

Chapter One

Of Blood and Soil

The Death of German Geopolitics

A concern with the politics of earth first emerged in Germany in the late nineteenth century as geographers like Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) and his disciple Karl Haushofer (1869–1946) sought to examine the causal influence that a nation's position, climate or access to natural resources had on its rise and fall. In turning to the concepts and ideas popular in the natural sciences, 'German geopolitics' became known for developing a political theory that naturalised both the territorial configurations of global politics and the phenomenon of interstate war. Whilst geopolitical traditions were mushrooming elsewhere, too, German geopolitics was particular in its understanding of the state as a political life form (an organism) that tried to secure its survival by conquering and defending *Lebensraum* (living space). In the sense of articulating a theory of the interplay of life and earth, these ideas were biopolitical in as much as they were geopolitical. Indeed, we owe the terms 'geopolitics' and 'biopolitics' to Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922), another of Ratzel's followers (Kjellén 1920: 94).

Much like Halford Mackinder's perhaps more widely known brand of 'British geopolitics' (see in particular Kearns 2009; Mackinder 1904), German geopolitics was mesmerised by what it saw as the eternal struggle between land and sea power. Indeed, Haushofer argued for an alliance of the land powers of Germany and Russia to counter what he saw as the predominance of Anglo-American naval power. Haushofer and his contemporaries furthermore displayed a Malthusian

concern with overpopulation and desired for Germany to break out of its unfavourable centric position in Europe and establish a greater pan-Germany (Haushofer 1926[1979]: 532). Preoccupied with the idea of autarky, German geopolitics also encouraged an economy that would be self-sufficient rather than relying on trade with other nations. For Kjellén, the nation-state should, 'if necessary', be able to survive autonomously – 'behind closed doors' (Kjellén 1917: 162).

The proponents of German geopolitics would soon make a name for themselves by promoting their view of states as organisms that could grow and shrink and that were rooted in the territorial 'soil' on which they stood. In dialogue with the Darwinian ideas of his time, Ratzel wrote about state behaviour as a relentless struggle for 'survival' or 'being' (*Kampf ums Dasein*), which he saw in fact as a struggle for space (Ratzel 1901). Germany, the geopoliticians felt, needed to expand its living space in order to survive. This led to an emphasis on territorial space as a marker of a state's well-being. Indeed, Rudolf Kjellén thought it less problematic for a state to experience population loss than territorial loss (Kjellén 1917: 57). Finally, geopolitics was obsessed with questions of death, extinction and ruin, leitmotifs that emerged both from a social Darwinian preoccupation with survival and extinction as well as from a cyclical understanding of history. A key medium for the proliferation of geopolitical ideas during the interwar period and into World War II was the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, founded by Karl Haushofer and Kurt Vowinckel in 1924.

German geopolitics would perhaps have remained a footnote in world history had Karl Haushofer not in 1924 been introduced to the as yet comparatively unknown Austrian politician Adolf Hitler, who was then putting together his manifesto, *Mein Kampf*. Given the geopolitical tone of significant parts of *Mein Kampf*, Haushofer would later be credited in the United States as the mastermind behind Nazi foreign policy (Ó Tuathail 1996). This idea of Haushofer as an *éminence grise* whose fictitious *Institut für Geopolitik* guided Nazi foreign policy has since been shown to be a myth (Murphy 2014). In fact, Haushofer's theory had 'long been drowned out by Hitler's ever-escalating pace of diplomatic crises, war, and extermination' by the time of the attack on the Soviet Union (Herwig 1999: 236; see also Murphy 1997: 244). Although Nazi ideologues continued to publish on questions of *Lebensraum* well into the war (Daitz 1943), Haushofer and Ratzel's geopolitics was in fact not in accord with Nazi ideology because it displayed an ambivalence towards the Third Reich's biological theory of race (Bassin 1987a). Despite these crucial ideological differences and the fact that Haushofer had even fallen out of favour with the Nazis, he came under attack after the war and would subsequently commit suicide in 1946. His suicide note famously asked for him to be 'forgotten and forgotten' (Haushofer 1946).

The story of this 'Faustian deal' between German geopolitics and the Nazis (Barnes & Abrahamsson 2015: 64) remains a crucial episode within the history of the geographical discipline until this day.¹ This story of German geopolitics is

always told in much the same way, namely as that of a temporally confined period that starts with the publication of Ratzel's *Politische Geographie* in 1897 and ends in 1946 with Haushofer's suicide (Agnew 2003; Dodds 2007; Dittmer & Sharp 2014; Mamadouh, 2005; Ó Tuathail 1996). This, of course, does not mean that existing histories of geopolitics end in 1946, for geopolitics had a central role to play during the Cold War, as many observers have recognised (Dalby 1988, 1990; Dodds 2003; Ó Tuathail 1996). And yet, the existing literature has tended to see geopolitics as having managed to survive World War II precisely by renouncing its specifically *German* variant. In this reading, Cold War geopolitics, as it was articulated in the United States and elsewhere, is deemed to lack the biopolitical underside of a Ratzelian or Haushoferian geopolitics (Werber 2014: 143). This, as we will see, is certainly not the case.

Even in the work of those who have explicitly sought to explore the remains of German geopolitics after 1945, geopolitics is overwhelmingly seen to have been silenced in both the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). In this vein, postwar German Geographers like Troll (1949: 135) and Boesler (1983: 44) would speak self-evidentially of German geopolitics as having 'collapsed' (see also Michel 2016: 137). Others would suggest that the subdiscipline of political geography was 'marginalised' (Kost 1988: 2), whilst the wider discourses of geopolitics were 'stigmatised' (Kost 1989: 369). More recently, the historian Karl Schlögel (2011: 12) has bemoaned 'a lost tradition' of spatial thinking in Germany with the geographer Paul Reuber (2012: 90) writing of 'decades of complete silence' from geopolitical voices in German-speaking academia. Others have gone so far as to suggest that the Federal Republic 'civilianised' its geopolitics after 1945, swapping jackboots for Birkenstock sandals (Bachmann 2009).² We can find echoes of this kind of thinking in the idea that in the early twenty-first century the so-called 'German question' has only re-emerged in geo-economic rather than a geopolitical form (Kundnani 2014) or in the crude insistence that Germany is a 'quasi-pacifist' power (Kaplan 2012: 11).

This idea of a 'silence' around geopolitical concepts and ideas would seem to imply that the Germans heeded to Karl Haushofer's desire to disappear intellectually. In this way, observers have described his political testament as a 'funereal summing up of the demise of German geopolitics following the Nazi defeat in World War II' (Giles 1990: 13). But here we should not necessarily do Haushofer – or indeed his enemies – the favour of assuming that his ideas, and those of German geopolitics more generally, did indeed disappear alongside him. For although political geography *was* limited to the fringes of the geographical discipline in Germany and the terminology of geopolitics was indeed taboo in mainstream politics, this should not be read as evidence that *all* geopolitical writing was tabooed in Germany. Indeed, Bach and Peters (2002: 1) have remarked in passing that geopolitics 'never ceased to be a factor in German politics'. As Sprengel noted as early as 1996, however, such claims remain to be investigated in detail (Sprengel 1996: 36).

This book, then, sets out to establish what happened to this politics of life and earth *after* 1945. It argues that the twentieth century witnessed a second attempt to put a programme of geo- and biopolitics into practice in Germany, for an obsession with questions of national survival and space re-emerged through the equally geopolitical project of the Cold War in which the Bonn Republic, as the larger of the Third Reich's successor states, participated enthusiastically in the 1950s and 1960s. Like the Third Reich, the Cold War too expressed its logic of survival and extermination in material form. This resurfacing, or rather submersion, of geo- and biopolitics in architectural form is puzzling given the seeming stigmatisation of geo- and biopolitics in post-1945 Germany. Nazi imperialism and the medicalising logic of extermination was seen, first by the Allies but increasingly by the majority of Germans too, as the root cause of a catastrophe that was not merely national but global in scale.

If we wish to unpack the seeming paradox as to why a particular amalgamation of geo- and biopolitics managed to survive its own funeral, I argue that we need to take seriously not just the level of intellectual discourse, where Ratzelian and Haushoferian concepts would cautiously re-emerge during the 1950s, but also pay attention to the militarised landscapes and subterranean spaces that the Cold War has left us with. For it is precisely here that we can get a sense of how this obsession with spaces of national survival managed itself to survive. As I will argue below, the Cold War turned the Nazi fantasy of the conquest for new *Lebensraum* into a more modest, though nevertheless bio- and geopolitical, fantasy of finding an *Überlebensraum* – a space of survival.

West Germany and the Bomb

After the demise of the Third Reich, Germany disappeared from the map of European politics as a major power. Given the extent of the German war crimes and the scale of its defeat, its two successor states had to tread carefully in the international arena. Founded in 1949, only three years after Karl Haushofer's death, both the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic rejected not just the Third Reich's politics of extermination but also the tradition of German geopolitical thought that was now seen to have been the driving force behind Nazi expansionism. Indeed, the term geopolitics was rarely used in West German mainstream political discourse in the decades after the war, other than to discredit an opponent.

Although geopolitics was thus tabooed as a mode of thought in West Germany, it is important not to be deceived here, for geopolitics, as a discourse on global power struggles, was still very much alive. Bound to its Western allies, the young West German state swiftly adopted a rather radical version of Cold War geopolitics. From the early 1950s onwards, anti-Soviet sentiments would return to the fore, promoted by former Wehrmacht generals and the young republic's political



Figure 1.1 Konrad Adenauer on a visit to the United States (1961). Source: Das Bundesarchiv. Reproduced with permission.

elites. Some of these new geopoliticians would soon become advisors to the new German army, the Bundeswehr, their ideas chiming well with Konrad Adenauer, the Federal Republic's first chancellor (1949–1963). A devoted anti-Communist, Adenauer (Figure 1.1) soon became known for his hardnosed 'policy of strength' vis-à-vis the Soviet Union (*Politik der Stärke*) and the unambiguous 'Western orientation' (*Westbindung*) of German foreign policy, both of which formed important parts of the country's dominant foreign political narrative until the 1970s – and arguably after that, too.

Whilst Adenauer made sure to avoid the now discredited terminology of *Lebensraum*, his worldview was nevertheless geopolitical. In 1954, the same year that *Time* magazine made him 'man of the year', *Life* ran a special issue on the new West German ally, in which Adenauer was invited to lay out his vision. In true geopolitical manner, he explained to his American audience that 'an *Atlas of World History*' showed 'much more directly' than did written history that the 'area of Europe-Asia landmass in which freedom still prevail[ed]' had become 'frighteningly small in Europe since Russia's power reached the Elbe' (Adenauer 1954: 26). For Adenauer, the river Elbe, which served as a segment of the iron curtain, was

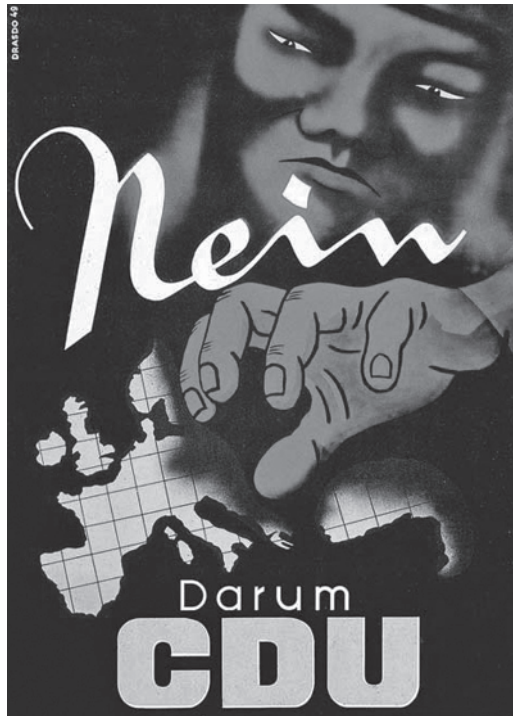


Figure 1.2 Conservative election poster: ‘No – therefore CDU’ (1949). Source: © Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2017. Reproduced with permission.

no less than *the* boundary between Western civilisation and Eastern barbarism. In 1946, he famously warned that ‘Asia was on the river Elbe’, a statement that tapped into familiar racial representations of the Soviet Union (Adenauer 1946, see also Figure 1.2). Adenauer argued that the Soviet Union would simply ‘over-run the rest of Europe’ if it were to advance to the river Rhine (Adenauer 1949) and feared that ‘the aggressive imperialism of Soviet Russia’ would drive the United States out of Western Europe (Adenauer 1951). West Germany’s ideological compatibility with the Western Allies’ struggle with the USSR and its ‘strategic’ position in Central Europe was what permitted Adenauer’s Federal Republic to join the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1955.

Whilst West Germany was integrating into a military alliance that was actively preparing for a war with the Soviet Union, it was of course also interested in preventing the outbreak of such a war. A Third World War was likely to turn nuclear and thereby threaten to devastate the country for a second time in the space of just a few years. As a semi-sovereign state and a frontline territory, West Germany’s

strategic choices were of course limited. But rather than experimenting with a policy of neutrality, successive West German governments were convinced that they could only secure the country's independence from the Soviet Union by embracing the North Atlantic alliance and its policy of nuclear deterrence.

Indeed, Adenauer repeatedly rejected neutrality in the Cold War, claiming that 'the winds would blow radioactive clouds even over a Germany [...] that had declared itself to be neutral' (Adenauer 1957). The administration in Bonn, the new West German capital, was thus broadly in favour of NATO's nuclear arms buildup, for it felt that the irrationality of a nuclear war was the only chance to prevent a conventional war 'on German soil'. Thus, after joining NATO in 1955, Bonn tried to lobby the alliance for a policy of hardline nuclear deterrence. Indeed, the young semi-sovereign West German state had been keen to develop its own nuclear weapons programme, but had been forced to renounce any ambitions of acquiring atomic, biological or chemical weapons at an early stage. Too controversial was the idea that Bonn would accomplish what the Third Reich had failed to achieve. And yet, NATO soon worked out a compromise, the so-called nuclear sharing initiative, which allowed non-nuclear powers like West Germany to participate in nuclear planning, stationing and delivery of nuclear weapons. As a consequence, the West Germans could at least simulate some form of nuclear status.

In a sense, however, this policy only allowed Bonn participation in what had already begun on the ground, namely the arming of West German territory with US battlefield or tactical nuclear weapons. Tactical nuclear weapons are small-yield and short-range nuclear missiles and bombs that are primarily designed for use in battle. They are usually distinguished both from high-yield *strategic* nuclear missiles that are launched initially from aircraft and later from missile silos and nuclear submarines that are meant to take out entire cities or large military installations. Whilst tactical nuclear weapons were meant to make up for Western Europe's perceived conventional military weakness vis-à-vis the Red Army, their 'military value could never be properly explained' (Freedman 2013: 171). Given that tactical nuclear weapons were often mobile, they were much less exposed to enemy attack than stationary missile launch silos. This meant that they were something of an unknown quantity that could escalate a conventional military war and transform it into an all-out nuclear Armageddon.

Starting in the early 1950s, the nuclearisation of West Germany had met little resistance from the leadership in Bonn, but in order to build a consensus amongst the population the government had to euphemise these new weapons. And so, in 1957, Chancellor Adenauer would declare that tactical nuclear weapons were 'nothing but the further development of the artillery' (Der Spiegel 1957, see Figure 1.3). As historians started to point out by the late 1980s, West Germany's frontline soldiers had in the 1950s been assigned 'the task of staving off a Soviet assault long enough for NATO to drop nuclear warheads above them', rendering them the 'atomic cannon fodder of a future war' (Cioc 1988: 9). In the early



Figure 1.3 Tactical nuclear weapons paraded on the Nürburgring (1969). Source: Das Bundesarchiv. Reproduced with permission.

1980s, the growing anti-nuclear movement would argue that NATO's first use doctrine would destroy what it meant to defend and therefore constituted a 'suicidal form of defence' (Afheldt 1983: 13).

This suicidal politics was not unique to West Germany. As the social theorist Paul Virilio has argued more generally about the relationship between modern war and the state,

As destruction became a form of production, war expanded, not only to the limits of space but to all of reality. The conflict had become limitless and therefore endless. It would not come to an end, and, in 1945, the atomic situation would perpetuate it: the state had become suicidal (Virilio 1975: 58).

If we wish to understand this paradoxically suicidal politics that emerged in Cold War West Germany in crystallised form – but which was more generally characteristic of the Cold War – then we need to read Virilio's statement in conjunction with contemporary debates around biopolitics. As Michel Foucault would come to argue, '[i]f genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill, it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population' (Foucault 1978: 137).

Towards a Cold War Biopolitics

Fueled primarily by its prominent role in theorising the global war on terror, biopolitics has now established itself as an important focal point for debate across human geography and has inspired scholarship on topics as diverse as migration, HIV, airports, climate change and food provision (for an overview see Rutherford & Rutherford 2013). The concept of biopolitics tries to capture how the production and protection of life is articulated with the proliferation of death. Biopolitics, in other words, is the moment when politics is applied to the boundary between the natural and the social, indeed to life itself (Lemke 2011). In political geography in particular, notions of the biopolitical have been drawn on to examine the re-emergence of the camp in the war on terror and the US-led occupation of Iraq (Diken & Lautsen 2006; Gregory 2007; Minca 2005, 2006, 2015), the Arab–Israeli conflict (Ramadan 2009) and in post-9/11 border regimes (Amoore 2006; Sparke 2006; Vaughan-Williams 2009, 2015). In doing so, political geographers have made a powerful connection between Nazi biopolitics, on the one hand, and the contemporary security state, on the other.

Geographers have tended to approach biopolitics through the works of two social theorists, Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben.³ Foucault began in the late 1970s to trace the ways in which life itself had increasingly become the object of modern governmental practices. He famously argued that the sovereign's old right over life and death had increasingly given way to a new power, a power of fostering life, even to the point of disallowing it. In his words, 'the right to take life or let live' was replaced by 'the right to make live and let die' (Foucault 1976: 241, 1978: 137). Rather than seeing biopolitics as a response and remedy to violence and war, Foucault saw them as compatible. The death of inferior forms of life made the life of the population healthier. Controversially, he argued that a form of power that combined the right to kill and the exposure to death 'was inscribed in the workings of all states' (Foucault 1976: 260). In an often quoted passage, Foucault argues that

Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilised for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many to be killed (1978: 137).

And yet, what often gets missed when this passage is taken out of context is that Foucault was in fact speaking about nuclear war. For he continues,

through a turn that closes the circle, as the technology of wars has caused them to tend increasingly toward all-out destruction, the decision that initiates them and the one that terminates them are in fact increasingly informed by the naked question of

survival. The atomic situation is now at the end point of this process: the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual's continued existence (ibid.).

Even nuclear war, Foucault held, was thus fought not in the name of the sovereign but legitimated through the preservation of the population's life – paradoxically to the point of risking its very death (Foucault 1976: 253).

More recently, Giorgio Agamben has built on these pioneering insights but departing from Foucault by refocusing biopolitics on the question of sovereignty and the law. Zooming in on the simultaneously legal and extra-legal logic of the state of exception, a conceptual focus he takes from Carl Schmitt (1922[2005]), he has argued that sovereign power constitutes itself and its counterpart, 'bare life', in and through exceptional spaces. In a now widely familiar argument, Agamben traces this production of bare life back to a distinction in Ancient Greek between political (*bios*) and natural life (*zoe*). He claims that biopolitics functions as the calculation, government and abandonment of *zoe*, though in ways that ultimately include it through its very exclusion. He finds this rendering of bare life again in the Roman legal figure of *homo sacer*, an expellee from the community who cannot be meaningfully sacrificed and can therefore be killed with impunity (Agamben 1998: 102). *Homo sacer* is human existence that has been deprived of its rights and its political voice – life that is exposed to death. Through a process of progressive normalisation, Agamben argues, states of exception have a tendency to turn democracies into dictatorships and render their citizens potential *homines sacri* (ibid.: 111).

Agamben has held that these logics were most visible in the Third Reich's rule of emergency decrees and more specifically in the tightly sealed and hygienic space of the concentration and death camp. As Minca (2005: 407) following Agamben puts it, sovereign power requires the camp as 'a material and mappable space within which violence becomes the constitutive element of *both* the torturer and the victim'. In this reading, the Nazi camps must be grasped as intimately intertwined with the fantasy of an Eastern empire. 'The "shrinking" of the internal spaces of the camp', Giaccaria and Minca (2011a: 5) have held, 'was a functional and symbolic counter-dimension to the expansive nature of German *lebensraum*'. The vast and open living space, in other words, relied on the cramped and concentrated space of the camp as a means of racial 'purification'. Like others before him (Bauman 1989), Agamben suggests that the deadly dimension of biopolitics (thanatopolitics) as materialised in Auschwitz was not so much a flaw in the project of modernity as its constitutive and repressed underside. The camp, in other words, was and remains today the hidden paradigm of Western modernity (Agamben 1998: 181).

This politically pessimistic reading of Western modernity has not been without its critics. Ernesto Laclau has accused Agamben of a 'naïve teleologism' that fails to see the messiness of modern biopolitics and precludes the emergence of

modernity's emancipatory potential (Laclau 2007: 22). Pushing this critique further, Mark Mazower has questioned whether Auschwitz should be read as *the* symbol of the genocidal episode of World War II. He points especially to the death of 2.1 million Soviet soldiers in German POW camps during 1941/42 that occurred as part of a logistic failure rather than the bureaucratic and medicalising logic of biopolitics foregrounded by Agamben (Mazower 2008: 31). This latter point highlights an important omission in both Foucault's and Agamben's original theorisation of biopolitics, namely the question of geopolitics, military logistics and the embeddedness of the Holocaust in a wider landscape of total war.⁴ This absence is particularly surprising given that the term 'biopolitics' originates in the work of an aforementioned geopolitician, the Swede Rudolf Kjellén.

By focusing its analysis on the war on terror and the geographies of the Third Reich, the literature on biopolitics has moreover, with few exceptions (Collier & Lakoff 2015; Monteyne 2011),⁵ overlooked the Cold War as a biopolitical set of events. Whilst geographers have long argued that Cold War geopolitics emerged smoothly from Nazi (Ó Tuathail 1996: 87) and imperial geopolitics (MacDonald 2006b), the relationship between Nazi and Cold War biopolitics is yet to be systematically explored. This is perhaps somewhat surprising given that the Cold War was a formative period for political geography. Indeed, the last years of the Cold War served as the political milieu for the emergence of critical geopolitics, the body of literature that sets out to examine the persistence and political impact of geopolitical discourse (Dalby 1988, 1990a, 1990b; Ó Tuathail & Agnew 1992; Sharp 1993).

I argue that if we want to understand better the intersection of geo- and biopolitics, we must return to the works of those geographers who first articulated a theory of *Lebensraum*. The role that the tradition of German geopolitics played within the development of biopolitics is often noted (Esposito 2008: 16; Lemke 2011: 13), but rarely expanded on. When Kjellén first coined the concept of biopolitics in 1920, he expressed his desire to capture both the physical (read natural) and cultural (read social) dimensions of life (Kjellén 1920: 94). Geopolitics, on the other hand, for him was the 'doctrine of the state as a geographical organism or as a phenomenon in space' (Kjellén 1917: 46). From their conceptual origins, the *geo* and the *bio* were thus difficult to disentangle. Haushofer, for instance, would refer in the 1930s to the phrase 'blood and soil' as 'an inextricable community' (Karl Haushofer 1935: 11). The phrase would play a crucial role in defining the German nation in territorial and racial terms under National Socialism in ways that would enable the extermination of those ethnicities that lacked a 'grip' on the soil. Following up on Roberto Esposito's claim that '[n]azism has much in common biopolitically with other modern regimes' (Esposito 2008: 111), it becomes necessary to grab biopolitics by its intellectual roots.

Geopolitics and biopolitics thus need to be considered together as two iconic forms of power that have operated at the very heart of modern statehood.

There is ‘no geopolitics that does not imply a correlate biopolitics, and no biopolitics without its corresponding geopolitics’, Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero (2008: 276) have us know. Stuart Elden adds that ‘geopolitics works with similar operative principles’ to biopolitics, namely calculation and metrics, ‘both categories emerged at a similar historical juncture as new ways of rendering, understanding and governing the people and land’ (Elden 2013: 49). Indeed, both geo- and biopolitics have a dark history: whilst we can find within the seemingly protective practice of biopolitics a much less benign policy of excluding forms of life that are deemed dangerous and unworthy, geopolitics has historically been used to legitimate territorial expansion and colonial oppression. As Giaccaria and Minca (2016: 3) argue, it is ‘difficult if not impossible to operate a distinction between life and space, between biopolitics and geopolitics, since the Third Reich incorporated *Lebensraum* by merging its duplicitous meaning, as living/vital space and as life-world’. Yet, whilst it most certainly makes sense to think geo- and biopolitics together, and it is of course the purpose of this book to do so, it is necessary to be aware of a conceptual tension between the two in the existing literature, a tension which this study attempts to bridge. Whereas geopolitics is often treated as a *body of knowledge* that is concerned with the mapping of territories, biopolitics is represented as a *mode of government* which targets the life of the population, fostering and abandoning it. More often than not, geopolitics is thus approached as a foreign political discourse and biopolitics as a practice of domestic politics.

Instead, geo- and biopolitics should be seen as dealing with *both* the domestic and the international realm and constituting *both* a body of knowledge on the state as organism (the tradition of German geopolitics) *and* a particular mode of governance (such as the German occupation of Eastern Europe during World War II and the nuclear politics of the Cold War). Moreover, I argue that we need to make a second important amendment to recent debates on biopolitics. We need to dethrone the camp as the most important space in which geo- and biopolitics intersect. For unless one assumes the concentration camp to be a mere metaphor for the politics of modernity, it is difficult to read it as the defining space of the Cold War. Of course, the Cold War’s many military conflicts, from Korea to Afghanistan, involved POW camps, but the Cold War did not simply see the death camp or indeed the fantasy of *Lebensraum* re-emerge in the same way in which they had played a role under National Socialism. Yet, a close look at what was arguably the most iconic of Cold War spaces will reveal a stealthy morphing and inverting, a moving underground and a pouring into concrete of the logic of *Lebensraum*. In order to grasp the latter, it is necessary to grapple with a very particular form of passive aggressive architecture and a biopolitical space in its own right, the bunker. In doing so, we will reveal the return of the extermination camp, though this time as a space from which the production of the corpse has been outsourced.

The Bunker and the Camp

Whilst the bunker has its origins in the context of World War I trench warfare, it came to the fore in the course of the technological possibility and political will to take out whole cities in World War II. Crucial to any understanding of the bunker's spatial politics is the work of Paul Virilio and his conception of the bunker as a spectacular, cryptic and insecure monolith. Captivated by the aesthetics of Hitler's Atlantic wall, his seminal *Bunker Archaeology* (1975) approaches the bunker as a monolithic space that promises survival in an era of total war, an age in which weapons have become so omnipotent that distance can no longer act protectively. Virilio discusses the bunker as a paradoxically secure and insecure space. Although the Atlantic wall was the harbinger of a new age of total war (1975: 45), it was also as a symbol of weakness and imperial overstretch, a strategic still birth, as it were. But whereas for Virilio, the bunker is always theatrical, built for an external gaze from which it would seem impenetrable (ibid.: 47), its actual value is often psychological rather than strategic; it tries to forge an identity where such an identity is in fact under threat.⁶ We have already learned about Virilio's insistence that bunkers are cryptic in the sense of being places of shelter, worship and salvation.

It is specifically the subterranean celebration of death in the crypt that links the nuclear bunker to the biopolitical space of the camp. Indeed, as a subterranean survival capsule, the bunker emerges in the same political context as the death camp, chosen by Agamben as a symbol for modernity's underside – total war. As Esposito reminds us, it is only in such a war that one can kill 'with a therapeutic aim in mind, namely, the vital salvation of one's own people' (Esposito 2008: 136). It is precisely this logic of survival and extermination, which draws together social Darwinism, German geopolitics, total war and the complementary architectural spaces of the bunker and the camp.

In developing this argument, it is useful to follow Benjamin Bratton, who, in a 2006 foreword to Virilio's *Speed and Politics*, briefly stages an encounter between Virilio's writings on the bunker and Agamben's reading of the camp to argue that both spaces should be understood as 'doubles'. He notes that both are 'hygienic' and 'defensive' but whereas the bunker functions as 'a concrete prophylactic, the camp is incarcerating' (Bratton 2006: 19). Indeed, both spaces attempt a radical inside/outside distinction. Whilst one 'is an architectural membrane against a hostile world', the other performs 'an expulsion-by-enclosure of the Other from the normal performance of law' (ibid.). In fact, however, the nuclear bunker turns the biopolitical logic of the camp inside out. Whereas the Nazi empire's Eastern living space was punctuated by concentration and death camps, the subterranean living spaces of the nuclear bunker would be scattered across a potential landscape of Cold War extermination. Following Virilio, Bratton goes on to emphasise the role of logistics as the fundamental socio-technical condition of possibility for

both spaces, ‘where the only compulsion is the execution of governance on a raw mass, mobilising it, diagramming it’ (ibid.).

Any exploration of the similarities and dissimilarities between the nuclear bunker and the concentration camp will have to start by noting the obvious, namely that the Cold War, unlike World War II, did not fully unleash its logic of extermination. Bratton is right to identify the logistics of governance as being at the heart of the two spaces but his insistence that they are ‘often architecturally identical’ is more questionable. After all, it is difficult to see how the nuclear bunker’s reinforced concrete would resemble the notorious huts, fences, watch-towers and crematoria of Auschwitz. Moreover, it seems problematic to treat the nuclear bunker as a passive and static space, as Virilio does, since the bunker too is a place from which the Other is expelled. As I hope to illustrate below, Agamben’s sovereign decision over life and death became localised in the nuclear bunker and materialised in its architecture. In important ways, the protective space of the nuclear bunker reproduced and inverted the lethal space of the camp.

Whilst the nuclear weapons storage site was clearly a space with a concentration camp-like architecture from which extermination could be rationalised and planned, it was ultimately a potential death camp from which the bodies had been purged. In this sense, the camp was designed to keep intruders out rather than to incarcerate and exterminate on site. Moreover, although few civilians came into contact with these deadly spaces and their exact location was of course hidden, their existence *per se* was not kept secret. Indeed, NATO’s nuclear posture was publicly celebrated by the Cold War state and enjoyed considerable public support, too. Similarly, nuclear bunkers were not simply reproductions of the camp, but turned the latter’s biopolitics inside out. They were built as subterranean colonies, securing their privileged inhabitants from the nuclear holocaust outside.

Approach and Structure

By approaching the question of geo- and biopolitics both on the level of strategic discourse and on that of the built environment, this book hopes to contribute to a number of existing and emergent debates on the materiality of geopolitics. Whilst political geographers initially studied (Cold War) geopolitics by concentrating on elite and popular discourses under the banner of ‘critical geopolitics’ (Dalby 1990a, 1990b; Ó Tuathail & Agnew 1992; Ó Tuathail 1996; Sharp 1993, 2000b), the 2000s brought a wave of work that sought to venture beyond the mere textuality of geopolitics (Dittmer 2013; Müller 2008; Thrift 2000). Whilst feminist geographers began to draw attention to the corporeality and everyday fabric of geopolitics (Dowler & Sharp 2001; see also Dixon 2014), work around urban geopolitics increasingly focused on the construction and destruction of the

built environment in armed conflicts (Fregonese 2009, 2012a; Graham 2004a, 2010, 2016; Weizman 2007). As geographers started to return to the questions of materiality which had been barred by a resistance to historical materialism and classical geopolitics, arguments about the political agency of the earth, from deserts (Squire 2015) and oceans (Steinberg & Peters 2015) to its geologic forces (Clark 2013a, 2013b), were increasingly heard.

The consequence of this re-materialisation of geopolitics has been a new concern with the ‘enactment of bodies, things, and contexts that constitute the “landscape” of geopolitics’ (Squire 2015: 148). It is ‘to rethink our identities as agents of geological change, and in the process understand humanity’s role in the larger order of things in new ways’ (Dalby 2007: 112). As political geography has moved away from a concern with political boundaries and towards one with networks and fluids (Barry 2013a), political agency has been extended to non-humans (Dittmer 2013: 397). Although much of these debates have offered valuable additions and correctives to the textual preoccupations of a critical geopolitics, they have a tendency to lose the original subject out of sight, namely the intellectual tradition of geopolitics and the question of war and peace more broadly. There are of course arguments to be made as to why a narrow focus on the geopolitical tradition is problematic, but it seems as if much remains to be gained from an engagement with early twentieth-century geopolitical thought – for its conceptual categories may prove to be more resilient than is sometimes assumed.

Much of the debate on the materiality of geopolitics departs from the assumption that geopolitics is a flat discourse that neglects the vertical dimension of power, the way in which authority is administered from above (Elden 2013; Graham 2004, 2016). Similarly, it has been argued that the geographical abstractions inherent in geopolitics have shown a disinterest in the physical infrastructure that makes the state and modern warfare possible in the first place. These voices have taken their cue from Eyal Weizman who has held that geopolitics

largely ignores the vertical dimension and tends to look across rather than to cut through the landscape. This was the cartographic imagination inherited from the military and political spatialities of the modern state. Since both politics and law understand place only in terms of the map and the plan, territorial claims marked on maps assume that claims are applicable simultaneously above them and below (Weizman 2002: 2).

Of course, it is true that geopolitics has tended to map the world in two-dimensional ways, either representing things that are in reality under the earth’s surface or in its atmosphere cartographically or ignoring them altogether. And yet, as we will find out below, German Cold War strategists and civil defence planners had increasingly realised this problem by the 1950s by juxtaposing in their writings the geopolitical map and the architectural blueprint. It was

precisely the impossibility of territorial conquest and the destructive power of nuclear war that led these new geopoliticians to seek *Lebensraum* in the third dimension.

Interestingly, Cold War research has also experienced its own ‘material turn’. In the early 2000s, Rachel Woodward (2004: 5) had still rightly bemoaned that the material spaces of geopolitics and militarism still remained off limits for geographers (Woodward 2004: 5). Whilst historians and political scientists had long thought of the *architecture of the Cold War* as simply the balance of power, architectural historians had been obstructed by the fact that there is, as Vanderbilt (2002: 17) puts it, simply ‘no Le Corbusier of the missile silo’. As the Cold War slowly slipped away as a key referent point in political debates and many sites were abandoned by the military, geographers and urban planners started to become more interested in the places where this conflict quite literally ‘mattered’ (Bartolini 2015; Bennett 2011a; Davis 2008; MacDonald 2006b; see also Woodward 2014: 46). This has come at a time when journalists and scholars across the social sciences have started to take a more active interest in the period’s military landscapes, from atomic test ranges and listening stations to missile silos and deep shelters (Bennett 2017; Cocroft et al. 2005; Masco 2009; Monteyne 2011; Vanderbilt 2002; Wills 2001).⁷

Whilst this scholarship has offered us fascinating insights into the everyday politics and heritage of nuclear bunkers and missile silos, it must account for a number of lacunae, to which this book seeks to attend. Firstly, this literature has displayed an Anglo-American regional bias that has largely neglected the military landscapes of continental Europe. In this way, the bunkered Cold War society emerges as a reincarnation of the American frontier (Heefner 2012; Masco 2009) or of American consumer capitalism (Wills, forthcoming; see also Marcuse 1964[1999]: 93). Bunkers are seen to have been imagined as ‘spacious, ridiculously well-stocked playrooms with artificial sunlight and state-of-the-art entertainment systems, inhabitable for years and years’ (Vanderbilt 2002: 110–11) – but not as geo- and biopolitical spaces. Secondly, whilst this literature has drawn attention to the simultaneous exceptionality and everydayness of Cold War architecture, it has yet to systematically theorise notions of biopolitics. Moreover, with Cold War architecture frequently cast as an ‘amusing’ curiosity (Rose 2001: 12), its historical continuities with the aggressive architecture of National Socialism have so far gone unnoticed.

By re-materialising geopolitics without losing the intellectual tradition of geopolitics out of sight, I hope to show how ideas about the politics of life and earth were intimately entangled with the built environment during the Cold War. I seek to examine ‘the repressed spaces of nuclear modernism; that is, the social logics, technoscientific practices, and institutional effects that were rendered invisible by this national fixation on extinction’ (Masco 2006: 4). I am thus interested in the way in which discourses ‘enter into construction and how in consequence buildings or planned environments become statements’ (Hirst 2005: 158). In a Foucaultian

vein, this offers ‘a link between a discursive formation, the institutional conditions in which it becomes a practice, and the products of that practice’ (ibid.). This is to recognise the ways in which soldiers and civilians are placed ‘within symbols, not merely to write or speak about buildings in war, but to symbolise what mattered through the buildings themselves’ (ibid.: 192). That said, my point is not to reduce the question of materiality to its semiotic dimension. I am not just interested in how materials were politically instrumentalised, but also in how materials such as poured concrete or razor wire had a life of their own and sometimes managed to resist the purposes to which they were put. We will see both how the problem of human waste enabled a legally exceptional geography of sewage disposal in the West German government’s nuclear bunker and how the inability to hide the often gigantic sites of Cold War geopolitics attracted the anti-nuclear movement during the 1980s. And yet, I should clarify that I am not primarily interested in telling a story about material agency. There is little to suggest that the re-emergence of geo- and biopolitics will be materially produced. It is rather the entanglement of politics and technology, materials and ideas that this study sets out to explore. In making an argument about the relationship of discourse and materiality, this study develops three recurring themes: inversion, temporality and play.

Firstly, I argue that the geo- and biopolitical fantasies of national survival and extermination managed to survive the demise of fascism not just by going underground, where infrastructure was safe from blast waves and radiation, but by means of architectural inversion. Whilst the tactical nuclear missile camp sought to rationalise and enable the possibility of extermination, the nuclear bunker was designed to protect fragile human bodies from these very same forces of extermination. Whilst the former was designed as a space of self-extermination, the latter was to function as an inverted concentration camp, a space that protected its concentrated living space from the nuclear holocaust outside. Both spaces were effectively turned inside out and thereby obscured their architectural origins. As we will see below, we can find similar inversions of geopolitical concepts at a more intellectual level. A second returning theme through which the book seeks to link the discursive and the material is chronopolitics, the politics of time (Klinke 2013). I am particularly interested in teasing out the temporal relationships that are materialised in Cold War sites, such as the ideas of ‘time capsule’ and ‘post-apocalypse’ and the ways in which these concrete structures anticipated and tried to resist their own destruction. But I am also attuned to the ways in which a cyclical understanding of world politics that naturalises the rise and fall of nations found expression in the fantasy of the nuclear ruin.

A final theme through which I hope to link the Cold War’s built environments and the strategic narratives that sustained it is ludic geopolitics, and the current engagement with and debates around it (Carter, Kirby & Woodyer 2015; MacDonald 2008). For nuclear bunkers and missile sites did not just exist in a dormant state, but were often used playfully in preparation for a war that never came. In this, the book wishes to attend to the importance of studying the

‘everyday’ articulations of geopolitics even in ‘elite’ settings (Dittmer & Gray 2010; Pain & Smith 2008; Thrift 2000). I focus in particular on a number of NATO war games that were performed from the 1960s until the 1980s, and argue that they brought out and played on the German trauma of uricide and bunker life. In unpacking these ultimately rather *unplayful* games, I attempt to answer the question as to why West Germany, a state that was in many ways eager to construct itself as having broken with its national history, was in other ways very keen to repeat its historical mistakes. Why, to rephrase the question in a Freudian register, did the German elites compulsively repeat the trauma of geo- and biopolitical annihilation?

In terms of method, the book draws on a combination of archival research and intellectual history, as well as media analysis and web research. The bulk of archival materials are made up of declassified files from the 1950s and 1960s located in the Federal Archives in Koblenz and the German Military Archives in Freiburg. I have also drawn on a number of online archives, such as that of the German parliament and the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance. Given the Cold War state’s secrecy, the analysis is necessarily limited to what the Federal Republic has been willing to open up to the public. As many of the files on atomic weapons and nuclear bunkers were shredded at the time or remain classified today, my research also draws on East German intelligence located in the Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Records in Berlin and at the Military Archives in Freiburg. The analysis also offers a qualitative analysis of key West and East German daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, as well as a variety of informal publications, such as the pamphlets produced by the anti-nuclear movement. Finally, the book incorporates photographic documentation taken during fieldtrips to the sites at hand. Throughout, these materials are juxtaposed with historical photographs, mainly found in the Federal Archives. The point of this exercise is not just to make the Cold War landscapes come to life, as it were, but to suggest that the architectural forms that are produced in these nuclear landscapes invoke previous attempts to organise a society around the principles of survival and extermination.

The book is divided into seven chapters. This introductory chapter has set out the central argument; next up, a contextual chapter explores the origins of the intersection of geo- and biopolitics, both at the level of intellectual discourse and on that of material architecture before 1945. Four empirical chapters will then discuss, in turn, the renaissance of geopolitical thought in the 1950s, the birth of the nuclear bunker, the emergence of the tactical nuclear weapons camp, and finally the practice of nuclear war gaming. The concluding chapter outlines the study’s wider theoretical and political implications and poses questions about the nature of the Cold War’s geopolitical ruins.

Chapter 2 lays both the historical and conceptual basis for the discussion that informs subsequent chapters. I begin by unearthing a fascination with political earth and political life within the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century

tradition of German geopolitics. In doing so, I return to the foundational works of Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellén, Karl Haushofer and others associated with German geopolitics in an attempt to show how these theorists of *Lebensraum* were not just fascinated by the nation's vitality and growth, but also by its death, extinction and extermination. I use this to argue that we can find within the idea of *Lebensraum* the seed of necropolitics (the politics of death), understood both as an aesthetisation of death and as the intellectual basis for a policy of survival and extermination. In the second part of the chapter, I take a closer look at the first attempt to put such a programme of national survival and extermination into practice, the Third Reich's conquest of *Lebensraum* in Eastern Europe. I discuss in particular the bunker and the camp as two archetypical material spaces through which this project was to be realised and I use this discussion to suggest ways in which we might begin to understand the Cold War in similar terms.

Chapter 3 seeks to establish what happened to the politics of earth in Germany after 1945. It argues that although the terminology of *Geopolitik* was largely banned from the public realm in the 1950s and 60s, the preoccupation with territory, national survival, autarky and living space managed to re-emerge in the preparation for World War III. This return of geopolitics may have been spawned in the pages of the reborn journal *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, but it was crucially amongst military strategists and civil defence planners rather than in academic circles that ideas about *Raum* (space) found a new platform. By surveying geopolitical writing in the first decades after the war, I examine the work of a number of 'intellectuals of statecraft' (Ó Tuathail & Agnew 1992), focusing on a number of figures who have so far not been examined as geopolitical thinkers in their own right. I discover not just that geopolitical ideas continued to be published in West Germany, but that they were moreover promoted by key political agents who were tasked with the establishment of the new West German army in 1955 and with the preparation for nuclear war. As Detlef Bald (2005) and Alaric Searle (2003) have shown, men like Heinz Guderian, Friedrich Ruge and Erich Hampe had a crucial influence on the strategic orientation of the new army and therefore the young republic. Much like the interwar geopoliticians, these men displayed a concern with the land and sea dynamic and with Germany's unfavourable position at the centre of Europe. Germany's territorial borders remained a concern, even though the aim of territorial expansion was abandoned. Interestingly, the new German geopoliticians continued to read the state as an organism that struggled for living space. But now living space was no longer understood as territorial but as architectural. In order to ensure Germany's survival in the era of atomic warfare, living space had to be sought in subterranea.

Chapter 4 picks up from the previous one by exploring 'in depth' the nuclear bunker, a space which materialised like few others the idea of geopolitical autarky. The chapter starts by examining the status of the bunker within West Germany's civil defence programme. It then zooms in on the uncanny story of a disused railway tunnel that was transformed into a slave labour camp during the early 1940s, only

to be reborn in the late 1950s as the West German governmental nuclear bunker. In an attempt to dissect this bunker, the chapter explores the political and legal context in which the bunker emerged, its technical and security features and the organisation of everyday life underground. Moving from a discussion of the Federal Republic's emergency laws to the bunker's decontamination facilities, the chapter argues that the bunker's drive to protect its concentrated living space from the nuclear holocaust outside turned the concentration camp's biopolitical logic inside out. Whilst the governmental nuclear bunker was built to protect lives in a conflict that threatened to rid the earth of life itself, it offered very little protection for the population. Rather, it served as a mausoleum for the Cold War state.

Chapter 5 moves from a space of protection to a space of extermination. Examining West Germany's active participation in nuclear war, it starts by unpacking Bonn's participation in NATO's 'nuclear sharing' initiative. It then goes on to examine the public and bureaucratic debates around the establishment and maintenance of tactical nuclear weapons systems, the range of which was so short that they could only be used on West German soil. In the event of a nuclear war with the Warsaw Pact, these weapons would have been used to sacrifice large parts of the West German population, a biopolitical logic of 'immunisation' *par excellence* (Esposito 2008). This chapter is interested both in the ways in which these sites were legitimated and how they functioned materially. It explores how the nuclear weapon site replicated the spatial logic of the death camp – that iconic architectural space that stood at the intersection of Nazi geo- and biopolitics. The missile camp too was an ultimate 'space of exception' within which extermination was rendered possible and even rational. It was enabled and governed by a highly concentrated but sometimes very mundane form of sovereign power, which was obsessively committed to the creation and fortification of hermetically sealed spaces. I conclude that the tactical missile camp stretched Esposito's biopolitical paradigm of immunisation to its vanishing point – national self-destruction and potentially the destruction of life on earth.

In an attempt to bring the nuclear weapons storage site and the governmental nuclear bunker into a dialogue, Chapter 6 takes as its focus a string of nuclear war games that the West German government staged in its command bunker between 1966 and 1989. After a discussion of civil defence exercises and war games in West Germany more generally, the chapter looks in more detail at Fallex 66, a 1966 NATO game. During this exercise, the Bonn Republic controversially simulated nuclear strikes on 'own' West German targets and a resupply of forces after a nuclear war on German territory. Whilst in line with NATO nuclear strategy at the time, the self-destructive simulation was read in East Berlin as an outburst of excessive and obscene enjoyment. Drawing on a psychoanalytic reading, the chapter argues that Fallex 66 and similar exercises should be understood not as a mere enactment of Cold War geopolitics, but as a Freudian 'fort-da' game, a traumatic re-enactment that was tellingly set in the subterranean space of a German bunker.

Endnotes

- 1 Whilst earlier debates focused in particular on the work and influence of Friedrich Ratzel and Karl Haushofer (Bassin 1987a, 1987b; Heske 1986, 1987; Kost 1987; Smith 1980), more recent discussions have focused on the role of Carl Schmitt and his geopolitical writings (Barnes & Minca 2013; Elden 2010; Legg 2011; Minca & Rowan 2014; 2015a; 2015b).
- 2 It is based precisely on these kinds of arguments that debates emerged in the 2000s that spoke of a 'renaissance' of geopolitics in Germany (Bassin 2003; Behnke 2006).
- 3 We may want to add Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's 2000 book *Empire* here, which was key to the alter-globalisation struggles of the 2000s. Here biopolitics denotes a new stage of capitalism, one characterised by the dissolution of the boundary between economics and politics, production and reproduction.
- 4 For a discussion of the silences around colonial violence in Agamben see the edited collection by Svirsky and Bignall (2012), especially Atkinson's chapter on Italian imperial aggression in what is now Libya.
- 5 Monteyne (2011) has possibly produced the most comprehensive existing study on nuclear bunkers. Located in the discipline of architectural history, it concentrates on civil defence but only mentions biopower in passing, without seeking to tease out the connections to previous the Third Reich's politics of survival/extermination. Hornblum et al. (2013) expose Cold War era medical experiments on children that were designed and carried out by an alliance of US scientists, pharmaceutical corporations and the US military. In doing so, they come closest to producing a study of Cold War biopolitics that could link up with the medicalising logic of biopolitics offered by the Nazis, although it is not conceptualised by them as such.
- 6 Whilst Virilio's prolific writings have inspired generations of thinkers, they have to be approached with the necessary critical distance for they are themselves caught up both in the geopolitical gaze (Luke & Ó Tuathail 2000: 364) and bunkered thought (Gane 1999: 100). Moreover, Virilio's insistence that bunkers are monolithic clearly has its limitations when different layers of geopolitical sedimentation in the biographies of specific bunkers are taken into consideration (Hirst 2005: 213).
- 7 For systematic attempts to rethink the urban geopolitics of the Cold War, see Farish and Monteyne (2015).