Geopolitics in Russia—science or vocation?

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Abstract

The author describes the development of geopolitical studies in Russia after the Soviet breakup. He identifies two main schools of geopolitical analysis, Traditionalist and Revisionist. Traditionalism is inspired by old European and Russian geopolitical theories and views the world through the lenses of confrontation over power and resources. The revisionist school, on the other hand, adopts a considerably broader definition of what constitutes geopolitics by proposing to study various forms of organizing space on a global scale. According to the paper’s central argument, the Russian geopolitics, while having emerged as a vocation, it is yet to turn into a full-fledged academic discipline. It continues to lack coherent and scientifically testable theoretical propositions and needs a broad discussion of its issues with the participation of both traditionalists and revisionists.

Keywords: Geopolitics; Eurasia; Power; Global world; Academic discipline; Social science

Introduction

The main problem with Russian geopolitics is that it has not fully materialized as an academic discipline, though the academic programs have been established and a large number of textbooks were published. In other words, although the geopolitical professional community has been formed in Russia, there is a deficit of some disciplinary norms and boundaries, which transform a branch of knowledge from an “art” or “craft” into an academic discipline. Russian national geopolitics lacks what defines any scholarly discipline—the notions of professional competence and responsibility of geopoliticians as representatives of a certain academic community. Practically all independent geopolitical research is isolated from political

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theory and other social science disciplines. Methodological principles of geopolitics have not yet been clearly and consistently articulated. In a nutshell, there is too much of an “art” and too little of a “science” in geopoliticians’ analyses, and personal experiences, talents and authors’ opinions continue to dominate the discipline. The present paper is an attempt to understand how and why this has happened.

Geopolitics in Russia: stages of development

This essay proposes a broad definition of geopolitics—as a system of ideas describing interrelationships between politics (world politics, above all) and the geographical environment which translate into various forms of control over the space.

The development of geopolitical knowledge in our country has a relatively long history, spanning more than a century. Some adherents of modern Russian geopolitics are even inclined to trace the origins of this discipline to the principles of the Athenian democracy and see Aristotle as the founder of this “one of the most ancient political sciences” (Razuvaev, 1993, p. 32). According to a widely held view, Russian geopolitical knowledge is nearly the earliest expression of public and political thought that emerged with the establishment of the ancient Russian state. However, statements regarding the geopolitical quality of the concepts, such as “Moscow is the Third Rome,” or about the existence of geopolitical thought in Russia in the pre-Mongol period (Kolosov and Mironenko, 2002, pp. 145–147; Kolosov, 1996, pp. 90–91; Trevish, 1995) lack support. They attempt to modernize our ancestors’ way of thinking. Geopolitics has developed along with political science and the concept of modern state that includes sovereignty and defined territoriality as its key attributes. Russian early thinkers, such as Gostomysl or Philofey, hardly thought in political categories of the modern state. The same can be said about geopolitical thinking attributed to the early XIXth century Slavophiles and Westernizers, Nikolai Danilevski, Konstantin Leontyev, and other prominent Russian thinkers. Danilevski, for instance, was primarily interested in the special features and principal differences of Slavic and Roman–German cultures and civilizations. His main work (Danilevskiy, 1998) is about the conflict of civilizations, rather than state related geopolitical problems. The Slavophiles’ versus Westernizers’ debate was centered on the problem of Russia’s choice of direction and pace of development. The work of a genuinely geopolitical emphasis emerged in Russia only in the late XIXearly XX centuries, in the works of Mechnikov (1995) and Semenov-Tyanshanskiy (1915), and in theories of Eurasianists (Nikolai Savitskiy especially, Savitskiy, 1997).

Semenov-Tyanshanskiy, in particular, tried to make sense of various forms of “territorial systems of political might.” He was quite original in his arguments and did not follow the questionable concepts of British geopolitics, which operated within the dichotomy of land- and sea-based powers and assumed the eternal conflict of the so-called “Telluric” and “Thalassic” nations. Writing about spatial and territorial characteristics of the world’s leading nations, Semenov-Tyanshanskiy...
described them as having attributes of geographical linkages, territorial concentration, and “sea to sea” connections. For the Russian empire, he saw the principal means of strengthening unity and power in developing a special cultural and economic region between the Volga and Yenisei rivers. The idea of such a region becoming the new political and geographical center of the country was further developed during the 1990s in the works of Tsymburskiy (1995, 1999).

As for Eurasianism, this geopolitical movement was born among Russian émigrés in 1920 and lasted until the World War II. It presented arguments about Russia’s harmony and uniqueness as a special world combining the elements of both Europe and Asia, with the latter predominating. It also insisted on Russia’s economic and cultural self-sufficiency. To Eurasianists, Russia was to be seen as a “middle continent” (Eurasia), rather than as a land divided between Europe and Asia. By Asia, they meant China, India, Iran, and other territories, whereas Europe was perceived to be from its western boundaries to the eastern border of Poland and Romania. In such interpretation, the “middle continent” was also a cultural melting pot for Slavic and Turkish peoples, which formed the organic nature of Russian Eurasian ethnicity and culture.

Despite their conservatism, the ideas of Eurasianists did not find support in the Soviet Union, in part because of the official taboo against the very notion of geopolitics. One might, of course, reflect about the geopolitical aspects of Stalin’s concept of the “spheres of interest”, which underlay the specifics of the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations. Or about the “Brezhnev’s doctrine,” which limited the sovereignty of the Warsaw Pact countries and was designed to preserve the Soviet sphere of influence in Europe. Yet conscious geopolitical thinking was hardly behind these foreign policy doctrines. Rather, these doctrines were permeated by the philosophy of realpolitik and were constructed in the spirit of traditional imperialism.

Discussions about the need to develop a “Soviet geopolitical theory” (the expression is believed to belong to Georgi Shakhnazarov) emerged in Russia only in the 1970s. However, at that time the discussion did not go very far, since in the Soviet public mind, geopolitics was too closely associated with the names of Karl Haushofer and other supporters of the Nazi Germany’s doctrine of the “Third Reich.” It was viewed as a form of reactionary ideology, designed to justify the expansionist foreign policy of the West. Only in the 1970–1980s did some serious studies devoted to development of geo-strategy and geopolitical analysis begin to appear in Russia (Lukin, 1983; Ponomareva and Smirnova, 1986). As for the idea of developing the Soviet geopolitical theory, it was completely abandoned.

The rise of geopolitics after the Soviet breakup

The disintegration of the USSR and the new policy of perestroika were followed by an expansion of geopolitics in Russia. Neglected for many years, the discipline was now viewed as having the answers to the new challenges in international relations presented by the changes of the 1980–1990s. The social and ideological
context of the late perestroika and the following dissolution of the Soviet Union played an important role in the process. The public, accustomed to the Marxist–Leninist claims of absolute truth, could not quite accept the seemingly sudden breakup of the system and was ready to turn to the new “genuinely truthful” and “scientific” ideology for explanation. However, many modern social sciences, including the critical geopolitics, operated with only relative and probabilistic notions and could hardly offer any ultimate judgments. It is in this context that many found it appealing to turn to the essentialist and highly deterministic theories of traditional geopolitics, as developed in the early-XX century by Halford Mackinder, Nickolas Spykman, Karl Haushofer, and others.

The traditional geopolitics studies can be seen as spatial and political phenomena. Their main emphasis is on power, and its research goals are to understand the causes of rise and fall of state power in international relations. This is why some authors characterized geopolitics as a branch of political realism (Tsygankov, 1996, p. 157). Yet, traditional geopolitics, as compared to realism, is often even more reductionist in its emphasis on state size and geography in explaining state behavior and in searching solution to world problems. The state emerges as a spatial and territorial organism with its own physical resources: climate, landscape, flora, geology, transport communications and, above all, geographical location are seen as those that determine the main objectives of state foreign policy and opportunities for its implementation.

However, it is this reductionism, simplicity, and the claimed ability to provide clear and unambiguous (within the frames of traditional geographical determinism) answers to complicated questions of the modern world that has attracted a wide array of post-Soviet Russian scholars and politicians to traditional geopolitics. Geopolitics in Russia claims solutions to some ultimate puzzles in global politics, offering both mystical and deterministic explanations for current and future events. The concept of controlled or mastered space was presented as the inevitable and ultimate foundation of world order. Geopolitics became the mirror image of Mikhail Gorbachev’s political idealism and Yeltsin–Kozyrev’s political subservience and frequent concessions to the West.

Another aspect of the geopolitics popularity in Russia has to do with the ideological demand for it. The reductionism of geographical determinism created an opportunity to use geopolitics as the ideological motivation and ideological justification of foreign policy priorities. Unexpectedly, geopolitics in Russia has demonstrated its mobilization potential and ability to influence large audiences. In this sense, it went far beyond a scientific discipline and turned into a “scientifically justified doctrine” and the ultimate ideological replacement for Marxism–Leninism. As the result, geopolitical terminology is now being used by both state officials and the representatives of the opposition. Geopolitical reasoning was behind such issues as Russia’s non-membership in European institutions and its often tense relationship with the US. Geopolitical considerations played the key role in the perception of relations with NATO, in the evaluation of prospects for integration with the Newly Independent States, in the building of ties with China and India, the designing of the “multipolar world” doctrine, and so on. Geopolitics
influences, directly or indirectly, the formation and implementation of Russia’s foreign policy strategy.

Finally, the appeal of geopolitics to Russia’s extreme right and left can be explained by some persistent and long established stereotypes of their political conscience. This means the idea of eternal and inevitable confrontation between Russia and the West, or the necessity of Russia’s military and political self-sufficiency in order to survive in the constantly threatening environment. Over the past decade, the far Right political thought has developed different variations of geopolitical imagination about the past, present, and future of Russia and the world order (Zhirinovskiy, 1996; Mitrofanov, 1997). Works of the leader of the Communist Party of Russian Federation (CPRF) Zyuganov (1995, 1998) also contributed considerably to the development of geopolitical thinking in the country. Communist geopolitics emphasizes such notions as ‘‘derzhava’’ (from Russian ‘‘power holder’’), ‘‘socialism’’, and ‘‘Russian statehood.’’ The communists present Russia’s long history as a coherent and continuous process and draw a straight line between the XV century processes of ‘‘gathering Russian lands’’ to the CPRF calls for a revival of the Soviet empire. The communists view the relationship between Russia and the West in primarily confrontational terms and insist that Russia must resist the unipolar trends in global politics, viewed as the ‘‘dictatorship of the US and NATO’’ (Zyuganov, 1998, p. 243). The hard-core geopolitical vision of the world has also made possible the so-called synthesis of the radical right and left, uniting ‘‘Red’’ and ‘‘White’’ nationalists on the platform of opposing Yeltsin’s status quo.

However, present world realities are much too complicated to be convincingly analyzed through the methods of traditional geopolitics. Geopolitics as a discipline certainly cannot afford to ignore the problems of territory, location, and ethnicity of a nation. But it also cannot abstract from some qualitatively new transformations taking place in the world arena. In the 1990s, many Russian scholars (Gadzhiev, 1998; Sorokin, 1996; Smirnov, 1999; Solovyev, 2001) postulated that the traditional models required serious correction. The development of military technologies, the collapse of bipolarity, and the formation of a new world order do not only mean the emergence of a new geopolitical reality as determined by the change in the old balance of power. Nor it is merely a complication of the old geopolitical structure of the world stemming from the growing power of regions outside the US and Russia. What we are witnessing is how the mutual relations of power centers, regions, and individual states achieve a new complex and multi-dimensional quality and how the previously clear boundaries are disappearing. A number of parameters defining the world politics have increased, whereas economic, military, spatial, and geographical forms of domination have further diversified. State and non-state actors are increasingly finding new and divergent areas of political control, and the very parameters of statehood and world hegemony are being actively rethought. It becomes obvious, as never before, that geopolitics deals not with constants of reality ‘‘as we know it,’’ but rather with social phenomena, which can be interpreted and reinterpreted by various researchers in various ways.
Realization of all these problems required the revision and rethinking of traditional geopolitical concepts. Along with the noted flaws of the traditional geopolitical analysis, transformation of Western geopolitical research made a significant impact upon the intellectual atmosphere and discussions in Russia. Western authors, supportive of so-called “critical geopolitics,” have transformed the old geopolitical knowledge to fit the modern realities and now identify several new research areas in geopolitics. These areas include “formal geopolitics,” which studies and critically reflects on the development of geopolitical thought and tradition, “practical geopolitics,” which concentrates on mass geographical symbols, images and ideas, as well as on their social interpretations and projections to the world, and “structural geopolitics,” which studies, above all, the impact of globalization and spread of information, the realities of public risk, and the transformation of geopolitical practices (Agnew, 1994; Ó Tuathail, 1996, 1999, 2000).

Principal schools of modern Russian geopolitics

The development of geopolitical knowledge in Russia moved in at least two major directions. The first school of thought was a synthesis of the traditional Western geopolitical concepts and Russian Eurasianism. The second school responded to the need for fundamental rethinking of the old theoretical synthesis.

Neo-Eurasianism: specifics of geopolitical approaches

In the 1990s, Eurasianism reemerged and developed several new versions. The magazine Elementy and newspaper Zavtra (formerly, Den’) became the main advocates of Neo-Eurasianism in the mass media and Dugin (1998) emerged as its primary theoretician. Panarin (1995, 2000a) and some other authors developed their own alternative versions of Neo-Eurasianism.

Students and followers of Dugin view geopolitics as a universal science that possesses the knowledge of the laws and the spiritual and cultural determinants of international relations. In their turn, the ideologists of Neo-Eurasianism do their best to make their findings accessible to a broad audience by trying to operate with the notions and archetypes reminiscent of the Soviet thinking. For example, in his pragmatic work, Foundations of Geopolitics, Dugin (1998, p. 7) asserts that Marxism comes the closest to geopolitics in terms of its universality and methodological rigor:

Marxist analysis is equally important for both the forces of Capital and for the fighters for emancipation of Labor. The same applies to Geopolitics—it teaches large states (imperia) how best to maintain territorial hegemony and to continue to expand. The opponents, however, also find this theory useful for learning about their self-protection and “national redemption” (Ibid).

For Dugin, geopolitics is a “synthetic” scientific discipline that incorporates the elements of geography, history, demography, strategy, ethnography, theology,
ecology, sociology, political science and so on—in other words, not a discipline, but a system of disciplines united by a world outlook. Marxism and liberalism are viewed as analogies to geopolitics.

Dugin’s supporters believe that configuration of world politics is defined by the principal dualism and confrontation of sea-based and land-based empires. The land-based power is directly associated with attachment to a particular space and cultivation of stability of its main quality characteristics. In cultural or civilizational sense, it practices values of conservatism, non-migration, austerity, tradition, and invariability of judicial and ethic norms. Peoples of land power value collectivism and hierarchy and do not have much regard for individualism and entrepreneurship. The sea-based power is the opposite cultural and civilizational type. “Sea civilizations” are adaptable, dynamic, and are open to social and technological innovations. On the high priority list of this cultural and civilizational type have always been sailing and trade, which reflected its social individualism and the so-called “spirit of entrepreneurship.” The two civilizations—Eurasianism versus Atlanticism—are fundamentally irreconcilable although the degree of their confrontation and balance of power may vary from one historical period to another.

Panarin (1999, 2000a) offers a more philosophically and politically refined interpretation of Neo-Eurasianism. In his view, “the Eurasianist project seeks to find a solution to two central tasks: how to restore the wholeness of the post-Soviet space and how to revive the spirit of Russia” (Panarin, 1995, p. 66). After the collapse of the “Second World”, Russia is facing the choice of either restoring its lost “big space” by spiritually, morally, economically and technologically transforming it, or becoming a part of the “Third World” and losing any sense of perspective forever. Obviously, put in such a way, Russia has only one choice and that is to restore the former USSR.

The dualism of “land” and “sea” is also fundamental for Panarin’s theory. In his view, the “land” becomes a symbol of everything solid and stable (Panarin, 2000b, p. 326), whereas the “sea” civilizations are designated as products of “global pirates” (Ibid, 376). The primary objective for Panarin, however, is not to “return” the former Russian territories or to unite the Eurasian space under Russia’s leadership. The key task is to transform the unipolar world order into something else, either a multipolar or a bipolar structure. It is the restoration of the system of checks and balances on the world scale and the prevention of a purely hegemonic model of world order that Panarin views as Russia’s main objective. While not sharing Dugin’s somewhat mystical vision of Eurasia, Panarin believes in constructing scenarios of the world’s development or “futurist projects” for the purpose of achieving the identified objective. In his “futurist project” Russia develops multilateral contacts with India, China, and the Muslim states in order to restore its power and to undermine Western global hegemony (Panarin, 2002, pp. 45–51).
Geopolitical revisionism

In the early-1990s the Russian scholars took the first steps towards the transformation of the subject of geopolitical research. For example, Pleshakov (1994a) argued that in order to survive as a branch of knowledge, geopolitics had to adapt to changes while preserving the coherence of its subject. In his view, geopolitics should continue to study control over space, but acknowledge that the forms of this control—military, political, civilizational, communicational, demographical, and so on—have been transformed significantly. Pleshakov’s (1994b) other innovation was to examine the problems of geopolitics in the context of evolving political ideologies. The proposed framework applies well to some geopolitical developments of the past, such as the Cold War, but does not seem to have much to offer for understanding the present and the future.

Tsymburskiy (1995) contribution was in offering an original interpretation of Russia as a geopolitical “island.” It implied that despite some principal geographical changes over the centuries, the Russian territory has established the core of its stability. That core is away from the European part of Russia, and the post-Soviet Russia should do well to shift power to the Ural Mountains and Siberia. Tsymburskiy is also known in Russia as the supporter for moving the Russian capital from Moscow to Novosibirsk in Siberia. He is also known for his scholarship on large historical cycles of Russian geopolitical practices (Tsymburskiy, 1996), in which he attempts to trace the impact of 150 years-long military cycles on the world developments.1

Sorokin (1996) went further and proposed relinquishing the “politico-spatial thinking” of traditional Western geopolitics since it was unable to adequately respond to contemporary challenges. His solution was not to cling to the traditional subject of geopolitics, but rather to expand it radically and to develop a discipline that would study “multi-layered and multi-level global politics,” as well as the “multi-dimensional and multipolar world” (Ibid, 16).

Gadzhiev (1996) developed similar line of thinking by proposing associating geopolitics with the study of the evolution and transformation of the world order, including the modern world order. Gadzhiev identifies the key problems for current geopolitical analysis as the structure of a new world order (unipolarity versus multipolarity), dimensions of the power allocation, and the process of formation of a common global community. In this case, the prefix geo- refers to the global ambitions of the discipline, rather than to its traditional geographical focus. This represents a far reaching structuring of geopolitics that in the future is intended to study overlaps of international, transnational, and global characteristics in the modern world community. It is associated with the structures, strategic directions, laws and principles of the functioning and evolving of modern world community (Ibid). In such interpretation, geopolitics gains a new meaning and opens itself to collaboration

1 Panarin also undertook a similar effort (1999) by placing Russia’s development in the context of world historical cycles.
with other disciplines, such as international relations, international law, political science, cultural studies, and others. As a result, geopolitics presents itself as a framework for integrating various branches of social and humanitarian knowledge. It becomes a complex social discipline with emphasis on multiple expressions of the modern world.

Along these lines, some scholars have proposed to view geopolitics as part of political geography, defining geopolitics as study of the state in the context of international affairs (Kolosov, 1992; Turovskiy, 1999; Kolosov and Mironenko, 2002). For example, Vladimir Kolosov develops the notion of geopolitics of cooperation, which (1) emphasizes communication between spatial systems, not just conflicts between them; (2) studies new forms of political activism in the world arena (transnational business, non-governmental organizations, separatist movements and so on); and (3) studies aspects of global geopolitical interdependence and their expressions, such as socio-economic and ecological crises (Kolosov, 1992; Kolosov and Mironenko, 2002, pp. 170–172).

Zamyatin’s work (1998, 2001a,b) is yet another very interesting direction of geopolitical reasoning, influenced by the methods and theories of Western critical geopolitics. Zamyatin views geopolitics as a discipline which major task lies in allocating power and influencing society through the creation and projection of geopolitical images. As a result, geopolitical images may acquire different forms, depending upon the goals and resources of their creators. At the same time, images remain open to interpretation and reinterpretation. In such a presentation, geopolitics emerges not as a projection of a geographical map, but rather as an active participant in a map-making processes. Rather than being “natural”, geopolitics becomes the subject to critical construction in the interest of achieving certain political objectives (Lurie and Kazaryan, 1994; Zamyatin, 1998, 2001a,b).

In addition, financial globalization and the informational revolution have stimulated development of geo-economics as a special, if not the most important, form of geopolitical projection (Sorokin, 1996; Kochetov, 1997, 1999). Under the new global conditions, economic conflicts emerge as the key source of potential international hostilities. Many scholars caution about the possible coming of \textit{realeconomic era}, which will see as its essence a fierce economic competition and even confrontation among territorially confined units (Kochetov, 1999).

**Future of Russian geopolitics**

The revisionist geopolitical theories presented Russian scholarly community with an elaborate alternative vision and outlined promising new directions for research. They have also revealed some serious of their problems and limitations of methodological nature. First and foremost, the increased level of complexity, for which many scholars of geopolitics have called, potentially creates new problems. At some point, every scholar is faced with the methodological necessity of either simplifying a theoretical framework by taking into consideration only those factors that matter the most or undermining the clarity and cohesiveness of disciplinary
boundaries. Viewed in this light, the complexity of the discipline may be a questionable blessing. Although Sorokin (1996) and some other revisionists are correct to note the growing complexity of the global order, the real picture includes elements of both new and old trends and leaves sufficient room for both conflict and cooperation in the world. So long as this is the case, there is also room for traditional geopolitics with its emphasis on principal contradictions among spatial units.

On the other hand, merging geopolitics with the fields of ethnic studies, political science, international relations, or others is likely to result in overloading geopolitics with new problems like excessively broad generalizations, rather than genuinely enriching it with new methods and research strategies. In the meantime, modern geopolitics, while struggling to preserve its ontological status of a scientific discipline, is on its way to turning into a kind of political philosophy. It is turning into what might be called a philosophy of international relations or foreign policy, which is either overloaded by normative judgments or suffers from some “naïve Machiavellianism.” While the revisionists tend to operate with normative generalities, such as a “multi-layer” and “multi-dimensional” world (Sorokin, 1996), traditionalists openly offer themselves to the elite as the “art of ruling” (Dugin, 1998). All discussions about creating a principally new complex scientific discipline of geopolitics remain no more than that. Various scholars, often independently of each other, argued the importance of revising traditional geopolitics, but are unable to offer a coherent vision in this regard. Perhaps a switch from the highly theoretical discussion about world order to case-studies of regional and trans-regional allocation of powers or even “micro”-geopolitical analysis will assist us in better defining the disciplinary boundaries and getting closer to solving some pressing methodological problems.²

Another methodological problem of geopolitics is its persistent state-centrism. Although it is true that the state remains the only legitimate and fully sovereign political actor on the global scene, it is also true that overemphasis on the state makes it impossible to adequately assess the role of actors without sovereignty, such as various national and international organizations, associations, firms, transnational groups, and so on. These actors might and should be studied in their own right, as long as they are related to the activities of some powerful states. Even more inadequate is the assumption of state-centrism in geo-economics. Globalization of finances and information promoted geo-economics to the status of the most important branch of geopolitics, as many scholars noted (Sorokin, 1996; Kochetov, 1997; Jan and Savona, 1997). Geo-economics should study flows, regulation and management of various resources across the globe. Yet in practice, it focuses too often on the strategy of achieving state interests under conditions of economic globalization (Kochetov, 1999). International interdependence is often studied solely as an applied discipline. Meanwhile, a situation where the US lobbies Japanese business interests in Europe because they produce their automobiles at American

² Certain steps in this direction have already been made (Gadzhiev, 2001).
plants or other such collisions and conflicts remains outside the sphere of analysis of modern geo-economics.

The practical orientation of geopolitics—its special characteristics—only exacerbates the problem, as researchers develop their taste for providing advice to the government. In this situation, the most reasonable thing to do is to gain some distance from the attempts to produce effective geo-strategic projects and to return to the attempts of understanding the nature of geopolitics as an academic discipline. If it is a science or has scientific elements, it should have its own subject and methods of analysis.

Finally, it is time for Russian geopolitics to become less Russia-centric, as the focus of Russian geopolitical reflection is undoubtedly on the role and place of Russia in Eurasia. As Kolosov and Turovski (2000, p. 22) write, the assumption of Russo-centrism has created a false image of Russia “as the key to global stability and the geographical center of world politics”, as well as some idealized perceptions of Russia’s geopolitical mission. Russia as the strategic axis of Eurasia is a myth. Instead, as some have argued, Russia may be not the world’s geopolitical axis, but a “geopolitical dead-end.” (Turovskiy, 1994, p. 31, 1995)

Further development of Russian geopolitics would benefit from a dialogue among several of the above identified schools and approaches. One of them views geopolitics as a complex scientific discipline, but it is the closest to philosophy of foreign policy and international relations. Another school tends to interpret geopolitics as a branch of a broader discipline, political geography. Still another school defends the notion of fundamental dualism of political societies (Neo-Eurasianism). Up until now, none of these schools have expressed either readiness or willingness to lead an open discussion on a broad spectrum of geopolitical problems. Yet, it is in such a discussion that Russian geopolitics would eventually be able to define itself as a vocation and as a scientific discipline.

References


