the intermediate, or meso level, we find the more specific Geopolitical Culture, containing interpretations of the state as a foreign policy actor in world affairs, and communicational culture of foreign policy making. This level also encompasses ‘Geopolitical Traditions’, historical schools of foreign policy theory and practice. And finally, on the micro level we find ‘Geopolitical Discourses’, that is, storylines and narratives, particular speech acts by foreign policy makers about national identity and security.⁸

From this perspective, the germane question of this article then becomes why in post-Cold War Germany no ‘transfer’ of ‘Geopolitical Visions’ from the meso to the micro level took place. While the 1990s saw a revival of the Geopolitical Culture in Germany, none of its visions was taken up on the level of the foreign policy practitioners. Two things therefore need explaining. First, in what way does the knowledge available on the macro level on which basic spatial assumptions about international politics produce fundamental ‘Geographical Imaginations’, circumvent the meso level in which the ominous tradition of *Geopolitik* is located, to reach the micro level of geopolitical discourse? Second, how do the German foreign policy makers keep the *Geopolitik*-informed geopolitical visions from becoming part of their storylines and narratives?

A conceptual clarification seems to be in order at this point. With ‘geopolitics’ I am referring here to a broad concept, encompassing the levels mentioned above: from geographical imaginations to particular cultures and traditions through which they are articulated, to actual speech acts that pertain to, express and reproduce such imaginations. In the most general sense, geopolitics could be defined as a ‘world view that privileges the metaphors of space for the self-understanding of the territorial nation-state’.⁹

With *Geopolitik*, on the other hand, I refer to the particular version or tradition of geopolitics as it emerged in Germany after the First World War and which is usually associated with the name of Karl Haushofer. *Geopolitik* is therefore a particular aspect of geopolitics, located on the meso level.

In order to answer the above question, I will focus below on the relationship of geopolitics and language. More precisely, what interests me here is the interplay of the discourse of geopolitics/*Geopolitik* with the discourse on geopolitics/*Geopolitik*. The first of these concepts refers to the linguistic practices within the field of geopolitics that are constitutive and productive of geographical spatialisations. In other words, I read the constative statements about a purportedly pre-existing world as linguistic performances through which this world is brought into existence.¹⁰ Geopolitics, in other words, is involved in the *geo-graphing*, the writing of space.¹¹ This turn brings into focus the ‘immaterial’ aspects of geopolitical language and their contribution to this process. At the same time it devalues and problematises the claims of traditional geopolitics about the production of ‘objective’ knowledge about ‘material’ realities of international politics.

With ‘discourses on geopolitics/*Geopolitik*’ I refer to the public, academic, and political discussions about these fields of knowledge. Here too, the productive aspect of these discourses bears emphasising. What geopolitics/*Geopolitik* is, what role it plays in society, academia, and politics, is established and decided upon in these debates.

The answers to the questions formulated above will therefore be sought in the interplay between these two ‘language games’.

The following section will provide a brief synopsis of *Geopolitik*, in its most famous rendition associated with the name of Karl Haushofer. I will place particular emphasis on its usually marginalised cultural and political *topoi* and stereotypes. As stated above, the argument here is that these ‘non-material’ elements play a crucial, indeed constitutive role for the discourse of *Geopolitik*. This is followed by a presentation of the ‘ruling position’ in the discourse on *Geopolitik* that attempts to reduce it to a marginal and irrelevant status in West German political discourse in the 1980s. Here, Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s critical (and adamantly polemical) engagement with the re-emergence of elements of *Geopolitik* within the *Historikerstreit* of that era is a central contribution and exemplary for this argument which defined the ‘mainstream’ position in Germany when the Cold War came to an end. The following sections will then seek to map two different ways in which a ‘tradition’ of *Geopolitik* was constructed within different discursive formations in post-Cold War Germany. It will describe the way its proponents construct this tradition to renew the claim to its relevance. Three strategies will emerge in this analysis: first, the historical de-contextualisation of *Geopolitik* into a source of perennial political wisdom, and second, a ‘revisionist’ reading of a historically situated *Geopolitik* as an abused and misused science. A third one introduces *Geopolitik* above all as a critique of the normative

underpinnings of Germany's foreign policy. In all cases, the association of *Geopolitik* and Nazism is severed, either by rendering it a (short-lived) perversion, or by depicting *Geopolitik* as the reluctant victim of Nazism's eclectic and ruthless instrumentalisation of its central concept. The next section will then analyse the discursive strategies through which the German government's representatives articulated a particular German identity in opposition to the *topoi* provided by *Geopolitik*.

To clarify the point one more time: The purpose of this article is not to decide whether *Geopolitik* could or should play a major role in German foreign policy making. To attempt to do so would mean to fall back into an essentialist view on *Geopolitik*. What I am interested in here are instead the discursive strategies through which the claims to its (renewed or perennial) relevance were made by its proponents, and the counter-strategies through which the German foreign policy makers deflected this claim.

GEOPOLITIK IN THE 1920S AND 30S: THE SONDERWEG – THE PATH TO A GERMAN MITTELEUROPA

The major claim of *Geopolitik* is that it is able to produce knowledge about the material and hence fundamental and comparatively stable conditions of statecraft and foreign policy.¹² Yet a closer reading reveals the extent to which *Geopolitik* is embedded in a particular historical context, and utilises ideational, cultural and 'immaterial' categories. Geographical space, this reading reveals, is produced through liminal processes that invoke such categories as they are historically available. For *Geopolitik*, the germane context is to be located in the experience of a political and social crisis.

The defeat of Germany in the First World War and the ensuing political fragmentation of the continent was the background for Karl Haushofer's contemplations on the geopolitical imperatives for Germany. This defeat was not primarily attributed to strictly geographical and material factors, rather, cultural and political considerations came to the front. Defeated by the Liberal powers in the West, Germany's cultural identity and political role was to be defined against them. Cultural prejudice and political strategies are intermingled in this assessment. Liberalism, the characteristic political order of the Western powers, was deemed to be destructive in terms of its effects on other systems. Threatening German Conservatism and Idealism, Liberalism was a system of and for the uncouth masses, based on a 'worship of the plebs for the sake of enrichment, privately as well as politically. . . . It is the empire of cynicism, of the anarchical violence of the economically stronger'.¹³ Against the German social and national *Gemeinschaft* stands the un-fettered individualism of Liberal regimes, an individualism that undermines the idea of the State and pits each citizen against the other in a never-ending quest for profit. Haushofer's particular aversion was reserved for the USA.

The Americans are really the only people on earth that I regard with a deep, instinctive hatred. They are like a false, voracious, hypocritical, shameless predator, always feigning behind masks, but really only going after food for its insatiable dollar-lusting belly, like a nice alligator. Since this lovely continent bestowed the favours of syphilis and Yankees upon the old world, all her alleged crimes that she perpetrated upon a virgin earth, are more than made up for'.¹⁴

The caricature-like depiction of the cultural inferiority of Liberalism is supplemented with a critical assessment of the strategic aims of its major representatives, France, Great Britain and the USA. From the latter emanated above all the threat of an incremental undermining of European cultural autonomy. Americanisation is read as a process in which Europe is increasingly subjected to the economic interests of the USA.¹⁵ As for Great Britain and France, their preference for the status quo in Europe, for the continued fragmentation of the continent and a weakened Germany in order to protect their own dominance posited them necessarily against Germany. From their side, no impulse for the development of a stronger and integrated Europe could be expected.¹⁶

As for the Soviet Union, sympathies for this equally isolated and chastised State competed with a more critical assessment of its socialist and universalist ideology. While the promise of an invincible Eurasian continental bloc through German-Soviet cooperation always loomed large in *Geopolitik*, the ideological characteristics of the Soviet regime led to an ultimately adverse assessment. Both Liberalism and Socialism were representing the 'principles of violence' in international politics and aimed at destroying *Mitteleuropa*. As Eberling notes, 'based on this assumption *Geopolitik* had constructed a threat that required immediate German counter-measures'.¹⁷ *Mitteleuropa* was under threat, and it was Germany's destiny to protect it against the lateral powers (*Flügelmächte*). For Germany, its central position in Europe confers it a particular task. In the discourse of *Geopolitik*, this country's mission was to articulate a 'third way' between the universalist and aggressive ideologies of Liberalism and Communism and to use this cultural identity as a means to tie together and protect *Mitteleuropa* from the threats of the lateral powers.¹⁸ Germany was after all 'the true European people'.¹⁹ And as such it had the historical task to unite this continent – if need be by force. Threatened and harassed by the Western powers and the League of Nations, Haushofer's argument included a 'right' to realise and defend this mission also by military means. While the integration of Europe should ideally be accomplished through the pure force of (German) ideas, given the reality of politics, this process might very well include the use of military power.²⁰ Germany has a *Sonderweg* to pursue, a special destiny to fulfil. Both culture and geography set it apart from the West as well as the East.²¹ And against the universalist arrogations of authority and legitimacy of

the liminal powers, Germany must lead *Mitteleuropa* into a more powerful and therefore integrated future. Temporally, Germany's position is pointing towards the future, against the 'status quo' powers surrounding it. Spatially, it does not belong to either East or West; its role is one of a bridge-builder for, and integrative force in, the Center.

It is worth emphasising that the logic of *Geopolitik* owes more to cultural stereotypes and common-places than to the strictly geographical imperatives it claims as its ontological parameters. As this brief synopsis demonstrates, the German dominated *Mitteleuropa* that Haushofer's *Geopolitik* imagined, constitutes a cultural space much more than a purely geographical area. Its boundaries are established through the political act of differentiating between self and other, or more precisely, between friend and enemy.²² In fact, this cultural differentiation cannot be considered simply one element among many within the logic of *Geopolitik*, as its representatives usually present it.²³ Rather, Haushofer's rhetoric here articulates the constitutive move through which the logic of *Geopolitik* can unfold in the first place. To postulate the need for a fit between population, geography, and natural resource endowment, as *Geopolitik* does, always depends on the prior move of delineating the population and the territory in question from its environment.²⁴ Hence, *Geopolitik* is not about where a country finds itself on the map, but where it puts itself on the map, and what claims to territory it might make. For the point is that we cannot know, identify, and locate a 'Germany' before this entity is set apart and differentiated from other cultures and identities. Any assertion and discussion of Germany and its *Mittellage* and *Sonderweg* presupposes first and foremost its discursive construction through a process of differentiation. Moreover, and crucially, these discursive processes of differentiation necessarily draw upon historically available cultural and ideological resources. The identity, role, and purpose of a state are therefore always contingently articulated, and situated within particular contemporary contexts. As Panajotis Kondylis has argued, the initial claims to a German *Sonderweg* in the late eighteenth century were articulated in opposition to a politically and economically much more powerful France and Great Britain. In this context, the reference to German *Kultur* was set against the superficial nature of French and Anglo-Saxon civilisation and enlightenment.²⁵ And it is within the context of the German role in the First and Second World Wars, that the negative connotation of the concept *Sonderweg* begins to take a hold in the Western imagination, constructing a continuity of German history and identity from Luther over Bismarck to Hitler.²⁶

The historical context can therefore never be dissociated from *Geopolitik*. To the extent that it provides the very problematique with which *Geopolitik* concerns itself and provides the cultural and ideational *topoi* through which the discipline constructs a particular answer, this context is ineluctable. In Mark Bassin's words,

the term [Geopolitik] is not politically neutral, and cannot moreover be neutralized. It cannot be, for the simple reason that it has a rich and problematic history, in the course of which it has been loaded and overloaded with a bewilderingly complex and indeed contradictory array of geographical significations and political passions.²⁷

Precisely these 'significations and passions' are at the center of a first debate in the 1980s about the role of *Geopolitik* in the formulation of German foreign policy.

THE COLD WAR CONSENSUS: READING *GEOPOLITIK* AS NAZI SCIENCE

Whether or not *Geopolitik* is 'Nazi Science', whether or not it was an inherent part of Nazi policies, or whether the Hitler regime exploited and instrumentalised its narrative to lend some scientific credentials to its atrocious campaigns is in a sense irrelevant for the purpose of this article. What is more relevant is the way this connection between Nazism and *Geopolitik* was inscribed in popular and academic discourse. As Gearóid Ó Tuathail has shown, as of 1939, American public opinion was introduced to Haushofer as the 'philosopher of Nazism' and the mastermind behind the war of aggression that unfolded.²⁸ In a similar sense, the dominant reading of *Geopolitik* in Germany itself since the Second World War has connected the notions of a German *Sonderweg* and the location in between East and West with Nazism's plans for domination and conquest. The 1980s however, witnessed a challenge to the dominant interpretation of the Nazi era in German history and as part of this a renewed controversy about *Geopolitik*. The *Historikerstreit* between conservative historians and representatives of the mainstream such as Jürgen Habermas and Ulrich Wehler in a sense once again reasserted the Cold War consensus on these issues on the eve of the momentous transformations that would end its historical context.

Wehler's criticism against this re-emergence of a discourse that draws heavily on geopolitical clichés and concepts, yet for some reason never acknowledging its historical origins,²⁹ establishes exactly this link between *Geopolitik* and Nazism against the conservative historians' attempt to re-conceptualise the field as a scientific and universal source of knowledge. For Wehler, the Nazis tried to turn *Geopolitik's* central concepts such as *Lebensraum*, *Grossraum* and *Reich* into political reality, 'at the expense of millions upon millions of human lives'.³⁰ *Geopolitik*, in other words, was highly influential in the formulation of Nazism's aggressive and atrocious foreign policy. Within the contemporary context, the conjuring up of *Geopolitik* is effective in the project of the conservative historians around Stürmer and Hillgruber as a way to re-construct a German identity and historical continuity that allows a re-definition of the political purpose and identity of the Federal Republic along

conservative and nationalist lines. By evacuating the responsibility for the Nazi atrocities into geopolitical ‘curses’, produced by Germany’s *Mittellage*, Nazism is no longer a problem of political agency and personal responsibility. ‘Significant political decision-making processes and intended and unintended consequences of political action, the tension between socio-economic modernisation and the traditionalism of old power elites, the antagonisms between the social classes in their struggle for opportunities and political legitimacy, the determining force of powerful ideologies – all this becomes secondary’.³¹

For Wehler, the dispute between the conservative proponents of this approach and their critics was about more than a re-assessment of historical facts. It was a controversy about ‘the basic questions of political consciousness and current and future self-image (*Selbstverständnis*) of the Federal Republic of Germany’.³² Within this context, the re-emergence of geopolitical concepts and explanations serve an intellectual as well as a political purpose. Above all, the geopolitical constraints and imperatives supposedly imposed upon Prussia and Germany due to their *Mittellage* serve as a set of structural conditions that purportedly explain, and in Wehler’s view thus offer an apology for, the German history between 1871 and 1945. *Geopolitik* allows its proponents to place the responsibility for Germany’s historical development on a ‘curse of Germany’s geographical position’, subjecting it to the ‘relentless logic of European geography of power, and producing the central characteristic of the German destiny: ‘temptation and damnation’.³³ Nazism, in other words, is but an unfortunate expression and consequence of this position; it is simply playing out the script provided to Germany by its geopolitical location. As a result, Nazism is rendered tragic, rather than criminal, a regrettable but not condemnable episode in a longer German history, which can still serve as the source of a re-invigorated sense of German national identity.

In a sense, this first attempt to revitalise geopolitical thought came too early, as Germany in the 1980s was still firmly embedded in the Cold War structure, which placed it firmly within the western camp. It would take the demise of this order to allow the proponents of *Geopolitik* to gather additional force and to be able to dismiss Wehler’s normative concerns as reflective of a mindset that had internalised the ‘revenge and retribution’ imposed upon Germany after the Second World War. But the reunification of Germany and its regained sovereignty made clear that this was a temporary abnormality and that the geopolitical realities now needed to be addressed without any moralist interventions.³⁴

RE-READING *GEOPOLITIK* AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR

In his comprehensive overview of the re-emergence of *Geopolitik* in post-Cold War Germany, Mark Bassin points out a number of significant core

characteristics of this movement. First, it is predominantly associated with conservative groups and the political right. Second, he points to the transformative or revisionist tendencies in the historical record of *Geopolitik*, a tendency that also re-appears in its contemporary instantiations. And third, its current proponents 'come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including academics, journalism, business and the military'.³⁵ He refers to these authors as 'geopoliticians', an apt description, as their goal is not so much to further the academic study and expertise on geopolitics, as it is to make a significant impact on the larger political and public debate. Bassin's presentation of their substantive arguments and commitments is comprehensive and exhausting, demonstrating the internal contradictions as well as the highly problematic continued commitment to *topoi* such as *Lebensraum*, or the state as an organism, that were part and parcel of *Geopolitik* in the inter-war era.

My analysis of these writing differs slightly from Bassin's, as I am more concerned with the 'political' or rhetorical strategies through which its proponents argue the case for the relevance of *Geopolitik*, rather than its geopolitical substance. From this perspective, I argue, we can discern three approaches through which this goal is to be accomplished.

As if Nothing Ever Happened: Contemporary Claims about the Eternal Relevance of *Geopolitik*

For the first of the claims that affirm the relevance of *Geopolitik*, the end of the Cold War opens up the opportunity to re-assess the relevance of *Geopolitik*, or to simply state the case for its relevance. As if to illustrate Bassin's point about the variety of backgrounds among 'geopoliticians', Felix Buck, an entrepreneur living and working in Frankfurt and a true *amateur* of political research and *Geopolitik*, presents the argument that 'the current international situation is characterised by global radical changes in factors determining power and influence. This situation requires above all in Germany as the biggest industrial and trade nation in Europe a careful consideration of the foundations and conditions of political developments in their spatial contexts and dependencies on a global scale'.³⁶ This statement itself is reflective of a basic assumption that runs through this particular discourse, that is, the timelessness of geopolitical Truth. Again in the words of Buck, 'all historical epochs had their inter-relations between space (geography), political will (States and Empires) and course of action (history)'.³⁷ While one might be inclined to forgive an amateur the breathless vacuity of this proposition, it is one we can also observe in publications by more serious and significant institutions and authors. Thus, Heinz Brill, a political scientist and Scientific Director in the *Amt für Studien und Übungen der Bundeswehr*, writes that 'the great significance that geographical facts have for statesmanship was well known to, and emphasised by, not only geographers but also outstanding theoreticians of the State. Plato and Aristotle,

Machiavelli, Bodin, Montesquieu, Hume and Kant, Herder and Hegel utilised these insights in their studies of the State'.³⁸ Given the universal, comprehensive, and timeless relevance of *Geopolitik*, it should come as no surprise that virtually any current problem, question, or issue of world politics could benefit from the recovery of geopolitical knowledge: unity vs. plurality, subjects and objects of world politics, balances of power, global economy, sense of mission, neutrality and so on. In a similar vein, Klaus-Achim Boesler argues that *Geopolitik* is currently relevant in environmental politics, economic transition processes in Eastern Europe, political regionalism and finally neo-nationalism.³⁹ To the extent that these texts address the historical association of *Geopolitik* with Nazism that contrary discourses use as a common-place, this is usually done with in a short and limited fashion, pointing to the 'ways it went astray' or defining some of its elements such as its theories about '*Lebensraum*' as 'pseudo-scientific' and thus not representative of the tradition as such. Only in this perverted form did it serve the leadership of the Third Reich to legitimise their aggressive foreign policy.⁴⁰

Interestingly enough, this sense of trans-historical relevance of *Geopolitik* can even be discerned in an infamous strategy paper put forward by members of the CDU in 1994. Concerned about the possibility of a stalling European integration process that would exclude the countries east of Germany, a dire alternative is conjured up:

Without the further development of the (West-) European integration process Germany might be called upon, or tempted by its own security needs, to bring off the stabilisation of Eastern Europe by itself and in the traditional way.⁴¹

Geopolitik here then produces a historical necessity that in a sense black-mails the addressees of this argument.⁴² *Geopolitik* remains effective, thus producing the need to contain it through further integration. German interests in this process are consequently cloaked in an argument about a necessary self-imposed restraint.

The first strategy, then, attempts to de-contextualise *Geopolitik* and thus cleanse it of any 'contamination' with Nazi ideology. What is arguably the constitutive period in the history of *Geopolitik* becomes reduced to a time in which the discipline was 'corrupted', 'perverted', and 'went astray'. In this context it is interesting to contrast Brill's claim about the 'pseudo-scientific' status of the *Lebensraum* theory with Bassin's exposition of the re-appearance of precisely this concept in the *Geopolitik* of the 1990s.⁴³

Overall, the effect of the 'universalisation' of *Geopolitik* in these arguments is problematic at best. A conceptual history of the term would demonstrate that it belongs clearly into the twentieth century. Moreover, as discussed above, the body of work that is connected with this discourse in this timeframe makes very historically and culturally specific claims about

German national identity and purpose. Yet in order to be able to extract *Geopolitik* from this context and its involvement with Nazism, the claim to timeless relevance in the works of 'outstanding' scholars is postulated, thus making its appearance in the 1920s and 1930s exceptional and deviant. The price for this discursive strategy is, however, high. As Rainer Sprengel observes, such arguments 'are leading us astray, because they displace the relationship between *Geopolitik* and our century in favour of some vague common-places such as: *one has always thought about the relationship between power and geography*'.⁴⁴ Indeed, it remains difficult to discern in the above texts, what precisely the analytical purchase power of *Geopolitik* and its concepts is. The argument that all (international) politics takes place in a spatial structure and that geographical conditions have long been considered relevant in politics is hardly constitutive of a paradigm the value of which needs to be recovered.

This conceptual and analytical weakness of a universalist *Geopolitik* feeds the suspicion that its substantial contributions are indeed linked more closely to its articulation in the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact, this is also what Bassin's study seems to suggest, as the majority of his examples fall into this camp. To salvage and re-construct this tradition for contemporary politics here requires a different, more demanding rhetorical strategy. It has to locate the substance of *Geopolitik* within its historical context while at the same time extracting it from this context. Its historically situated articulation is recognised, while at the same time its meaning and purpose has to be protected from the improper appropriations of the Nazis. The most prominent example of the project is Frank Ebeling's work on *Geopolitik* and Karl Haushofer.

One Big Misunderstanding: *Geopolitik* as the Victim of Nazism

Compared to the above strategy, Frank Ebeling's attempt to salvage *Geopolitik* as a relevant science at the end of the Cold War appears fairly sophisticated. For him, *Geopolitik* is not a timeless and universal truth about the alleged relevance of geography. Instead, he locates it within its historical context of the massive changes and dynamics in world politics at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Geopolitik was a reaction to a particular historical situation, prompted by the tremendous attempts and failures to re-order political spaces. Imperial designs, the First World War, the Versailles post-war order, the League of Nations, the emancipation of Asia and the fall of colonial empires, the rise of two "lateral powers" (*Flügelmächte*), USA and Soviet Union, both endowed with enormous resources and spaces: it is hardly surprising that these tremendous dynamics resulted in attempts to scientifically analyse these developments in order to draw some conclusions for political actions.⁴⁵

At the same time, however, *Geopolitik* exceeds the logic of its historical conditions of articulation, as it also claims contemporary significance. The relevance of these conclusions for current times is established via the argument for a similarity in historical conditions. Once again, the argument goes, we find ourselves in a situation of 'tremendous changes and re-organisation of spaces'.⁴⁶ In this context, a 'recollection' of geopolitical basics will help to better understand and therefore to better control and steer political developments. 'To put it succinctly, if the re-organisation of spaces is to succeed this time without plunging the world into a disastrous conflictual order (*Gegeneinanderordnung*), one cannot do without *Geopolitik*'.⁴⁷

In order for this to be possible, *Geopolitik* needs to be sanitised, eliminating the contamination that results from its association with Nazism. To accomplish this, Ebeling tries to uncover an original, authoritative text that escapes the impurities incurred by the citations and re-iterations of the Nazis, and that can still provide the historical lessons relevant for current international politics.

His first move in this respect is to identify an author for the narrative of *Geopolitik*, one that can vouch for its purpose and intentions. For Ebeling, this function is fulfilled by the figure of Karl Haushofer. 'The rise and fall of *Geopolitik* is related to a period in history. Its development is directly connected with the person of Karl Haushofer. Before Karl Haushofer, there was no *Geopolitik* in Germany, and with his suicide in 1946 it disappeared from the political agenda and from the Germans' consciousness'.⁴⁸ To define *Geopolitik* in this fashion as the expression of one particular author allows Ebeling to avoid the free play of signifiers, the problem of citation, appropriation, grafting and re-presentation of texts. The truth of *Geopolitik* can now be ascertained if we re-trace its articulation in the work of Haushofer. And with this as the starting point, the necessary dissociation of *Geopolitik* from Nazism can be effected by demonstrating that Haushofer himself never truly was a Nazi, and that his writings contained central tenets that in fact contradicted Nazi ideology.

As for Haushofer's personal integrity, the fact that the Americans closed the investigation into his involvement with the Nazi party without an indictment serves as the warrant.⁴⁹ Moreover, in terms of political background and ideology, Haushofer is placed within the context of the anti-modernist conservatism of the Weimar Republic, positioning him in this way against the modernist and radically 'idealist' ideology of the Nazis.⁵⁰ Finally, the role of Haushofer as a policy advisor, his goal to provide 'substantial knowledge for political debate and practice', which Wehler sees as part of the problem of *Geopolitik*, is here rendered within a context of education and emancipation. *Geopolitik* 'should help the public to observe and evaluate the conduct of states, above all of Great Powers, in order to better assess the limits of political practices for their own country'.⁵¹

With Haushofer's personality and intentions thus dissociated from any immediate Nazi involvement, Ebeling proceeds to provide an 'authorised' reading of his texts. The discursive elements invoked in effect a sanitation of the text from any inherent Nazi ideology focus on the purported peaceable nature of *Geopolitik*.

The notion that *Geopolitik* was a means to limit or render unnecessary the use of force in international relations assumes a central role in this argumentation. Ebeling offers an epigraph to open his treatise: 'Nothing could be more mistaken than to relate the notion of global political dynamics with that of the use of force. The mind will always defeat the rapier'.⁵² The goal of *Geopolitik* is to understand the conditions and limitations of foreign policy making and statecraft, and thus to avoid war and the use of force. *Geopolitik* in this rendition sees war not as the state of nature of the international system, but as its extreme exception and a discontinuation of historical processes, 'an artificial intervention into the evolution of the international community'.⁵³ Political practice was to be brought into harmony with the conditions and requirements of the spatial order of the international system. *Geopolitik*, in Ebeling's rendition, is therefore inherently conservative and sceptical towards excessively idealistic policies that pretend to be able to overcome these limitations. In particular, Hitler's plans for the conquest of Europe were doomed from the start, as they were based on a blatant disregard of geopolitical insights. *Geopolitik* could thus identify his expansionism as the 'delusions of an ignoramus. . . . The course and the outcome of the Second World War do not falsify geopolitical hypotheses; rather, they demonstrate the correctness of geopolitical assumptions'⁵⁴

The key to the creation of a much more peaceful order was the necessary transcendence of the division of Europe as manifested and institutionalised in the Versailles Treaty. Rather than being internally divided into victors and vanquished states, Europe would have to pursue the plan of a trans-national European space that was to be more than the sum of its parts. As such, it could present itself as a third *Großraum*, in a deliberate contrast to America and Asia.⁵⁵ Between and within these entities, a balance would have to be created that could accommodate a more just distribution of space. Each state should be assigned as much space as it needs – but not more. Against Realism and its theories of the transcendence and control of space, *Geopolitik* posits the natural limitation of states in terms of their ability to utilise space for their national purposes. Boundless imperialism paired with a disregard for spatial or geographical realities was to be rejected. For Germany this would mean a redrawing of its boundaries, in order to allow it to fulfil its destiny as the guardian of European interests and purpose. Germany as the carrier of the true spirit of Europe should lead in the creation of a European *Großraum*, against the status quo power France and the ambivalent stance of Great Britain.⁵⁶ This process was above all aimed at protecting Europe from the domination of the two lateral powers in world politics,

the Soviet Union, and the USA. Both powers, representing Socialism and Liberalism respectively, represented the principle of force (*Gewalt*) in the international system. 'Liberalism and Socialism, *Geopolitik* was certain, would do anything to banish the ideas of justice and equality for all peoples from global politics via the destruction of the European centre'.⁵⁷

Faced with the perceived adversity of the lateral powers and the continued attempts of France and Great Britain to weaken Germany, the mission to unite Europe under her leadership was endangered. Consequently, Haushofer demanded the German exit from the League of Nations, and formulated what he considered to be the 'right' of Germany to defend herself and her mission with force. His plan in the early 1930s now was 'a German Sonderweg with a goal of a united Europe'.⁵⁸

It seems at this point plausible to argue that Ebeling's attempts to sanitise *Geopolitik* from Nazi contamination are becoming increasingly tenuous. Apparently, the narrative of *Geopolitik* does not effect its own closure and remains open to citations, paraphrases and grafts for ideological purposes. Whether or not Haushofer himself was a Nazi becomes less relevant compared to the question to what extent his texts can be associated with Nazi ideology via grafts, citations, and references. I will return to this issue below.

While Ebeling tries to articulate comparatively moderate lessons to be learned from the inter-war period of *Geopolitik*, other proponents have been much more radical. Buck for instance has no problems re-formulating a theory of *Lebensraum* and presenting it as a continued problem for current German foreign policy.⁵⁹ Other 'geopoliticians' have re-discovered the countries between Germany and Russia as *Zwischeneuropa*, referring back to a notion first articulated in the 1920s, implying the tentative and unsettled political and territorial status of these countries. Given the political agenda of *Geopolitik*'s proponents, one has to agree with Bassin's assessment that this in fact amounts to 'theoretical foundation of sorts for challenging the legitimacy of a reunified Germany's existing international boundaries'.⁶⁰ What becomes even more clear in these latter cases than it does in Ebeling's project is that this approach is not so much about us looking back into history for guidance for contemporary problems, as it is about the past orienting itself towards the present and trying to finally realise political projects that were long since abandoned. Whereas the first approach worked through a historical decontextualisation, this second approach instead re-contextualises the present in terms of the past.

Geopolitik as Political Critique

The claims about a renewed relevance of *Geopolitik* at the end of the Cold War also extended beyond the articulation of a new German foreign policy into a public debate about the normative underpinnings of the traditional

policies. In this context, arguments based on the alleged 'renaissance of *Geopolitik*' were targeting the alleged *Machtvergessenheit* (an oblivious attitude towards power) of German foreign policy and the unwillingness to confidently assert the existence of a German national interest in international politics. In particular, the *Westbindung* (the strong institutional and ideational bond to the West) of German foreign policy was interpreted as an expression of a policy based on a wilful and ultimately counterproductive denial of certain geopolitical facts that determine the role Germany has to play in Europe. While the Cold War allowed Germany to hide behind the rigidity of a bi-polar international order, the breakdown of this order enables, even necessitates a reassessment of the costs and benefits of this central tenet of her foreign policy. Against the metaphysical idealisation of the *Westbindung*, the critics assert the reality of Germany's geopolitical location that situates her in a *Mittellage* in Europe. The West as a community of values cannot provide any purpose for Germany's foreign policy; it is erroneous to believe that 'foreign, security, and alliance political decisions can be grounded in specific societal (*gesellschaftspolitische*) preferences and options'.⁶¹ The orthodox commitment to the West as the cultural and ideational point of reference for Germany and the taboo imposed upon *Geopolitik* after the Second World War have to be understood as part of the peculiar structure of world politics during the Cold War and the trauma of Nazism. Yet with the collapse of this order, Germany is caught in a historical position 'between a no-longer and a not-yet', between a West, no longer identical with itself, and an East in transition. Germany rediscovers its *Mittellage*.⁶²

The rhetorical energy behind the rejection of the 'utopian and totalitarian'⁶³ dogma of the *Westbindung* and the assertion of a newly *selbstbewusste* German nation, able to define her national interest without the tutelage of Western powers and institutions would easily suggest the radical opening of new options for German foreign policy.⁶⁴ Significantly, the positive revalorisation of the notion of *Sonderweg* now even suggests a political course away from the strong bonds with Western institutions and values and a rejection of Germany's *Sonderrolle* as the bridge between East and West.⁶⁵

Yet despite the vigorous critique of the doctrine of *Westbindung* and the renewed fascination with Germany's *Mittellage* and its historical *Sonderweg*, many of the alternatives outlined by the proponents of *Geopolitik* are in effect remarkably conventional. The greatest danger conceivable in Ludwig Watzal's analysis appears to be the pursuit of a 'utopia of a total Western integration of Germany into a European federal state', yet at the same time, it is repeatedly recognised that the '*orientation* towards the West' offers many chances and opportunities for Germany foreign policy.⁶⁶ Specific discussions of political issues often demand a modified strategy, but hardly ever question the institutional framework itself within which Germany conducts its international affairs. Thus, while EU integration as outlined in the Maastricht treaty is considered a mistake (*Irrweg*), as it attempts to take the process too far, German

membership in the EU and the overall logic of European cooperation is never cast in doubt.⁶⁷ With regard to NATO, Karl Feldmeyer argues that Germany needs to leave the tutelage of the Four Powers and the dependency on the United States behind. The traumatic attitude towards power, as revealed in the German willingness to accept an inferior position within the Alliance has to be overcome in favour of a clear formulation of German national interest. NATO will have to adapt to a fully sovereign German state. At the same time, the European security structure is inconceivable without the Alliance, and the option of Germany leaving NATO is not even contemplated.⁶⁸ And for Jochen Thies the new perspectives of German foreign policy include the cornerstones of a 'Europe-friendly orientation towards the West' and 'a close partnership (*Schulterschluss*) with the United States of America'.⁶⁹ Within this context, Germany is encouraged to articulate its own interests more assertively, while at the same time retaining a positive attitude towards European integration. Should the process of European integration fail, Germany should be prepared to become an actor on the world stage once again.⁷⁰ Generally, Germany will have to give up its reservations about power politics, while remaining sensitive towards its own history.

This perplexingly ambivalent oscillating between 'sowohl, als auch', of advice that tries to have it both ways isn't particularly helped by the insights of *Geopolitik*. 'The reality of the new *Mittellage* in Europe, the correlation between geography and politics, one could also say: *Geopolitik*, cannot be disputed. Directly at Germany's Eastern border begins a great crisis zone (*Erdbebenzone*, literally earthquake zone), that reaches all the way to Vladivostok'.⁷¹ Out of this zone emanates the most significant challenge facing Germany and Europe: migrants and asylum seekers.

What emerges in these is a *Geopolitik* that offers very little beyond rather general and superficial insights. The work of Thies and his colleagues therefore points to a first problem within the discourse of *Geopolitik* and its attempts to become policy-relevant in the post-Cold War foreign policy making in Germany. For all their acerbic criticism of the *Westbindung* orthodoxy and their fascination with the German *Sonderweg*, its representatives offer a shift of emphasis at best. *Westorientierung* replaces *Westbindung*, and an assertive expression of German national interest (a faint echo of the *Sonderweg*) is to supplant the alleged wilful submission to the tutelage of Western powers and institutions. It is only on its most radical margin, that *Geopolitik* completely rejects the normative basis of Cold War Germany's foreign policy and returns to the expansionist and revisionist policies it advocated in the 1920s and 1930s. Here, a project of territorial readjustments in the East reflect an unmitigated commitment to a notion of power politics that finds its origins in revived and highly problematic notions of *Lebensraum*, organic state, and historical calling.⁷²

In both its more moderate and its radicalised form, the new *Geopolitik* continues to be indebted to cultural and ideological commonplaces and

gestures. Within the texts reviewed here, this is expressed for instance in the placement of Germany in between a set of identities: a changing West and a transforming East. Thus, contrary to Großmann et al's assertion that societal values cannot determine a country's foreign policy choices, *Geopolitik's* first move to locate Germany in the post-Cold War era is once again to differentiate it from other societal value systems. Second, on a deeper level the ideological premises of 1990s *Geopolitik* can be discerned in the underlying assumptions about the nation state as the constitutive and virtually exclusive entity of the spatial order in Europe. For the supporters of *Geopolitik*, there exists a dichotomy in international politics that places statehood, power, and rationality against transnational integration, obliviousness towards power, and utopianism. If there is one concern they share and express clearly, it is the alleged need of Germany foreign policy makers to forego the idealistic and value-based orthodoxy of *Westbindung* for a realist(ic) assertion of German national interest. Germany, the argument goes, should first and foremost pursue its own national purpose within Europe. Its growing self-confidence and growing 'self-awareness' will lead to a new appreciation that the geopolitical space best suited for democracy's political stability remains the nation-state.⁷³ *Geopolitik's* primary concern is arguably the proclamation of a 'normal' and 'self-confident' German nation-state. To the extent that it actually offers any empirical analysis, it is based on and reflects this ultimately metaphysical commitment.

As Bassin emphasises in his review of the discursive field of the new *Geopolitik*, none of its proponents, and none of their ideas played anything but a marginal role in post-Cold War German foreign policy articulation.⁷⁴ This can partly be explained by the marginal positions of its proponents outside the foreign policy making mainstream. Yet to complete the picture we also need to understand the strategies employed by foreign policy makers in their responses to the revival of *Geopolitik* in at least parts of the political spectrum. The marginal status of *Geopolitik* was at least to some extent the result of repression instead of omission.

GEOPOLITIK AS THE OTHER

From a foreign policy perspective, the end of the Cold War also triggered the revival of old historical concerns about the role of a unified Germany in Europe. In many countries, public and political debates looked to past experiences with Germany to better assess the future of Europe.

The narratives on German reunification frequently emphasise that it had to be achieved against the resistance of some of Germany's closest allies. 'France and Great Britain accepted German unification only reluctantly. . . . From their perspective, Germany now has the freedom of choice – towards the West as well as towards the East'.⁷⁵ In response to this

resistance, the German government engaged in a comprehensive process of establishing a particular reading and interpretation of the meaning of German unification. From an analytical point of view, there are three *topoi* that can be discerned in this discursive campaign. These are 1) ‘*Verantwortungspolitik*’, that is, a policy guided by the principle of responsibility rather than the pursuit of power, 2) a ‘European Germany’, and 3) ‘*Westbindung*’.⁷⁶

*Verantwortungspolitik*⁷⁷

Interestingly enough, the first commonplace we find in the official German discourse in 1989–1991, at the eve and in the wake of reunification, was one that resonates with a *topos* from the *Geopolitik* narrative outlined above. German foreign policy, the argument goes, is responsible for the whole of Europe, and not just for Germany’s national interests in a narrowly defined fashion. Placed in the heart of Europe, the geographical position of Germany determines the course and purpose of its diplomacy. Above all, Germany bears a particular responsibility for the future of Europe and the overcoming of its division. As such, it cannot let a narrowly defined national interest guide her policy. *Verantwortungspolitik* for Europe is routinely contrasted with national *Machtspolitik* (power politics).⁷⁸ Germany, the argument goes, cannot pursue its own national interest and exercise its power without regard for repercussions of such a policy for the whole of Europe. A German *Sonderweg* is no longer an option.⁷⁹ Even before the end of the Cold War, as long as they existed, both German states were joined in a community of responsibility (*Verantwortungsgemeinschaft*) ‘for the peace in Europe’.⁸⁰ So once again, Germany conducts its foreign policy ‘in Europe’s name’⁸¹ burdened with the responsibility to move Europe ahead. However, within the new Europe it must take on a different role than the Germany of the 1920s and above all the 1930s. Germany now is confronted with ‘nightmares’ and ‘jarring noises’ from even friendly countries, confronted with the fact that more Europeans would prefer Germany to remain divided, and with a widely held fear that the reunification would entail a return to the old traditions of the first unified German nation-state⁸². Responsibility now has to be exercised as part of Europe, not as a separate agent.

Against the contemporary *Geopolitik* critics, the official discourse therefore emphasises the larger role and responsibility of Germany for the European order. In this sense, it in fact is closer to the *Geopolitik* of the 1920s and Haushofer’s ideas about a particular European role for Germany in terms of uniting and integrating the continent. ‘Geographical position’ again imposes this role upon Germany⁸³. There is, however, a crucial difference to be observed. Whereas Haushofer’s *Geopolitik* perceived the German *Sonderweg* in opposition to the liminal powers in East and West, the integration process in the 1990s is to be accomplished within a structure that includes the liberal countries in the West and the countries in the East,

including the Soviet Union. As for Germany itself, it has to accomplish a re-definition of its purpose. No longer aiming to create a German Europe, it has now to identify itself as a European Germany.

A European Germany

As the responsibility for the greater European context echoes a motif of the original version of *Geopolitik*, an additional element has to be introduced into the narrative in order to revalorise the notion of responsibility and extract it from the 'contaminated' context of the 1930s. This move is accomplished by the introduction of the *topos* of a European Germany. The commitment to this identity is supposed to counter the notion of a German Europe, a notion associated with the *Machtpolitik*, the old *Sonderweg*, and the historical disaster of Nazi Germany.

The association between Europe and Germany is hereby rendered in a double fashion. First, the division of Germany is equated with the division of Europe itself. Hence, overcoming the latter division must necessarily include overcoming the former. This way, the normative goal of ending the Cold War division in Europe also attaches itself to what is in the eyes of many countries in Europe the more problematic issue, that is, the unification of Germany. 'The ugly wall made of iron and concrete, that was erected across Germany had more to do with the structural statics of the European house than we often like to acknowledge'.⁸⁴ 'The division of Germany was always also the division of Europe'.⁸⁵ Whatever continues to divide East and West continues to separate Germans from Germans.⁸⁶ European unity entails national unification.⁸⁷ German policy must therefore always include a commitment to European unification⁸⁸.

This correlation between European and German division and unity leads over to a positive affirmation of the European(ised) identity of the latter. 'We don't want a German Europe, we want a European Germany'.⁸⁹ Germany's national and its European interests are identical.⁹⁰ 'Our policy is more national, the more European it is. History tells us: only as good Europeans can we be good Germans'.⁹¹

Westbindung

Further supporting the 'embeddedness' of a unified Germany is the network of Western or transatlantic institutions such as the EC and NATO. This network serves as a further safeguard against any German *Sonderweg* and related claims to sole leadership or superior status. German unification narrative resonates with assertions of cultural and institutional belonging. German is now a part of the West, linked 'in friendship, and cooperating in a close and trusting partnership, with the Western Allies, the USA, France, and Great Britain'. Moreover, this belonging 'was, is, and will remain of existential

significance for Germany'.⁹² Germany 'has become a thoroughly Western country. Our political culture is and remains formed by Western values'.⁹³ This sense of belonging has to be preserved and maintained, now that it is no longer based on mutual dependencies (between the USA and Germany) as it was during the Cold War. Mutual trust rather than expediency will be the cornerstone of this community henceforth.⁹⁴ 'The bitter lessons of history' are the incentives to make the 'firm and enduring "anchoring" (*Verankerung*) of Germany in the Atlantic Alliance and within the community of values of the free peoples of the West irrevocable'.⁹⁵ As for the European Community, Germany declares its willingness to transfer national sovereignty to the EC level with the goal to create a United States of Europe.⁹⁶ As for NATO, it will serve as the cornerstone of the security order to be created in Europe. In both cases, German 'embeddedness' in Western institutions guarantees that the temporal trajectory of its foreign policy is pointing to the future of a united and stable Europe, not to the past of a German *Sonderweg* and power politics. Germany is no longer a 'wanderer between East and West',⁹⁷ 'there will be no more German *Sonderwege* or nationalist "solo efforts" (*Alleingänge*)'.⁹⁸ Such solo efforts would be a 'relapse into the past'.⁹⁹

CONCLUSION

One can summarise the above analysis perhaps best in a paradox: while *Geopolitik* did not matter in post-Cold War Germany, geopolitics mattered.¹⁰⁰ Bassin's argument about the marginal status of the proponents of a new *Geopolitik* therefore needs to be supplemented with a finding that supports Reuber and Wolkersdorfer's case for the continued relevance of geopolitics in the unified Germany.¹⁰¹ The excerpts cited above clearly reflect a commitment to 'spatial metaphors', and a role for 'geographical imaginations' in the German foreign policy discourse in the 1990s.

The reason for this continued influence of geopolitics is simple enough. All international politics takes place within a spatially organised international system, and the definition of national identities, political roles, and collective allegiances have to reflect this. More interesting from the point of this paper is the question about the condition for its continued appearance in the storylines and narratives of German foreign policy. What 'political' or rhetorical strategy makes this micro level accessible to the macro level of the geographical imaginations? Here the answer is that geopolitics/*Geopolitik* must not speak its name. As Karsten Voigt inadvertently explains the paradox: we can talk about geopolitical issues, but we must not call it *Geopolitik*, as this imports the political and ideological connotations of a German past against which the reunified Germany defines its new identity. This, then, is the answer to the second question posed above. *Geopolitik* itself becomes a signifier for a historical 'Germany' that serves as the

constitutive other for the 'new' Germany. The 'geopoliticians' that seek to connect the new Germany with the old one in their texts effectively end up providing the material out of which the construction of the other is accomplished. At the same time, geopolitical categories were re-appropriated in order to construct a new national identity and political role for Germany. The continued relevance of geopolitics is in fact the condition of possibility for this rendition of *Geopolitik* as the other. Only within the horizon of a discourse that maintains the meaningfulness of geopolitical categories can this logic unfold effectively.

In summary, post-Cold War Germany experiences neither a renaissance of *Geopolitik*, nor a demise of geopolitics. The particular historical and ideological signification attached to the concept *Geopolitik* in the discourse on geopolitics/*Geopolitik* simply necessitates that the discourse of geopolitics/*Geopolitik* never acknowledges its own conceptual sources.

NOTES

1. Paul Reuber and Günter Wolkersdorfer, 'The Transformation of Europe and the German Contribution – Critical Geopolitics and Geopolitical Representations', *Geopolitics* 7/3 (Winter 2002) p. 39.

2. David Campbell, *Writing Security. United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity, Revised Edition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1998) p. 18.

3. *Ibid.* p. 4.

4. See the contributions in Stefano Guzzini, *Self-fulfilling Geopolitics? An Analysis of Geopolitical Thought in Post Cold-War Europe* (forthcoming).

5. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, 'Geopolitical Structures and Cultures: Towards Conceptual Clarity in the Critical Study of Geopolitics', in Lasha Tchantouridze (ed.), *Geopolitics: Global Problems and Regional Concerns*, Bison Paper #4. Centre for Defence and Security Studies (Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba 2004) p. 98.

6. Karsten D. Voigt, 'Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen und die neue Geopolitik', available at http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/ausgabe_archiv?archiv_id=3375 accessed 15 Sept. 2005. The relevant section in the original German reads as follows: 'Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren, vielen Dank für die freundliche Einführung. Ich fühle mich geehrt, in diesem Kreis über die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen und ein Thema, nämlich die Geopolitik, zu sprechen, das in Deutschland nach dem Ende des 2. Weltkrieges so nicht mehr bezeichnet werden würde'. This is the only time the term 'Geopolitik' is mentioned in the speech.

7. Ó Tuathail (note 5) p. 98.

8. This is admittedly a slightly simplified paraphrase of the model.

9. Jonathan Bach and Susanne Peters, 'The New Spirit of German Geopolitics', *Geopolitics* 7/3 (Winter 2002) p. 1.

10. By now this is the established methodological commitment of Critical Geopolitics; see Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics. The Politics of Writing Space* (London: Routledge 1996); also Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell 1994) pp. 9–14.

11. Ó Tuathail (note 10) p. 11.

12. Frank Ebeling, *Geopolitik. Karl Haushofer und seine Raumwissenschaft 1919–1945* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1994) pp. 51–52. The following analysis will build on Ebeling's detailed account of Haushofer's work.

13. Cited in *ibid.* p. 96.

14. *Ibid.* p. 98.

15. *Ibid.* p. 99.

16. *Ibid.* p. 107ff.

17. *Ibid.* p. 103.

18. Ibid. pp. 112–113.
19. Cited in *ibid.* p. 115.
20. Ibid. p. 117.
21. Ultimately, *Geopolitik* does not seem to be able to maintain its own claim that geography only determines political destiny, as a lot of explaining the latter rests on cultural rather than strictly geographical assumptions.
22. Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen. Text von 1932 mit einem Vorwort und drei Corollarien* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1991).
23. See for instance Karl-Eckhard Hahn's laundry list of 'economic, ecological, demographic, social, cultural, religious, political and military factors', all relevant 'if they refer to a particular territory' in his 'Westbindung und Interessenlage. Über die Renaissance der Geopolitik' in Heimo Schwilk and Ulrich Schacht (eds.), *Die Selbstbewusste Nation. "Anschwellender Bocksgesang" und weitere Beiträge zu einer deutschen Debatte* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag 1994) p. 329.
24. On the mutual constitution of citizenship and political space see my 'Citizenship, Nationhood and the Production of Political Space', *Citizenship Studies* 1/2 (July 1997).
25. Panajotis Kondylis, 'Der deutsche "Sonderweg" und die deutschen Perspektiven' in Rainer Zitelmann, Karlheinz Weissmann and Michael Grossheim (eds.), *Westbindung: Chancen und Risiken für Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen Verlag 1993) p. 26. See also Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen. Erster Band: Wandlungen des Verhaltens in den weltlichen Oberschichten des Abendlandes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1976) pp. 36ff.
26. Kondylis (note 25) p. 25.
27. Mark Bassin, 'Between Realism and the "New Right": Geopolitics in Germany in the 1990s', *Transactions of the British Institute of Geographers* 28/3 (2003) p. 363.
28. Ó Tuathail (note 10) p. 115ff.
29. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Entsorgung der deutschen Vergangenheit? Ein polemischer Essay zum "Historikerstreit"* (München: Beck 1988) p. 177ff.
30. Ibid. pp. 176–177. See also Wehler, *Preußen ist wieder chic . . . Politik und Polemik in zwanzig Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1983) pp. 60–61.
31. Wehler, *Entsorgung* (note 29) pp. 7–8.
32. Ibid. p. 7.
33. Ibid. p. 76. Wehler is citing Michael Stürmer here.
34. Bassin (note 27) p. 360.
35. Ibid. p. 351.
36. Felix Buck, *Geopolitik 2000. Deutschland in der Welt am Vorabend des 3. Jahrtausends* (Frankfurt am Main & Bonn: Report Verlag 1996) p. 8.
37. Ibid. p. 11.
38. Heinz Brill, 'Geopolitik und Geostrategie. Begründung – Degeneration – Neuansätze', *Verteidigungsanalysen. Berichte aus der Zentralen Forschungs- und Studienarbeit*, Amt für Studien und Übungen der Bundeswehr, Ausgabe 8, December 1993.
39. Klaus –Achim Boesler, 'Neue Ansätze der politischen Geographie und der Geopolitik zu Fragen der Sicherheit' in *Sicherheitspolitik an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert. Ausgewählte Themen – Strategien – Handlungsoptionen. Festschrift für Dieter Wellershoff*, Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik, Schriftenreihe zur neuen Sicherheitspolitik, Jahresband 94/95, pp. 75–87.
40. Brill (note 38) p. 5.
41. Wolfgang Schäuble and Carl Lamers, 'Überlegungen zur europäischen Politik', available at http://www.cdusu.de, schaeuble_lamers_papier_1994.pdf, p. 3, accessed 16 Dec. 2002.
42. On the blackmail implied in this logic see Joscha Schmierer, *Mein Name sei Europa. Einigung ohne Mythos und Utopie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag 1996) p. 135.
43. Bassin (note 27) pp. 357–358.
44. Rainer Sprengel, 'Geopolitik und Nationalsozialismus: Ende einer deutschen Fehlentwicklung oder fehlgeleiteter Diskurs?' in Irene Diekmann, Peter Krüger and Julius H. Schops (eds.), *Geopolitik. Grenzgänge im Zeitgeist, Band 1.1: 1890 bis 1945* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg 2000) p. 148.
45. Ebeling (note 12) p. 22.
46. Ibid. p. 24.
47. Ibid. p. 24.
48. Ibid. p. 24.
49. Ibid. p. 29.

50. Ibid. p. 134ff.
51. Ibid. p. 18.
52. Ibid. p. 16.
53. Ibid. p. 51.
54. Ibid. pp. 109–110.
55. Ibid. p. 40.
56. Ibid. p. 105ff.
57. Ibid. 1994, p. 103.
58. Ibid. 1994, p. 117.
59. See the quotes in Bassin (note 27) pp. 357–358.
60. Ibid. p. 360.
61. Michael Großheim, Karlheinz Weißmann and Rainer Zitelmann, 'Einleitung: "Wir Deutschen und der Westen"' in Zitelmann, Weißmann, and Großheim (note 25) p. 14.
62. Karl Schlögel, 'Deutschland: Land der Mitte, Land ohne Mitte' in Zitelmann, Weißmann and Großheim (eds.), *Westbindung* (note 25).
63. Großheim, Weißmann and Zitelmann, 'Einleitung' (note 25).
64. See the collection of articles in Schwilk and Schacht (eds.), *Selbstbewusste Nation* (note 23). The translation of the term 'selbstbewusst' reveals an interesting ambiguity in its meaning. Its conventional translation is 'self-confident' or 'self-assured'. A more philosophically inclined translation, however, would render it 'self-conscious', or even 'conscious about one's self', thus linking the demand for a more assertive politics with the notion of a distinctive German identity.
65. Mark Bassin 2004, 'The Two Faces of Contemporary Geopolitics', *Progress in Human Geography* 28/5 p. 623.
66. Großheim, Weißmann and Zitelmann, 'Einleitung' (note 25) p. 15.
67. Ludwig Watzal, 'Der Irrweg von Maastricht' in Zitelmann, Weißmann and Großheim, *Westbindung* (note 25) pp. 477–500.
68. Karl Feldmeyer, 'Die NATO und Deutschland nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Gegensatzes' in Zitelmann, Weißmann, Großheim, *Westbindung* (note 25) pp. 459–476. See also Michael J. Inacker, 'Macht und Moralität. Über eine neue deutsche Sicherheitspolitik' in Schwilk and Schacht, *Selbstbewusste Nation* (note 23) pp. 364–380.
69. Jochen Thies, 'Perspektiven deutscher Außenpolitik' in Zitelmann, Weißmann and Großheim, *Westbindung* (note 25) p. 527.
70. Ibid. pp. 534–535.
71. Ibid. p. 528.
72. Bassin (note 27) pp. 358–361.
73. Hahn, 'Westbindung' (note 23) p. 340.
74. Bassin (note 27) p. 351.
75. Thies, 'Perspektiven' (note 69) p. 524. See for instance the sceptical assessment in the secret memorandum of the British Foreign Office, based on a roundtable discussion about the future of Germany and Europe after unification; reprinted in German in Ulrich Wickert, *Angst vor Deutschland* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe 1990) pp. 222–228. Even the usually very diplomatically restrained former German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher concedes in his memoirs that 'I was under the impression that Mrs. Thatcher had reservations against German unification. Her repeated warnings against any changes in the status quo suggested that she came to terms with these developments only reluctantly'. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag 1995) p. 676.
76. These analytical categories correspond to a significant extent with Thomas Risse's 'three components of German foreign policy identity: civilising power, orientation towards Europe, and multilateralism. His 1993 study therefore confirms the stability of these discursive elements in Germany foreign policy making. See his 'Deutsche Identität und Außenpolitik', manuscript, 14 January 2003, available at http://www.fu-berlin.de/atasp/texte/030113_identitaet_risse.pdf, accessed 12 Jan 2005.
77. The document numbers in the following endnotes refer to the number assigned to the respective document in the anthology *Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Dokumente von 1949 bis 1994. Herausgegeben aus Anlaß des 125. Jubiläums des Auswärtigen Amtes* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik 1995). Page numbers refer to that volume. The anthology, edited by the German Foreign Office, comprises a selection of important documents pertaining to German foreign policy since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. The documents analysed in this article are all part of Section IV, German Unity (1989–1991).

78. 'Zum Gedenken an den 17. Juni 1953', document 202 (1989) p. 595; '44. Generalversammlung der Vereinten Nationen', document 204 (1989) p. 601; 'Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage der Nation', document 206 (1989) p. 615; 'Rückblick 1989 und Ausblick auf das neue Jahrzehnt', document 216 (1989) p. 654; 'Verpflichtende Erklärung zur deutschen Truppenreduzierung', document 233 (1990) p. 686.

79. 'Zum Gedenken an den 17. Juni 1953', document 202 (1989) p. 595; 'Sitzung des Deutschen Bundestages im Reichstagsgebäude in Berlin', document 245 (1990) p. 729.

80. 'Abschluß des dritten KSZE-Folgetreffens', document 194 (1989) p. 574; 'KRK- und VSBM-Verhandlungen', document 197 (1989) p. 579.

81. Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name. Germany and the Divided Continent* (London: Vintage 1994).

82. 'Zum Gedenken an den 17. Juni 1953', document 202 (1989) pp. 593–594.

83. 'Rückblick 1989 und Ausblick auf das neue Jahrzehnt', document 216 (1989) p. 655.

84. 'Zum Gedenken an den 17. Juni 1953', document 202 (1989) p. 594.

85. 'Ansprache von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl zur Eröffnung der Konferenz für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit in Europa (KWZE) in Bonn am 19. März 1990', document 219 (1990) p. 661.

86. 'Rückblick 1989 und Ausblick auf das neue Jahrzehnt', document 216 (1989) p. 655.

87. 'Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage der Nation', document 206 (1989) p. 612; '46. Generalversammlung der Vereinten Nationen in New York', document 269 (1991) p. 821.

88. 'Die Zukunft der Deutschen in Europa', document 227 (1990) p. 677; 'Verpflichtende Erklärung zur deutschen Truppenreduzierung', document 233 (1990) p. 686; 'Botschaft von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl zum Tag der deutschen Einheit an alle Regierungen der Welt, mit denen das vereinte Deutschland diplomatische Beziehungen unterhält, vom 3. Oktober 1990', document 243 (1990) p. 719; 'Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl vom 22. November 1990 zu den Ergebnissen des KSZE-Gipfeltreffens in Paris und zum bevorstehenden Europäischen Rat in Rom', document 253.2 (1990) p. 768.

89. '45. Generalversammlung der Vereinten Nationen', document 238 (1990) p. 710; 'Rede des Bundesministers des Auswärtigen, Genscher, zur Unterzeichnung des Vertrages, in Warschau am 14. November 1990', document 249.2 (1990) p. 748.

90. 'Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage der Nation', document 206 (1989) p. 614.

91. 'Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage der Nation', document 206 (1989) p. 616.

92. 'Ziele und Aufgaben der Außenpolitik', document 199 (1989) p. 585.

93. 'Zum Gedenken an den 17. Juni 1953', document 202 (1989) p. 595.

94. 'Zum Gedenken an den 17. Juni 1953', document 202 (1989) p. 598.

95. 'Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage der Nation', document 206 (1989) p. 611; see also *ibid.* p. 614; 'Ansprache von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl zur Eröffnung der Konferenz für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit in Europa (KWZE) in Bonn am 19. März 1990', document 219 (1990) p. 662; 'Die Zukunft der Deutschen in Europa', document 227 (1990) p. 678; 'Botschaft von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl zum Tag der deutschen Einheit an alle Regierungen der Welt, mit denen das vereinte Deutschland diplomatische Beziehungen unterhält, vom 3. Oktober 1990', document 243 (1990) p. 719; 'Staatsakt in der Philharmonie in Berlin am 3. Oktober 1990', document 244 (1990) p. 722; 'Sitzung des Deutschen Bundestages im Reichstagsgebäude in Berlin', document 245 (1990) p. 729; 'Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 14. Januar 1991', document 258 (1991) p. 786.

96. 'Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl vom 22. November 1990 zu den Ergebnissen des KSZE-Gipfeltreffens in Paris und zum bevorstehenden Europäischen Rat in Rom', document 253.2 (1990) p. 768.

97. 'Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage der Nation', document 206 (1989) p. 611; 'Zum Gedenken an den 17. Juni 1953', document 202 (1989) p. 595.

98. 'Sitzung des Deutschen Bundestages im Reichstagsgebäude in Berlin', document 245 (1990) p. 729; 'Ansprache von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl zur Eröffnung der Konferenz für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit in Europa (KWZE) in Bonn am 19. März 1990', document 219 (1990) p. 662.

99. 'Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage der Nation', document 206 (1989) p. 614.

100. This echoes van der Wusten and Dijkink's argument about the relation between *Ostpolitik* and geopolitics, see Herman van der Wusten and Gertjan Dijkink, 'German, British and French Geopolitics: The Enduring Differences', *Geopolitics* 7/3 (Winter 2002) p. 28.

101. Reuber and Wolkersdorfer (note 1).