

# **GEOPOLITICS**

# SOCIAL DICTIONARIES

Series edited by

Wit Pasierbek and Bogdan Szlachta



## GEOPOLITICS

Edited by Jacek Kloczkowski



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**S O C I A L**  
**DICTIONARIES**

# **GEOPOLITICS**

EDITED BY

**Jacek Kloczkowski**

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## Foreword

In 2019, the team members of the Ignatian Social Forum decided to continue the work that was initiated by the publication of the *Social Dictionary* in 2004. Scientists from both Polish and foreign academic centres contributed to this publication, which contained over one hundred extended essays that discussed the findings of recent humanities and social science research.

This new project is more extensive than the original *Social Dictionary*. The aim of the project is to present the state of knowledge from within various fields of humanities and social sciences as they are at the beginning the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They plan to show man, who is developing within diverse civilizations, cultures and societies, who adheres to many religions, and who honours diverse patterns of behaviour and products that condition his behaviour. However, rather than divide the humanities and social sciences according to the fields and disciplines listed by various international or national (departmental) institutions, we will divide them according to research areas that have been investigated by “officially acknowledged” scientific disciplines, with the use of a range of methods that yield a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary view. The research subject areas include issues considered particularly important to the humanities and social sciences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that relate to man and his social environment, political and public affairs, and international relations. The analyses, which consider diverse

research perspectives, allow a multi-faceted approach to problems that are typically addressed by only one discipline and broaden the horizons of the research undertaken by the Authors of the articles. They look for an “interpretative key” that will allow them to present the most significant issues related to each of the main categories; sometimes these issues are controversial or debatable among scientists. These research areas give the titles to the four volumes of the new *Social Dictionary*. This “interpretative key” would not be important if the articles published in each volume resembled succinct encyclopaedic entries; however, it becomes significant because the entries take the form of 20-page articles that follow a uniform pattern. The considerations presented by the authors are devoted to the essence of the analysed category: its history, subject matter, and practical recommendations. Written by Polish scientists representing not only different academic centres and scientific disciplines but also different “research sensibilities”, they are based on theoretical reflection accompanied by practical considerations. We also treat Catholic social teaching as one of the “interpretative keys” because it is impossible to ignore twenty centuries of the legacy and richness of Christianity.

We hope that this volume will satisfy the Reader as it offers not only an opportunity to learn about scientific approaches to the vital problems faced by contemporary man, states, and societies, but also an insight into sometimes difficult aspects of modernity as viewed from a Catholic perspective. We also hope that the Reader will appreciate the effort of Polish scientists who, while undertaking original reflection on these issues, go beyond mere presentation of other people’s thoughts, as they are aware of the importance of the intellectual achievements of Polish science.

Series editors  
Wit Pasierbek and Bogdan Szlachta



# Introduction

Discussions on geopolitics are highly emotional in Poland. This is probably influenced by the temperament and personality of many of the participants of these discussions, but sometimes this is also because of the entanglement of these debates in current political disputes. The reasons for this undoubtedly fashionable popularity of geopolitical debates are, however, deeper rooted, but they are easy to identify: geopolitical determinants are usually seen as one of the main reasons for the ups and downs in Poland's history. In our consciousness, the worst scars have been left by various calamities: the loss of independence at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and again in 1939 have both left their mark; after the first loss, we had to wait more than a century to regain our freedom, and after 1939 we waited another half a century. Identifying the causes of our past failures, which are usually located in a broader interpretational context, adds a dramatic overtone to the current geopolitical dilemmas under debate: Will history repeat itself? Will the Polish state again face threats on a scale similar to those faced by the Polish elites in past centuries? If so, when might this happen and under which circumstances (also including geopolitical ones)? Will Poles manage to avert these dangers next time? Geopolitics cannot be ignored, even if we reject this perspective as being exaggerated, simply false, overrated, or misunderstood. Geopolitics is a factor of great contemporary significance as it shapes the political thinking of those who distinguish reflection on politics from party games and who engage in it as experts, decision-makers, commentators, or civic observers.

Geopolitical debates also have a different dimension to that outlined above, as geopolitics is also discussed in scientific terms. There is a dispute as to whether the approaches that dominate in public debate can be regarded as expressions of scientific positions. Although they are presented in a more accessible form in journalistic texts, they are nevertheless based on scientific theories and hard, verifiable data that can be subjected to scientific processing and analysed with the use of appropriate methodology, thus yielding objective descriptions of the state of affairs. Furthermore, if one assumes that geopolitics can be a science, can we assume that Polish geopolitical research is also a science? This issue is subject to heated debate that is no less heated than debates concerning the geopolitical determinants of Poland's history, Poland today, and other global geopolitical dilemmas – both past and present. The starting point for these debates must be to define the very boundaries of what is discussed: When is a subject a geopolitical consideration and when is it “merely” a voice on international politics that is wrongly regarded as geopolitical? Is a given statement a scientific statement and is it “merely” an expert's analysis or perhaps “merely” a journalistic text? In this field, it is easy to devalue or excessively praise individual geopolitical works (at least in principle); this subjectivity of judgement is in itself an issue worth considering as it should not result merely from the good or bad will of those who make these often-contradictory judgements.

This volume is not intended to be the ultimate voice in these disputes, although the authors of the articles it contains sometimes take a stand in public debates and have their own distinctive views on these issues. Nor is it an attempt to impose a single binding pattern for approaching geopolitics in Poland. First, such an attempt would be doomed to failure; second, this is not the intention of its authors. Rather, it is intended as an aid to those who seek knowledge about various aspects of geopolitics, regardless of whether it is considered as a way of thinking, a stance in the public debate, a method of analysing international politics, a field of science, or a field that aspires to be treated as scientific. In a word, this volume is an aid to those who are looking for instruments that will make it easier for them to learn about geopolitics or form an opinion about it.

As is usually the case with such publications, a social dictionary devoted to geopolitics could have been designed quite differently, could have focused on different terms for analyses, could have focused on

different aspects, or could have even modelled them in a different way. However, while trying to inspire and accompany the discussion, the authors of this volume decided that the adopted approach serves this purpose well as it is characterised by a diversity of interpretative and methodological perspectives. This can be seen as an advantage rather than a disadvantage as it reflects the complexity of disputes about geopolitics and geopolitical disputes as well as the complexity of the various dimensions of geopolitics as a phenomenon. An inevitable problem that the authors faced is the repetition of the same issues in different texts, starting with the definition of geopolitics. This is where the aforementioned diversity of perspectives came in handy as, although it did not eliminate the risk of repetition altogether, it considerably reduced it.

Work on this volume began before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has inarguably affected the world, including international politics. In discussions devoted to geopolitics, the pandemic already plays an important role: the associated social, economic, and political changes in individual countries as well as in relations between them will be all the more pronounced and comprehensively considered in future analyses. Thus, it can be concluded that in analyses of the current situation and in forecasts of what may happen in the future, geopolitics in Poland and elsewhere will occupy an even more prominent place than in recent years; therefore, it is worth studying it from various perspectives. We hope that this volume will be of some assistance in this regard.

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## Geopolitics – an overview

### Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The concept of geopolitics is both poorly defined and contentious. There are two main trends in defining this area of knowledge: one treats geopolitics as the science of spatial determinants of political processes, while the other treats geopolitics as a political theory that enables a state to formulate and justify its political objectives.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** Starting from the Enlightenment, the article presents the main intellectual processes that took place at the intersection of geography, history, and the political sciences and led to the formulation of complete geopolitical theories by F. Ratzel and R. Kjellén at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; these theories were further developed by theoreticians such as H.J. Mackinder and K. Haushofer.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** A key issue in geopolitics is the tension between the political and scientific components that are embodied in this concept. The experience of World War II resulted in a move away from traditionally understood geopolitics, and this area of knowledge was often developed in related fields, such as political geography or geostrategy.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** This article outlines the historical development of the concept of geopolitics and the most crucial yet still unresolved problems with its definition. However, it should be remembered that geopolitics, as

a field inextricably related to politics, is an inherent component of man's political activities that are undertaken in the course of history.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, political geography, geostrategy, Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellén

## Definition of the term

The concept of geopolitics has not been clearly defined. This is due to the ongoing discussion on the subject of this area of knowledge and the problematic status of geopolitics as a field of science. Attempts at defining the concept of geopolitics follow two directions: the first treats geopolitics as a scientific discipline (Moczulski, 2000), while the second focuses on the subordination of geopolitics to political objectives (Jean, 2007). This tension between the theoretical and practical aspects of geopolitics characterises the ongoing dispute over what geopolitics actually is. Leszek Moczulski proposes that geopolitics be defined as a science that

addresses changeable systems of power at an unchanging space. Geopolitics is about a whole range of possible arrangements that take into account all factors of historical importance and (in pragmatic and ad hoc terms) also those of political importance (Moczulski, 2000, p. 73).

The Italian theoretician Carlo Jean observes that “geopolitics is not a science. Geopolitics is a reflection that precedes political activity” (Jean, 2007, p. 40).

After all, geopolitics is nothing more than the “geography of power”, a “voluntaristic geography”, thanks to which it is possible to distinguish national interests and establish politics that aim to change the existing geographical order (Jean, 2007, p. 39).

In fact, these two different ways of defining geopolitics differ in the distribution of accents between geographical and political aspects, but it should be emphasised here that both focus on the category of the “power/strength” of a particular actor. On the negative side, they are linked by the marginalisation or exclusion of deeper reflection on international relations in a theological or metaphysical context. The difference between the aforementioned tendencies and the tendencies that represent the general trend lies in the different treatment of power – from either a normative or a descriptive position.

## Historical analysis of the term

The perspective of looking at political issues in the context of geography has a long tradition, but the term 'geopolitics' was used for the first time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Rudolf Kjellén, a Swedish historian and political scientist, in his article entitled *Studier öfver Sveriges politiska gränser*, which was published in 1899 in "Ymer" magazine. Ancient thinkers (Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Strabo, among others) analysed the geographical determinants of the shape of a state and their influence on the way in which it conducts its political activity, but it was only during the Enlightenment that the relationships between the two areas were more deeply understood. This was associated with enlightenment views concerning naturalism and the perception of human affairs, including political affairs. Nature, defined by the natural sciences not as a metaphysical category but as an object of cognition and description, became the main point of reference for Enlightenment philosophers. For Montesquieu, climate was one of the main factors determining the "spirit of laws" of individual communities (Montesquieu, 1997, Books XIV–XIX). His proposal was modified by Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot in his *Plan d'un ouvrage sur la géographie politique*, published posthumously in 1751. Turgot dynamised Montesquieu's static concept and incorporated it into his theory of cumulative progress. In his view, all nations are at different levels in the process of improvement, which is developing over time. Differences in the level of development of individual nations are determined by geographical and chronological factors. History and geography determine the position of nations in the context of time and space, but the boundary between history and geography is relative. Geography is a set of conditions for development, and history *de facto* describes "past geography" (Heffernan, 1999, p. 131). According to Turgot, political geography as a scientific field was an extremely broad category which included the study of links between natural conditions and the formation of nations, sources of wealth and resources, transportation systems and various forms of government. Turgot was the first to try to define political geography as a science that operates at the intersection of history, the political sciences, and geography; he also indicated practical objectives of this field of knowledge, i.e. indicating the forms of social organisation that optimise the process of progress. The term political geography was



also used by Immanuel Kant, who considered it one of the branches of geography (alongside physical geography, mathematical geography, moral geography, commercial geography, and theological geography) that deals with the study of the relationships between state systems and geographical conditions.

In France, the concept of natural frontiers was developed, which was sometimes linked with Turgot. This concept was put into practice by Napoleon, who intended to base the border of France on the Rhine from the north as an addition to the country's natural barriers marked by the Pyrenees and the Alps. However, it was in German states that the most important components of future geopolitical approaches were developed. On the one hand, this was the result of Herder's suggestion to link the political shape of a nation with its natural environment; on the other hand, this was a reaction to French expansionism in the Napoleonic era. Johann Gottlieb Fichte directly expressed the idea of natural frontiers when he described a closed commercial state:

Certain areas of the earth's surface, including their inhabitants, are clearly destined by nature to form political units. They are separated from the rest of the earth by large rivers, seas, inaccessible mountains [...]. It is these indications of nature as to what is to remain united and what is to be separated that one has in mind when speaking, in modern politics, of the natural frontiers of empires (Fichte, p. 219).

Ernst Kapp, who based his thoughts on the ideas of Carl Ritter and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, is considered a pioneer of the related concept of "necessary living space" in an understanding that is far removed from its later imperial connotations (Moczulski, 2000, p. 8). In his view, geographical conditions determine not only the conditions for the development of a nation but also the nature of its mission. The message of nature that is expressed in the soil, climate, terrain, and in the historical space is completed by man because of his political and cultural achievements. According to Kapp, Germany's geographically specific and irregular location meant it was destined to play a more significant role as "the embryo of a united organism of European states" (Wolff-Powęska and Schultz, 2000, p. 25; Eberhardt, 2011, p. 460). Germany, which, due to its geographical vagueness is defined according to the criterion of language, embodied the potentiality of a universal state. From

the point of view of later theories, an important perspective was offered by the German historian Leopold von Ranke in his work *Die Großen Mächte*, in which he outlined the development of the European international system from the reign of Louis XIV. Ranke saw the history of Europe as a game of domination and balance between the most powerful European countries (France, Austria, England, Prussia, and Russia). In his opinion, the rivalry between powers and their determinants are the essence of the historical process. Contrary to the Hegelian tradition, he stressed that world history is always the history of individual nations and their role in the fight for dominance.

Geopolitics gained its distinct shape in the theory of the German scholar Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904), who was strongly influenced by the theories of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, as well as Ranke's historiography. He was the first scholar to base his analyses on the categories of location and space; as he observed, "geographical features are like a skeleton that grows with the meat and fat of the state" (Ratzel, 2000, p. 227). Both location and space are dynamic; they are not the boundaries of a nation's development; they are an expression of its actualising growth. Development makes it necessary to increase space and establish new boundaries in changeable constellations of locations. The concept of space is attached not only to geography but also to "historical greatness". The development of a nation and a state is a transition from "small" to "large" space. The ability to conquer and rule space is linked to the organisational abilities of individual nations and their leaders. From the perspective of this German scholar, all political history is *de facto* a struggle for space:

The struggle for existence really means first of all a struggle for space. Struggles between nations are mostly about space; hence, in all the wars in recent history, the prize for the winner always was and still is space (Ratzel, 2000, p. 241).

Ratzel believed that the natural process of expansion is achieved by economic and then political means. For Ratzel, the notion of a border is not constant, it is just "the moment when the movement ceases" (Ratzel 2000, p. 248), while war is the clearest sign of movement. He observed that the spatial horizon (small or large) of certain nations expresses the character of their developmental ambitions and thus the form of their internal relations. Internal life will always naturally fill this

form and adapt to the requirements of maintaining or expanding it. In his political work, entitled *Politische Geographie*, Ratzel formulated one of the basic categories of German geopolitics, i.e. the concept of living space (*Lebensraum*). He departed from the classic concept of a natural border that is defined in physical terms, and instead defined it in terms borrowed from biology. In his opinion, the political border is not set by natural barriers but by the boundary of an area in which an organic species lives (Ratzel, 2000, p. 250). The dynamically understood strength, needs, and adaptability of a particular species determine its necessary living space. Similar rules direct the life of nations.

Paul Vidal de la Blache (1845–1918), the French geographer and creator of the concept of geographical possibilism, adopted a different perspective. He believed that geographical conditions could not be seen in deterministic terms as they offer a whole spectrum of versatile possibilities that can be actualised by man thanks to his creativity. However, his concept had no expansionist overtones. According to him, man makes use of the conditions primarily through invention and technology, thanks to which he conquers space. The collective effort of a community is directed not so much towards the outside as towards the inside, where it creates geographical personality and, related to this, national personality.

The “father of geopolitics”, Friedrich Ratzel, used the term political geography, but it was the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922) who introduced the concept of geopolitics into scientific language in 1899. He further developed the concept of geopolitics in his main treatise *Staten som Lifform*, which was published in 1916. The category of geopolitics required a new branch of knowledge that would describe the mechanisms for the development of states in the context of geographical conditions (Eberhardt, 2012, pp. 316–317). Kjellén was an organicist and based his considerations on Darwin’s theories. A state, like living organisms, goes through developmental stages from birth to death and is determined by natural external conditions. It is the union of a nation (soul) with a specific territory (body) and manifests itself as one entity with many aspects. This determined the polymorphic nature of the political sciences, including the understanding of a state as a geographical space, nation, society, economy, and system of power. Kjellén created the following areas of political science based on his

organicistic views: geopolitics, ethnopolitics, sociopolitics, ecopolitics, and cratopolitics (Eberhardt, 2012, pp. 321–322). Geopolitics analysed states through the prism of their three features: the location, shape, and size of a state.

All these perspectives, which often permeate and complement one another, were supposed to reflect a holistic picture of a state as a form of life subject to biologically understood laws, the essence of which is the struggle for existence. Like Ranke, Kjellén saw the history of mankind as the history of the great empires that set the conditions for the existence of smaller entities in a way that suited their needs. The main objectives pursued by strong state organisms in the phase of growth are the domination and expansion of their living space and their spheres of influence. He distinguished hegemonies that held global positions (England, Russia, Germany, and the United States) and large states of lower position in relation to the hegemonies (France, Austria-Hungary, Japan, and Italy). He introduced one more important division, which was to become crucial for Karl Haushofer's doctrine: that of growing countries (Germany, Russia) and dying countries (France, England) (Eberhardt, 2012, p. 324).

The aforementioned practical aspect has always accompanied the theoretical aspect of geopolitics as a scientific category. As a scientific category, geopolitics is rooted in geography, history, and the political sciences; it describes the changing balance of forces in an unchanging space (Moczulski, 2000). From the theory of natural frontiers that is rooted in the Enlightenment to Ratzel's concept of living space, geopolitical theories have always been created within a specific historical context and have supported the political aspirations of states. In Germany, the analyses undertaken within political geography or geopolitics often justified a specific political project: initially the unification of Germany, and then various concepts of international politics, often with imperial overtones (Ratzel's concept of living space was frequently used as an argument for colonial expansion). German geopoliticians were particularly active after the end of World War I. Scientists cooperating with "Zeitschrift für Geopolitik" magazine, which was first published in 1924, included the leading representative of German geopolitics, Haushofer, who used geography to justify political expansion. The arguments they formulated were used in the development of the Third Reich's foreign

policy programme. The notion of living space took on a broader, racist character in the form of the “blood and soil” theory, which was formulated on national-socialist grounds. This link between geopolitics and the activity of Hitler’s Germany led to a situation in which the very concept of geopolitics had already gained strong negative connotations by the end of the war. Robert Strausz-Hupé (1903–2002) offered a comprehensive critique of German geopolitics, which he accused of providing effective instruments to the Reich leaders and also of Mackinder’s theory, which in his opinion was instrumental in achieving the political goals of the British Empire (cf. Klin, 2001). Similar accusations raised by Isaiah Bowman, among others, resulted in a departure from the perspective that had been presented by classic geopolitics. Some authors see the year 1945 as the end of geopolitics (Otok, 2001, p. 13), but geopolitical issues were still relevant in terms of political geography or geostrategy after the war. Since the mid-1960s, geopolitics has been revived in journalistic and academic circles, including critical geopolitics (see the article entitled *Critical geopolitics*).

## Discussion of the term

The concept of geopolitics, which lies somewhere between science and politics, originated from broadly understood political geography and, in Kjellén’s understanding, became a branch of the political sciences. It is worth presenting here the most synthetic classification of definitions that was created by Leszek Sykulski, who distinguished four categories of geopolitics: 1) academic geopolitics, which investigates the relationships between space and the physical structure of the earth and human activity from a scientific perspective; 2) geopolitics understood as a paradigm, i.e. a certain specific research approach within the framework of the science of international relations, usually related to a realistic perception of international affairs; 3) geopolitical doctrine as a specific interpretation and theory of the international order (e.g. the doctrines of Mackinder or Haushofer); 4) geopolitics as a specific form of political activity or recommendation of such activity that defines the vital interests of actors of international relations and identifies how these interests are to be achieved, e.g. Monroe’s doctrine (Sykulski, 2013).

Of course, these are not mutually exclusive approaches, and they often permeate and complement one another.

In the context of defining geopolitics, it is also crucial to realize how it differs from other areas of knowledge, such as political geography, geostrategy, or geohistory. The issue of distinguishing between geopolitics and political geography is still being debated by researchers, and both concepts have often been used interchangeably. It is no coincidence that thanks to Kjellén, the term geopolitics was developed within the political sciences and – being close to politics – analysed from both theoretical and practical angles. For Haushofer, the difference between geopolitics and political geography lies in the perspective: “political geography considers a state from the point of view of space, while geopolitics considers space from the point of view of a state” (Haushofer, as cited in: Barbag, 1987, p. 11). A similar approach is adopted by the Italian political scientist Carlo Jean, who has added to this the premise that geopolitics is not a science but a metaphysics of the struggle for control over space (Jean 2007, p. 46):

Political geography concerns the spatial distribution of political phenomena and their influence on geographical factors, while geopolitics studies the opposite relationship, that is the influence of geographical factors, both physical and human, on the analyses, choices, and political actions taken in relation to other political actors in the same territory (Jean, 2007, p. 45).

The term geostrategy was mainly used in Anglo-Saxon literature, often as a synonym for geopolitics, which after 1945 was accused of being instrumental in expansionist politics. Geostrategy is considered a subdiscipline of geopolitics (Sykulski, 2013, p. 17) or its practical application (Moczulski, 2000, p. 78; Otok, 2001, p. 13), and its evident military application is emphasised. Another way to explain this is to see geostrategy as any long-term political strategy of a state that is directed at other actors of international relations, which takes into account the geographical aspect (Moczulski, 2000, p. 78).

Geohistory is usually associated with the French historian Fernand Braudel (1902–1985), who took into account the spatial perspective in historical research (Braudel, 2006). According to Leszek Moczulski (2000), such a distinction of geopolitics in terms of time is purely arbitrary. Historical research is one of the pillars of geopolitics, and it is

difficult to draw a line between the past and the present, especially if one takes into account Braudel's demand that phenomena should be studied in the long term (*longue durée*). Thus, in this perspective the term geohistory hides an aversion to the notion of geopolitics rather than being a substantive distinction.

## Systematic reflection with conclusions and recommendations

Despite its controversial genealogy, the concept of geopolitics is still one of the key perspectives that are used to describe political relationships among actors of international relations accounting for their spatial aspect. This category, with a conceptual scope that has changed through the course of history, seems to be influenced by the currently dominant approach to politics, including the aims and means of politics. Irrespective of the change in the geographical horizon that results from the process of globalisation and the attempts to conquer space, geopolitics will remain an important element of man's political activity and an instrument of scientific research.

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# Theories of classical geopolitics

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The article presents the first geopolitical theories – today considered classical – that generated the classical pattern of geopolitical thinking. However, it is necessary to distinguish classical geopolitical theories from critical geopolitics, which analyses the spatial determinants of political processes while negating their political dimension.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** The article outlines the theories developed by H.J. Mackinder, K. Haushofer, and A.T. Mahan. These three theories are considered mature geopolitical concepts which constituted the canon of achievements within this field until the outbreak of World War II. The presentation of these theories is supplemented with an outline of the ideas of R. Kjellén and F. Ratzel that explain the genesis of geopolitics and its selected components. Also presented here are the geostrategic theories that are rooted in the geopolitical doctrines which were developed by N. Spykman, A. de Severski, G. Renner and S. Cohen.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The presentation of classical geopolitical theories, and in particular their evolution, is conducted within the context of their political and historical determinants. This reveals the most important elements that make classical geopolitical theories controversial, i.e. the links between the theory and the political objectives of a state, which are often used to justify its expansionist policies.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Outlining the internal tensions within geopolitical

theories allows these theories to be confronted with the theories formulated within critical geopolitics and the differences and similarities between them to be identified.

**Keywords:** geopolitical theories, Mackinder, Haushofer, Mahan

## Classical geopolitical theories

The term *geopolitics* was first used in scientific discourse in 1899 by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922), but the theory of the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) that was presented in his work entitled *Politische Geographie* in 1897 is considered the first geopolitical doctrine. The greatest developments in geopolitics took place in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and this was when Halford J. Mackinder (1861–1947) and Karl Haushofer (1869–1946) developed their classical theories. Together with the theory of Alfred T. Mahan (1840–1914), these three theories became the canon of classical geopolitics (Moczulski, 2000, p. 24). The later geopolitical theories that were developed before critical geopolitics, such as the doctrines of Nicholas Spykman (1893–1943) and Saul Cohen (born 1925), were either based on previously formulated premises, especially those advocated by Mackinder, or on purely geostrategic grounds, e.g. the doctrines of George Renner (1900–1955) and Alexander de Seversky (1894–1974).

In his concept, Friedrich Ratzel combined a vision of international relations that was rooted in the Darwinian tradition and treated as a process of constant rivalry with the political programme of territorial expansion of the German Empire. He distanced himself from the view imposed by geographical determinism that closely linked the fate of the nation to geographical conditions and instead emphasised the process through which political organisms (whose growth resembles the growth and development of a biological species) take over a space. He is considered to be the creator of the concept of “living space” (*Lebensraum*), understood as a certain defined area in which a community is able to exist and develop (Wolff-Powęska and Schulz, 2000, p. 44). However, this area is not closed within fixed boundaries. The dynamic growth of a community will necessarily lead to a continuous redefinition of an area that is necessary for life and an ever-wider expansion of its boundaries as corresponding to the current needs of the community. A border, as Ratzel (2000, p. 248) stressed, is the result of movement. The German scholar indicated two notions that define the existence of a state in physical space: space (quantitative category) and place (qualitative category). Place can positively or negatively influence the conditions that are dictated by a space. In addition to these two factors, Ratzel

emphasised a community-specific “sense of space” that reflects a community’s ambition to expand its space, which is irrevocably linked with the internal organisational capacity to realise it (Jean, 2007, p. 62). He believed that expansion does not just take place on a military basis but also on economic grounds. In the natural process of state development, the latter paves the way for the former. In a way, war sanctions the borders that are created in the course of what is a natural process. The author of *Politische Geographie* formulated a number of political objectives for the German Empire on the basis of these premises. He pointed out the need to undertake not only colonial expansion but also territorial expansion to the east, thus renewing old Prussian concepts of basing the eastern border of the state on the Vistula River.

Soon after, the Swedish political scientist, Rudolf Kjellén, developed his concept of the relationships that exist between geographical areas and politics. As Leszek Moczulski (2000, p. 11) emphasises, Kjellén took a decisive step forward by focusing on analysis of the international system (Eberhardt, 2012, p. 319). Like Ratzel, he understood a state as an entity analogous to an organism that develops over time and goes through developmental stages from birth to death. A state is a multidimensional phenomenon; hence, the political sciences should embrace different areas of knowledge in order to capture the specificity of different aspects of the state. Alongside political, social, economic, and demographic issues, he advocated the need to study the relationship between the condition of a state and its geographical conditions. He stressed the need for a strong relationship between a state and a nation and thus considered the existence of multinational structures an anachronism (Eberhardt, 2012, p. 320). According to this Swedish political scientist, rivalry, expansion, and the fight for influence are natural manifestations of relations between states. In the context of these assumptions, he focused on the role of the large states that dictated the rules of international relations. He divided states into empires and large states, into those that are growing and those that are dying, and into land and sea powers. He strongly believed that countries such as Germany and Russia are on the ascending wave (Eberhardt, 2012, pp. 324–225). He linked his hopes for the future with the dynamic development of Germany, which, thanks to its organisational potential, could take over the territories of Central Europe and extend its influence to

the Balkans, the Middle East, and Africa. After the defeat of the central states in 1918, he predicted that the United States would achieve the position of a global superpower (Eberhardt, 2012, p. 329).

Although geopolitics primarily developed in Germany, it was a British scientist, Halford John Mackinder, who created the most influential geopolitical theory of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1904, he presented its premises in the article *The Geographical Pivot of History* (Mackinder, 1904), which was a record of a speech he had given to the Royal Geographical Society. He divided the world map into three areas: the World-Islands (Europe, Asia and Africa), the offshore islands (the British Isles and the islands of Japan) and the outlying islands (North America, South America and Australia). The key area of the world island was called the Pivot Area (he later replaced this term with the term Heartland), which was located in the heart of Eurasia (it stretched from the Volga to the Yangtze and from the Arctic to the Himalayas). This area was inaccessible for sea invasion due to its distance from the sea, but at the same time, due to its poor natural conditions, it was an area from which invasions directed at the so-called Inner Crescent or the Rimland always set off. The Rimland is a strip of land between the Heartland and the sea that covers Germany, Austria, Turkey, China, and India. The so-called Mackinder Outer Crescent (Insular Crescent) included other island areas: Great Britain, Japan, South Africa, Australia, and North America (Mackinder, 1904, p. 436). In the context of political events, the researcher warned that in the interests of political balance in the world between continental and maritime powers, it was crucial to counteract a merger of the Heartland with any country from the Outer Crescent. In particular, he considered the possible prospect of a German-Russian alliance to be dangerous. A similar threat would be present if the Chinese, whilst under Japanese leadership, chose to drive the Russians out of part of their territory (Mackinder, 1904, p. 437).

Mackinder later modified his initial theory twice. In 1919, in the light of the Treaty of Versailles, which was being drafted at that time, he published his work under the telling title *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. Here, he postulated a softening of Wilsonian idealism to take into account real geopolitical conditions. He particularly emphasised the role of the countries separating Russia and Germany. He wrote:

Unless you would lay up trouble for the future, you cannot now accept any outcome of the War which does not finally dispose of the issue between German and Slav in East Europe. You must have a balance as between German and Slav, and true independence of each. You cannot afford to leave such a condition of affairs in East Europe and the Heartland, as would offer scope for ambition in the future, for you have escaped too narrowly from the recent danger. A victorious Roman general, when he entered the City, amid all head-turning splendour of a 'Triumph', had behind him on the chariot a slave who whispered into his ear that he was mortal. When our Statesmen are in conversation with the defeated enemy, some airy cherub should whisper to them from time to time this saying: *Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland: Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island: Who rules the World-Island commands the World* (Mackinder, 2011, p. 121).

In this work, Mackinder also moved the western line of the Heartland as far as a line from the Elbe to the Adriatic.

As early as 1924, in his work *The Nations of the Modern World*, Mackinder outlined the concept of the Midland Ocean, which he further developed in "Foreign Affairs" magazine in 1943. The Midland Ocean covered the North Atlantic. In *The Round World and the Winning of the Peace*, he analysed the consequences of the German-Russian clash, which was *de facto* a battle of the Heartland. The territory of the Heartland itself was confined to the Leningrad-Moscow-Stalingrad line in the west and ended on the Lena River in the east. Taking into account the political situation (i.e. the United States' alliance with the Soviet Union) and the advances in aviation, Mackinder pointed to the political role of the North Atlantic area, which in his opinion balanced the potential of the Heartland. He believed that the Soviet Union's victory in the war against Germany would make it the most powerful land-based power, which would be balanced by a treaty centred on the North Atlantic. Mackinder assumed a peaceful balance between the two blocks. Importantly, he pointed to the growing role of the Monsoon lands of China and India and emphasised their future role as a third element of the global system of balance.

The theories of this British researcher were crucial for the further development of geopolitics, most major concepts of which were modifications and reinterpretations of Mackinder's assumptions. Of primary importance in this context is the German geopolitician Karl Haushofer. In his doctrine, Haushofer synthesised the theories of Mackinder and Ratzel, most specifically by developing the concept of "living space". As Leszek Moczulski observed,

Haushofer did not go beyond Mackinder's thought, he developed it consistently and in great detail. At the same time, he made full use of the findings, analyses, and concepts of Friedrich Ratzel (Moczulski, 2000, pp. 20–21).

Haushofer certainly borrowed the concept of living space, along with a general vision of international relations, which is inseparably connected with a fight for dominance, from Ratzel, who was known as the father of German political geography. As he wrote:

A constantly recurring, major task of foreign policy is to maintain and care for living space, at least at the level at which it was inherited from the previous generation, and to enlarge it when it becomes too tight, without posing an existential threat to the nation's resources while doing so (Haushofer, 2000, p. 350).

The enlargement of living space was directly related not to biology – Haushofer rejected the racist ideology of the Nazi Party (Eberhardt 2009, p. 529) – but to culture. The ability to organize space and use its resources was the basis for defining living space.

Only cultural nations that are among the great independent propagators of culture on Earth can [...] conclusively prove that their living space is too cramped and is unable to feed the masses crowded in it (Haushofer, 2000, p. 351).

Similarly to Ratzel, the notions of borders, place, and space are not fixed values in Haushofer's doctrine but an expression of natural movement. Therefore, geopolitics is not only a science; it is primarily a tool that can be used to determine the division of power on the Earth's surface (Haushofer, 2000, p. 363).

What Haushofer shared with Mackinder was a global approach to international relations that was based on the division into sea and land centres of power. However, unlike the British researcher, Haushofer postulated the unification of Eurasian potentials in order to balance the influence of the two sea countries: the United States and Great Britain. He pointed out the need for three pan-regions to work together: Pan-Europe (ending on the Dniester and Riga), Eurasia (ending in Manchuria) and Pan-Asia (ending in the Pacific). These regions were to be governed by Germany, Russia, and Japan. Haushofer advocated the Berlin-Moscow-Tokyo axis as the best political division of land potential (Eberhardt 2009, pp. 536–537). Even before the outbreak of the

German-Soviet and Japanese-American War, he formulated another thesis of four pan-regions: Pan-European, Pan-Russian, Pan-American, and Pan-Pacific. This division reflected the proposed division of spheres of control between Germany, Russia, Japan, and the United States. He attempted to fit the Axis powers – the countries forming a triangle (Germany, Italy and Japan), i.e. the three points surrounding Europe and Asia – into this arrangement. By uniting their potential and thus reaching the oceans, they gained a global position. However, what was important – as was emphasised by Haushofer in 1940 – was that they respected the peace arrangements made with the Soviet Union (Eberhardt 2009, pp. 538–540; Haushofer 2000, pp. 493–496). The outbreak of the German-Soviet war disproved Haushofer’s previous ideas, and in his opinion this war was the beginning of the defeat of Germany. Influenced by the initial successes of the German army on the eastern front, he tried to develop further concepts based on the domination of Germany and Japan in Asia, but later disasters eventually turned his attention to pessimistic warnings rather than optimistic projects for the future (Eberhardt 2009, p. 453).

Turning our attention to a period chronologically earlier than the above, the theories formulated by the American naval officer and historian Alfred Thayer Mahan are in stark contrast to the theory of land power. Analysing historical processes in *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1663–1783*, Mahan concluded that the struggle for global domination is not related to land but to the sea. It was on the seas that the fates of empires were decided. He defined the role of the sea in political space not as a natural frontier but as a path that connects various parts of the land. Sea transport was always cheaper and safer than land transport, which is why it influenced the dynamics of the development of individual countries so strongly (Mahan 1890, p. 25). In the introductory chapter of the book, he enumerated the main factors that determined the naval power of a given country and, consequently, political power in relation to land states. He emphasised the role played by:

- a) *geographical position*, particularly factors such as access to the sea and a country’s position relative to other land states;
- b) *physical conformation*, including the coastline and bays in particular;
- c) *extent of territory*, which translated into the length of the coastline;



- d) *population size*, with particular reference to the number of people involved in sea-related activities;
- e) *character of the people*, i.e. involvement in trade, which stimulates ambition to develop a naval policy;
- f) *character of the government* (Mahan 1890, pp. 25–89, Misiarz 2010).

Mahan's observations were closely linked to practical politics. On the one hand, they justified the development of American naval potential; on the other hand, they indicated the directions for strategic action. Mahan was a friend and advisor to President Theodore Roosevelt (Turk, 1987). His theory was an excellent justification for the expansion of the US Navy and during Roosevelt's term of office the United States became the second largest naval power in the world. In addition, the President took steps to strengthen the US position in the Gulf of Mexico, initiated construction of the Panama Canal, and was active in the Pacific region. Within geopolitical strategy and based on the assumption of a conflict between land and sea powers, Mahan stressed that the United States' main antagonist would be Russia, which could extend its influence to include weakened China and thus lead continental power towards the sea. Mahan also indicated the possibility of Russia's expansion into the Indian Ocean. Faced with such an alternative, he formulated a programme of alliance between the United States and Great Britain, Germany, and Japan in order to curb Russian imperialism (Misiarz 2010, p. 58; Eberhardt 2013, p. 642). The Russian-Japanese war (1904–1905) was an important moment during which, despite its declared neutrality, the American administration clearly favoured Japan. However, this war also revealed the weakness of the Russian potential and thus reduced the role of Russia as a potential threat. For this reason, in the years that followed Mahan postulated the need to counteract the expansion of the naval potential of Germany and Japan.

The theories of Mahan, Mackinder, and Haushofer are the three key theories of classical geopolitics and constitute a major reference point for future generations of geopoliticians who have reinterpreted them in the light of new political circumstances.

One of the main reinterpretations of Mackinder's theory was by the American political scientist Nicholas Spykman, who, in the spirit of the "founding fathers" of geopolitics, linked the elements of theory to

the pragmatic justification of a particular political strategy. In the book *America's Strategy in World Politics. The United States and the Balance of Powers*, published in 1942, Spykman openly wrote that he intended to reconcile the Christian worldview with Machiavellian political tactics (Spykman 1942, p. 11). In his opinion, the ethical dimension needed to be complemented by effective political activity. Active defence of political values required effective authorities, the aim of which was not hegemony but the defence of international order. Constructed in this way, "Christian political realism" justified, in his eyes, America's departure from the Monroe Doctrine and an undertaking of military and political activity outside the immediate sphere of interest of the United States. He believed that in the face of German-Japanese domination it was impossible to maintain a safe distance, which is why America should be fully involved in activities on the continent (Spykman 1942, pp. 446–457). Spykman's comments on the future post-war order were interesting. Analysing Wilson's politics after the Treaty of Versailles, he claimed that in the case of Europe and the Far East, it was necessary for both territories to establish an organisation in the shape of a regional League of Nations, in which the United States would take the position of an extraordinary member, a *de facto* guarantor for maintaining the balance in both areas (Spykman 1942, pp. 468, 470). In another short work that was published posthumously in 1944, entitled *The Geography of Peace*, Spykman fundamentally reinterpreted Mackinder's theory and emphasised the strategic role of the Rimland, i.e. the area separating the Heartland from the sea. He observed that future control of this area, from which major invasions towards the Heartland set off, was the key to global power, therefore the United States should counter any attempt to integrate the Rimland. The alliance with the Soviet Union should also be maintained, but attempts to extend the Soviet sphere of influence to the Rimland should be prevented (Jean, 2007, p. 81). Spykman's theory was the basis for President Henry Truman's later policy of containment, known as the Truman Doctrine.

The American geographer Saul Bernard Cohen was critical of both Mackinder's and Spykman's doctrines. Above all, he rejected the possibility of integration of the Rimland due to its diversity. He perceived geographical space as more complex than was assumed by these two authors. He postulated the existence of two types of regions:

geostrategic and geopolitical. The geostrategic region included the trade-dependent maritime world and the Eurasian continental world. He divided the former into five geopolitical regions: Anglo-American and Caribbean; South American; European with the Maghreb; South African with the Sahara; and Oceania and the Asian coasts (Japan and North Korea). He divided the last of these into two geopolitical regions: China and Russia (together with the Eastern Bloc countries). He also mentioned a third geostrategic subregion: South Asia (Moczulski, 2000, p. 41; Jean, 2007, p. 87). In his opinion, these geostrategic regions were not unified but fought for influence or emancipation. Geopolitical regions included “crash zones” or “shatterbelts” (Middle East, South-East Asia), which were located between geostrategic regions and could not build their own geopolitical unity as they were internally broken. In Cohen’s opinion, major clashes between geostrategic blocks would take place in this region, but these clashes would remain regional in scope and would not develop into global clashes (Jean, 2007, p. 88). Cohen’s theses were evidence of a move away from a bipolar perception of the geopolitical situation and from the “doctrine of containment” and heralded the evolution of American political strategy in the direction initiated by the administration of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger.

It is also important to mention the geopolitical theories that take into account modifications introduced to the political activity of states in the international space by the development of technology, especially aviation. The possibility of fast transport and, above all, of increasing the combat range of individual states radically changed the geopolitical perspective. Space was losing its importance. In his work entitled *Human Geography in the Air Age*, published in 1942, George Renner indicated a large strategically important geographical area that surrounds the North Pole: North America, Greenland, Iceland, Russia, Turkestan, and China (Graczyk 2010, p. 128). Due to its location as an area that connects two centres of the world (Russia and the United States), the Arctic played a key role in this region. The area was inaccessible to shipping but accessible to aviation. Piotr Graczyk observed:

Renner developed his theory not in the context of the Cold War and the East-West agreement but in the context of the American-Soviet alliance. He did not predict the collapse of cooperation after the defeat of the Third Reich. Although his predictions did not materialise, the conclusions of his deliberations were not

entirely lost. What is more, it can be said that they fit even better in an era of missile weapons and the emergence of opposing blocks on both sides of the Arctic Ocean and Antarctic Ocean. The idea of the existence of two *Heartlands*, both of which are able to deal a final blow to each other via the Arctic, was also fully articulated (Graczyk, 2010, pp. 129–130).

Renner's findings were elaborated on by Alexander de Seversky. This Russian air force veteran of the First World War, who moved to the United States after 1918, was the creator of the theory of air power. He emphasised the revolutionary warfare that the development of air forces brought with it. As the experiences of the Second World War demonstrated, not only can the fate of strategic operations be decided by means of aviation, but also the enemy's material base can be completely destroyed. This recognition of the decisive role of the air force in defeating and destroying the enemy guided Seversky's approach to geostrategic planning. In this respect, he agreed with Renner that the Arctic played a key role as the fastest route for any decisive attack. With the increase in the nuclear weapon capabilities of the Soviet Union and the United States, the Arctic area became even more important (Eberhardt, 2015, pp. 716–717). Seversky divided the map of the world into two areas within the aviation range of both powers. The whole of North America and South and Central Asia were situated in the so-called Area of Decision, which was in the mutual range of the fighting parties (Moczulski, 2000, p. 38). Seversky's theory, so important for strategic planning in the times of the Cold War (along with conquering space, as emphasised by Piotr Eberhardt (2015, p. 719)), became outdated.

Most theories outlined above, apart from Saul Cohen's concept, were rooted in the realities and experiences of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, geopolitics was the greatest triumph in the area of theory and influence on real political decisions. The Second World War did not just lead to reinterpretation of old assumptions and the search for geostrategic solutions but also triggered a wave of criticism directed at geopolitics, which was understood as a tool for achieving imperialist goals that, in the realities of WW2, brought with it an increasingly serious threat of extermination. The critical conclusions formulated by Robert Strausz-Hupé and Isaiah Bowman marked the end of the first stage in the theoretical development of geopolitics, which was later expanded on during the Cold War, mainly in the area of geostrategy.

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# From “radical” geography to “critical” geopolitics

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to discuss the birth and evolution of two forms of geopolitics, namely classical and critical geopolitics, and outline the concept of radical geography.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** Geopolitics gained particular importance at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when modern political geography was developing, and again at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when there was a revival of interest in this branch of geography.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article demonstrates the evolution of geopolitics, which was introduced in its classical form by K. Haushofer (among others), and later underwent considerable changes under the influence of events in international politics (such as World War II). The article presents several contrasting positions on geopolitics that were formulated by authors who either supported or opposed its classical concepts. Particularly important in the development of this area was the emergence of radical geography (Y. Lacoste) and critical geopolitics (G. Ó Tuathail).

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Critical geopolitics allows a more complete and sophisticated understanding of the international situation, and it highlights the role of geographical knowledge in creating strategies within foreign policy and in the activities of policymakers.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, classical geopolitics, radical geography, critical geopolitics





## Introduction

Every historical epoch had different understandings of what geography is and what is meant by the term “geographical” (Lisowski, 2003). Political geography is a dynamic discipline that studies the relationships between space and the socio-political activity of man, and it has always reflected the times in which its theories were developed (Blacksell, 2008). As a sub-discipline of political geography, as time has passed geopolitics has undergone significant changes in how it is understood, its subject matter, and the main research areas. Geopolitics played a particularly important role at the beginning of the formation of modern political geography (at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and almost a century later during the revival of interest in political geography (at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century). In each of these periods, the reasons for the fascination with this area of research were different, as were the understandings of the concept of geopolitics.

## Development of geopolitical thought

The birth of “classical” geopolitics is most often associated with the political rivalry of the great European powers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this period, strategic calculations provided by various strategists and “geopoliticians” were treated as an indispensable tool in the building of nation states, pursuing the politics of imperialism, and rivalry between the great powers. Analysts of international relations used geopolitics as a research tool to uncover the patterns and regularities that could comprehensively explain the nature of the international system and thus assist governments in developing strategies based on “geopolitical discoveries”. The interests of individual states affected the majority of the concepts that were developed at that time by committed political and military activists, many of whom were employed by government institutions to analyse world politics and the “geopolitical reality”. Their task was to construct particular notions of the international environment in order to legitimize policies that were directed towards specific regions of the world.

“Classical” geopolitics was situated in a particular historical context which strongly influenced its form. Before World War II, geopolitics was

defined as the description and analysis of selected territories and the development of theories that helped to control them. Halford J. Mackinder's Heartland theory and Friedrich Ratzel's organic theory of the state were created at that time. The latter stated that the essence of political processes is the struggle for "living space", which is governed by laws of expansion analogous to those governing the growth of an organism, and that geography/space has a fundamental influence on the life of a nation and a state.

The relationship between the geographer and former soldier General Karl Haushofer and the leaders of the Nazi party became a key determinant for the first stage of the development of geopolitics. Haushofer was a lecturer at the University of Munich and an author of many books and articles on geopolitics. The first journal devoted entirely to geopolitics, *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, was published under his direction from its first issue in 1924. The founder's intention was for the publication to clarify and elaborate on the theoretical framework of geopolitics, as well as to develop Germany's foreign policy strategy and plan for territorial development. A large number of the texts published in the journal focused on revising the order established by the Treaty of Versailles, reconstructing Germany within its former geographical borders, and reclaiming German territories (in the east and in the former colonies). At the turn of the 1930s, Haushofer established numerous contacts with NSDAP leaders, which resulted in the incorporation of geopolitics into the national socialist ideology. After Hitler came to power, *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* began to be used for propaganda purposes, as it was believed that geopolitics should play the role of "educator" to keep the nation constantly alert and to stimulate it to fight for "living space". Gradually, geopolitics became a foundation for the fascist worldview, and *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* became a part of Nazi propaganda (cf. Heske, 1994).

During World War II, the American media portrayed German geopolitics (*Geopolitik*) and Karl Haushofer as having inspired Hitler's attempt at world domination. The American geographer Isaiah Bowman wrote that geopolitics presents a distorted picture of world history, politics, and geography, but it is not universal because it depends on the interests of the state in which it is created. The aim of the pseudo-scientific arguments that were produced in Germany was to legitimise its policy of aggressive expansion (Bowman, 1942). Although exaggerating the

relationship between geopolitics and the politics of Nazi Germany served mainly as a propaganda tool, the consequences of this position were significant. Political geography was equated with geopolitics and Nazi Germany, which strongly inhibited interest in research in this field. Geopolitics itself was considered a form of ideology and a tool of aggressive state politics.

After World War II, geopolitics was generally regarded as a pseudo-science and disappeared from academic discourse for many years. Only at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century did interest in this field of knowledge unexpectedly increase. The changes taking place in the international environment triggered a growing interest in the issues of international politics and contributed to the revival of academic research in this area, which resulted, among other things, in the third inter-paradigm debate in the theory of international relations. Since the early 1970s, there has been a growing interest in humanistic geography and the spatial aspects of human social activity (Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey). The development of humanistic geography and the incorporation of new research perspectives into it, such as post-structuralism or critical theory, meant that political geography gradually began to regain popularity.

Thus, the revival of interest in geopolitics had two sources. First, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, geopolitics became a fashionable journalistic term used to describe global rivalries in international politics. The full rehabilitation of geopolitics came with the collapse of the previous bipolar balance of power, which resulted in a revival of “geopolitical” thinking and the use of this kind of rhetoric in political discussions and everyday language. As a construct for describing and forecasting international relations, geopolitics began to experience a boom and became a “keyword” of sorts that was used at every opportunity to lend academic authority to speculations that were often pseudo-scientific.

Second, geopolitics returned to academic discourse, where four characteristic research trends were evident: 1) The growing popularity of the notion of geopolitics in international relations led to the development of historiographical research regarding the history of geopolitical thought and the ideas of Isaiah Bowman, Halford Mackinder, and Karl Haushofer, who were “rediscovered” for political geography. 2) Political geographers returned to studying areas that are part of the “traditional” geography of international relations. This was fostered by the changes

that had occurred on the world map and the demand to reevaluate the world in spatial terms. 3) Political economics was incorporated into research on political geography and geopolitics in order to analyse the new economic order that had emerged as a result of the collapse of planned economies and the economic globalization of the world. 4) “Critical geopolitics” and the proposed post-structuralist interpretation of “geopolitical practices” linked political geography, humanistic geography, and the social sciences, which was crucial to this discipline (Flint and Taylor, 2007, p. 44).

Critical geopolitics, which was one of the fundamental elements in the resurgence of academic interest in political geography, originated and developed among English-speaking geographers, including John Agnew, Simon Dalby, Klaus Dodds, Peter Taylor, Colint Flint, and Gearóid Ó Tuathail. The intellectual inspiration for the development of critical geopolitics came primarily from French radical geography and post-structuralism; these two research traditions were the prime contributors to the formation of what has come to be known as critical geopolitics. Particularly important were the achievements of the French geographer Yves Lacoste, who had an enormous influence on the development of critical geopolitics.

## Radical geography – Yves Lacoste and *Hérodote*

The wave of social unrest of the 1960s brought with it social scientists’ growing interest in radicalism and critical theory, as was particularly evident in cultural studies, pedagogy, and sociology. “Radical” researchers were expected to criticise the existing social theories that imposed their views on the world and to study the inequalities and limitations inherent in the social structure that hindered the development of mankind. Radicalism was described as “getting to the root of things”, i.e. revealing the structural characteristics of society (Mucha, 1986). An important element of this approach to the study of social phenomena was the assumption that radicalism and criticism must be combined with an active attitude and a willingness to change anything that is considered wrong. Knowledge is expected to reveal the hidden mechanisms of power and enslavement so that they can be effectively opposed.

Radicalism found support among American social geographers. In 1969, the *Antipode* journal, which was inspired by the idea of creating radical geography, was founded at Clark University in Worcester. However, the rediscovery of and naive enthusiasm for old Marxist theoretical dogmas concerning capitalism and imperialism hindered the development of political geography. For American radical geographers fascinated with Marxism, the Vietnam War was a consequence of late capitalism’s dependence on imperialist domination and exploitation for its continued existence and the inevitable reaction (in the form of national liberation movements) to this domination in the Third World. Most publications by American radical geographers did not go beyond this level of argumentation (Ó Tuathail, 1996, p. 161).

In Europe, fascination with radicalism was mainly evident in French academia. The geographer Yves Lacoste sought to transfer this radical attitude to geographical research, having assumed that the role of geographers was to use their spatial thinking skills to effectively reveal and disseminate knowledge of structural regularities that are incompatible with the interests of the majority. He believed that the weakness of academic geography stemmed primarily from the fact that it had historically been a tool at the service of “political domination, modern wars, and counter-revolutions” (Lacoste, 1976, pp. 1–2).

In his famous work *La géographie, ça sert, d’abord, à faire la guerre*, published in 1976, Lacoste wrote that geography (the knowledge of space) is not “neutral” knowledge because its purpose is to provide those in power with the knowledge and tools needed to control space (Lacoste, 2014). The very title of the book was a deliberate intellectual provocation that was meant to provoke discussion about the nature and role of geography. This French geographer emphasized that geography is strategic knowledge that is closely linked to political and military practices. The practice of political activity makes geographical knowledge necessary for state authorities. Geography is strategic knowledge and hence is entangled in power relations. It is not academic “knowledge for knowledge’s sake” but strategic “knowledge for power’s sake” (ibid).

Lacoste believed that geography is a form of military and political knowledge that plays a central role in the planning of military strategy and the exercise of power. From the ancient times of Herodotus, through twentieth-century geopoliticians, and to the present day, geography

has been an important aspect of practical political and military activity. Academic geography has been relegated to the role of an apolitical, “useless” science concerned with describing the basic geographical facts about a given country and the world. At the same time, academic geographers occupied with providing “neutral” descriptions play an important ideological role because their activities conceal the importance of geography as political-strategic knowledge (Hepple, 2000).

Lacoste argued that “geographical factors” remain an active and important aspect of political activity. He considered geography as knowledge that creates and consolidates a particular image of the world, hiding its true image behind the “smokescreen” of academic science. As a political-strategic discipline, geography plays an ideological role by providing citizens with information about their country, environment, and the external world, thus creating their knowledge of the world. Geopolitics – treated as the ideological use of geographical knowledge to achieve the political goals set by the elites of power – stemmed from this understanding of geography. According to Lacoste, geopolitics was political knowledge. He believed that the term “geopolitics” refers to everything that has to do with rivalry for power or influence over a territory and its population. Rivalry can be peaceful or violent and can take place between various political forces such as states (but also within them), political movements, and (more or less legally) armed groups, i.e. all centres of power (including those that are covert). This rivalry is about control/domination over geographical territories, whether they are vast or small in size (Lacoste, 2010).

For Lacoste, phenomena and processes of a geopolitical nature are expressions of competition for power in a specific territory. When we speak of geopolitics, we think of the fight for control over a particular space and of the people who live in that area. When political forces confront one another, each of them uses a variety of means and arguments to justify that they (and no other force) have a legitimate right to rule over a given territory and that the claims of its opponents are unfounded (Lorot, 1995). At any historical moment, the geopolitical situation is defined by rivalry for power and by the mutual relationships between the forces in the territory that is the object of that rivalry. It is important to emphasise that historical reflection and the method of geopolitical analysis are inseparable from each other, as it is impossible

to analyse a geopolitical situation without relating it to history. In fact, everything that can be represented on maps at various scales, or at any level of spatial analysis: for example, the lines that mark borders, the overlapping territories of different peoples and their languages, the uneven distribution of populations – all these are the result of previous balances of power that lasted for a shorter or longer period of time. It is fundamental that current conflicts are understood by relating the maps that depict these conflicts to analysis of the current consequences of past events that took place months, years, or even centuries ago. It is impossible to understand (even in the most general way) the geopolitical situation without knowing how it happened, i.e. without general knowledge of the conflicts between powers that took place in a given territory (Lacoste, 2010).

Lacoste proposed a completely new way of thinking about geography by emphasizing that it is not “innocent” academic knowledge. Its purpose is to provide the people in power with the information and tools (e.g. maps) needed to dominate a given space. He wanted to “renew” academic geography and make society more sensitive to the political aspects of geographical knowledge. With this vision in mind, in 1976 he founded the journal *Hérodote*, which soon became one of the most important periodicals devoted to political geography. Advocated by the creators of *Hérodote*, the “new geography” was expected to exceed the limits and boundaries associated with its previous role and become a critical analysis that would reveal the role of geography in generating power and imposing a corresponding image of the world (Hepple, 2000). From the very beginning of this project, Lacoste wanted to bring geography from the periphery to the centre of debate on the social and political problems of the contemporary world.

In search of inspirations that would help geography become a relevant research area, Lacoste turned his attention to the achievements of the French scholar Michel Foucault. The first issue of *Hérodote* published an interview with Foucault (cf. *Questions à Michel Foucault...*, 1976, pp. 71–85), which became one of the most frequently quoted excerpts from his works concerning the relationship between space and power (an English translation of the article appeared in a collection of his texts entitled *Power/Knowledge*; Foucault, 1980). In this interview, Foucault argued that discourse and genealogy of knowledge should not be analysed in terms

of types of consciousness, methods of perception, or forms of ideology; rather, they should be analysed in terms of tactics and strategies of power. These tactics and strategies, which are implemented through implantation, distribution, demarcation, control of territories, and organization of domains, are a form of geopolitics. Thus, they constitute a place where Lacoste's ideas and post-structuralist philosophy come together. Foucault admitted that he had underestimated the role of geography, which should have been at the centre of his interest (cf. Foucault, 1980).

Inspired by Foucault's concept of power-knowledge, Lacoste concluded that geography plays an ideological role by providing citizens with information about their state, their environment, and the outside world. In this view, geopolitics is ideologised knowledge produced by geopolitical entities that presents interdependencies with other actors that are active in the international arena as a function of their interests. There are no "geopolitical laws" because they exist only in the subjectively defined geopolitical thought of an actor and serve to create political hypotheses, theories, representations, and scenarios; these, in turn, are dependent on the interests, available technology, and the system of cultural values that is characteristic of the actor that develops them. In their actions, political actors are guided by particularistic notions and representations of the world that constitute one of the main determinants of geopolitical activity. Lacoste believed that the analysis of adopted particularistic geographical notions could help provide a better understanding of what determines the choice of a specific geopolitical strategy. To him, one of the key elements of the study of political geography was the category of "geopolitical imaginations", which could be the key to understanding territorial conflicts among human groups. He emphasized that in order to understand the nature of territorial conflict, one must understand the key ideas and imaginations that underlie them (Lacoste, 1993, pp. 70–74). This understanding of geopolitics would allow it to be considered an independent research discipline that is concerned with isolating and systematically confronting the insights and beliefs that each political group holds about a given space.

Lacoste's innovative works contrasted with traditionally understood political geography. The merit of French radical geography lay, above all, in drawing attention to the "political" role played by geography and its openness to post-structuralist philosophy that included, most importantly,



the ideas developed by Foucault. Lacoste’s radical geography can therefore be considered the forerunner of critical geopolitics. However, the very term “critical geopolitics” was not coined by French scholars.

## Critical geopolitics

As an area of research, “critical geopolitics” emerged at the turn of the 1990s, when Anglo-Saxon political geography turned its attention to new research trends that appreciated, among other things, the role of radical geography and post-structuralist philosophy in enriching geographical research. The technological revolution, the processes of globalization, and the third wave of democratisation led to a growing recognition that the old theories of international relations were not compatible with the new political reality. “Opening up” international relations theory to new research perspectives, and the Third Great Debate that was being conducted within international relations theory, brought new concepts and ideas that were to describe international reality anew.

Mainstream research was joined by researchers who were focused on new ways of perceiving the world and discourses concerning how the world works. In 1986, Gearóid Ó Tuathail argued that the U.S.’s relationship with El Salvador and the American government’s unequivocal commitment to one side of the bloody civil war there could best be explained by referring to American beliefs regarding its sphere of influence (Ó Tuathail, 1986). He wrote that neither the realistic, conventional geopolitical “domino theory” nor explanations based on “economic exploitation” and protection of American business allow U.S. foreign policy to be fully understood. He also observed that it was the “cultural imperative” to defend democracy and the “American way of life” that were central to the “geopolitical practices” of the U.S. administration under Ronald Reagan. In this understanding, geopolitics was a combination of economic and military opportunities to realise one’s plans and the “geopolitical visions” that were direct inspiration for the actions taken. In this view, geopolitics was seen as an ideological process of shaping space and creating political and cultural borders and barriers in order to separate a state’s “own” space from “foreign” space that could be a source of threats (cf. Dalby, 1990).

Following this line of thought, Ó Tuathail and John Agnew gave a presentation at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. in April 1987 (published in 1992). This was one of the most important texts associated with the appearance of critical geopolitics in academic circles. Agnew and Ó Tuathail wrote that geopolitics is nothing more than a narrative or discourse in which protagonists play their roles in geopolitical scenarios where the description of the world “outside” is a way of ensuring the security of what they value “here”. Drawing on Foucault’s idea of discourse as a form of power-knowledge, they were attempting to re-conceptualize geopolitics as a discursive practice through which political elites create a spatial description of international politics in order to present the world (people, places, events) according to their interests. In this sense, discourse was defined not only as a set of socio-cultural resources that are used to construct ways of understanding the world and one’s activity in it; it is also defined as a set of possibilities and rules that enable readers/listeners to take in what they have heard and, on this basis, build a complete map of the world (Agnew and Ó Tuathail, 1992). Given that production of language is an institutional matter, geopolitical discourse is formulated and used by representatives of authorities and political leaders to establish and represent international relations, and the strategy of exercising power always involves the use of space and discourse around it (Ó Tuathail, 2002). Ó Tuathail emphasized that geopolitical discourse is more than a public “discussion” about international politics: it has its own structure, rhetorical strategies, and presentation techniques that are sponsored by particular institutions and political forces who compete in the social arena to secure their rhetorical “dominance” as the “universal truth” about essentially particularistic processes, crises, and actors in world politics (Ó Tuathail, 2000).

The term “critical geopolitics” first appeared in Ó Tuathail’s doctoral dissertation (1989), which advanced the thesis that geopolitics, especially in its classical form, is not so much a science as a technique for describing the world to help create a particularistic image of it. All acts of describing reality are linked to its social, historical, and geographical context. Therefore, a geopolitical description of space cannot be a neutral activity because the world is social; thus, describing it is a social activity. Politics and international relations are a social practice and

part of the social creation of reality. The actions of policymakers can be deemed geopolitical because they entail a “political” description of the world (Ó Tuathail, 1989). Various geopolitical concepts thus constitute the “technology of power” that is designed to impose a particularistic vision of the world and thereby achieve one’s intentions. In turn, critical geopolitics seeks to reveal the real role of geopolitical concepts that are essentially a “hegemonic practice” which is intended to create a particular image of the world (*ibid.*).

Ó Tuathail emphasized that his dissertation was written from a critical perspective and was primarily devoted to understanding the true nature of “classical geopolitics” and revealing its real character as knowledge entangled in political relations. Geopolitics in its “classical” form (e.g. Mackinder, Haushofer) is merely a “technique” for describing the world that helps to create a particular image. Ó Tuathail observed that the critical understanding of geopolitical theories that treats them as instruments of political influence rather than as objective scientific truths has a long tradition. He found the texts devoted to criticism of the theory of geopolitics by the German scholar Karl Wittfogel, the American geographer Isaiah Bowman, and the French geographer Yves Lacoste (*cf.* Ó Tuathail, 1994) particularly valuable in this respect. Ó Tuathail explained that adding the word “critical” to geopolitics aims to emphasise that his concept of geopolitics differs from both Mackinder’s approach to political geography and the Kissinger-style of geopolitics. Instead, it is an analysis of how geographical configurations and assumptions about the world turn into political projects and geographical images that shape group imagination, thus building a particular vision of the world. In coining the term “critical geopolitics”, Ó Tuathail wanted to emphasize that although the world is the same for everyone, interpretations and discourses devoted to it differ. Geopolitics is a purpose-built form of knowledge that organizes the space in which we move; it provides us with terms to describe our surroundings and with a specific “map of the world”. Critical geopolitics should therefore focus on demonstrating the strategic importance of “geopolitical knowledge” in the shaping and legitimizing of a state’s foreign policy strategy. Ó Tuathail proposed that geopolitics be understood more broadly and holistically as power-knowledge which enables political elites to create particular descriptions of international politics in spatial terms, producing specific images

and representations of the world and imposing a dominant vision that reflects the interests of the authorities.

Based on Jacques Derrida's philosophy, it was recognized that the task of critical geopolitics was to deconstruct the ways in which political elites describe, present, and use imaginations of places in exercising their power (Dodds and Sidaway, 1994). Hence, the main task of critical geopolitics was to expose the manipulative nature of various geopolitical theories and to demythologize them by revealing their "genealogy". Based on Foucault's tradition, it was concluded that its task was to reveal the hidden, symbolic "archaeology of power" of geopolitics and the spatial imaginations that it creates (Reuber, 2000). Critical theory, post-modernism, and post-structuralism were openly referred to, and the dominant ways of perceiving the world that are shaped in the processes of social discourse were put at the centre of analysis. The research task was to prove the strategic importance of spatial imaginations. Imposing relevant "geographical knowledge" (i.e. particular ways of describing the world) makes us treat the world – described by means of given categories – as "natural" so that we fail to notice the real sources of our knowledge or the interests that are hiding behind it. The deterministic, naturalistic vision of geography that was prevalent in traditionally understood geopolitics, which treated geographical space as a constant variable subject to certain laws, was rejected. Instead, what was proposed was a vision of geography as a discourse entangled in power relations, arguing that the theses of political geographers/geopoliticians and their way of reasoning are culturally constructed and politically established as dominant. It was advocated that geopolitics be looked at critically as a practice of social discourse through which intellectuals and politicians describe international politics in spatial terms by creating appropriate images and representations of the world, and by imposing a dominant vision of reality that reflects the interests of those in power. The researcher's task is to deconstruct the ways in which political elites describe and represent space (place) in their competition for power.

Ó Tuathail wrote that critical geopolitics as a research approach consists of three main areas of analysis: 1) critical geopolitics tries to deconstruct the tradition and history of geopolitical thought; 2) it addresses the current activities of the political elites in individual countries and tries to understand and explain them; 3) it is an attempt to indicate the

sources of our conventional ways of describing the world (Ó Tuathail, 1994). The term “critical geopolitics” very quickly gained popularity and began to “live a life of its own” well beyond the framework set by Agnew and Ó Tuathail. Pointing to the characteristics of critical geopolitics, researchers sought to develop an innovative and coherent research programme. First, it was assumed that geopolitics is a much broader cultural phenomenon than is usually understood in the traditional sense (i.e. as strategists’ concepts of security and the development of a state). As a form of “spatial politics” that creates a framework for the practice of foreign policy, geopolitics is not a specific school of international analyses but rather a social practice, both material and symbolic, which is implemented by political elites. In consequence, any critical study of geopolitics should be rooted in the study of the particular cultural myths that are connected with a given state. Within critical geopolitics, the “geopolitical imaginations” of states and the founding myths embedded in national cultures are analysed and compared. The creation of a state is a “geopolitical act” because it involves processes of defining its space and legitimizing claims to it.

Second, it was advocated that in critical geopolitics special attention should be paid to the practices and activities of creating and protecting borders, which characterize the everyday operation of states. The objects of analyses are both the material borders that mark the boundary of a state and the symbolic concepts that delineate specific areas as boundaries between the outside and the inside. Critical geopolitics is not concerned with the “international surroundings” of a state but rather with the various ways in which the terms “outside” and “inside”, “here” and “there”, “domestic” and “foreign” are constructed. It is thus concerned with deconstructing the processes of “producing” political space.

Third, critical geopolitics assumes that there is no “single geopolitics” but rather multiple representations and images within a society. Moreover, geopolitical thought is relativized not only to a specific state or culture (“geopolitical traditions”) but also to the times in which given “geopolitical theories” emerge. Without rejecting the conventional vision of geopolitics as a political practice that is used by leaders and their advisors to govern a state, critical geopolitics complements this picture by treating geopolitics as a social and cultural phenomenon – as a complex network of socio-cultural practices. In order to understand

the functioning of geopolitics as a practice of social discourse, three levels can be distinguished: 1) practical geopolitics, which is a product of the activity of political leaders, state bureaucracy, political institutions, and diplomats; 2) formal geopolitics, which is a product of intellectual elites and academic circles; 3) popular geopolitics, which is a product of popular culture disseminated through mass media. In this sense, geopolitics is a state's and society's everyday practice of identifying security and threats. It encompasses material and symbolic imaginations held by political elites that exist at the level of state institutions and at the level of society.

Fourth, for critical theorists knowledge is not and cannot be neutral, be it morally, politically, or ideologically. Every form of knowledge reflects the interests of the observer. It is never impartial because it is the product of the researcher's social perspective. Theory is unable to avoid normative assumptions when selecting information, interpreting it, and justifying the relevance of research. The visions of reality that are presented by international analysts are an expression of ideology and specific political interests. Critical studies of geopolitical ideas should pay attention to the context of their emergence and should link them to the interests that a given vision of international order or a given theory represents. In this way, it is possible to ascertain who and what this specific knowledge serves and how it will contribute to maintaining or changing the existing international structures.

Fifth, the conceptualization of geopolitics as a "contextual" phenomenon that is a result of its place in historical/cultural reality imposes the research area that should focus on the socio-spatial and technological-territorial aspects of the emergence of geopolitical concepts and their application. Geopolitical issues and their technological possibilities in relation to space have always been of interest to states and societies. Historically, geopolitics – as a practical and rational way of thinking about space and strategy in international politics – was deeply connected to what Foucault called the "governmentalisation of the state". Questions such as "what is the best way to make a state a superpower?" (which was crucial for Alfred Mahan, for example), or "what is the best form of a state territory and how should a state develop territorially?" (the fundamental question in Friedrich Ratzel's political geography) were practical problems of state governance that motivated the creators of "classical

geopolitics” and underpinned its development. Indeed, geopolitics was linked to European modernity and to the socio-technological changes that made it possible to extend control over a specific territory. This is why critical geopolitics tries to link “geopolitical thought” to historical and technological contexts (Ó Tuathail and Dalby, 1998).

## Conclusion

Critical geopolitics emerged in opposition to the traditional realist approach to geopolitical analyses; it was an element of the relativist revolt in humanistic geography and the theory of international relations. Researchers working within critical geopolitics observed that all states possess some kind of territory (more broadly, all social actors are rooted in some form of space), and that foreign policy strategy and practice are dependent on geographical location and a geographical understanding of the world. Geography is not merely the unchanging foundations of human activity (as some would like it to be seen), but it is also a historical and social form of knowledge of space in which activity happens. Geography is social and political imaginations of the world rather than merely a description of what the world is like. In this sense, the geopolitical research advocated by critical geopoliticians is analysis of the spatial understanding of international politics that is produced by superpowers and states with a hegemonic status in a region or in the world. The task of critical geopolitics is to deconstruct these terms and to understand how they are produced. Since geopolitical research is conducted within a state or specific groups, movements, and other political entities, it should be embedded in the analysis and confrontation of “geopolitical imaginations”, myths, and knowledge of oneself and of the outside world (Ó Tuathail, 1996). Geopolitical concepts and “theories” are not analyses of objectively existing international reality but rather an interpretational and discursive social practice.

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# The history of Polish geopolitics

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The history of Polish geopolitics is analysed in the article from many different angles to demonstrate that geopolitics can be treated in a variety of ways: as a branch of science, a subject of political analysis, a focus for journalistic debate, and an ideological stance.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** Polish deliberations on geopolitics have always been largely conditioned by Poland's lack of independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its regaining of independence in 1918, and its losing of it again in 1939, followed with enslavement by the USSR.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** Assigning geopolitics to particular categories is often a subjective attempt to classify it, which contributes little to discussions on the issue. It is more important to analyse geopolitics in terms of its content matter and the realism of works produced within its scope.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Becoming familiar with the history of geopolitics in Poland can significantly enrich knowledge of international politics, but it is a mistake to dogmatically apply old conclusions to the present reality.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, Polish political thought, history, international politics



## Definition of the term

Geopolitics is understood in various ways: as a branch of science, a subject of political analysis, a focus for journalistic discussions, and an ideological stance. Each aspect involves different theories and interpretations. Some approaches put these aspects in strong opposition, while others attempt to reconcile them. However, the approach dominant among the recipients of geopolitical content is a common-sense understanding of what geopolitics is.

The history of Polish geopolitics effectively illustrates the aforementioned dilemmas. Polish geopolitical sources consist of a few works of a scientific nature (or those aspiring to be called scientific), abundant geopolitical analyses, numerous journalistic texts (very common in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) on various geopolitical issues (often without any direct reference to the term in question), and rare statements in which geopolitics was treated as an ideological stance. Essentially, this is a very broad and diverse collection which testifies to the fact that geopolitics (in its various forms) has occupied an important place in Polish intellectual and political life over the last two centuries.

## Historical analysis of the term

The term “geopolitics” entered scientific and journalistic discussions at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922) used the term in the article *Studier öfver Sveriges politiska gränser*, published in the magazine “Ymer” in 1899. However, geopolitical deliberations (which were not yet termed geopolitical) have a much longer history. In the case of Poland, this was determined by its location and turbulent history. From the time of the Piast dynasty, the growth of the Polish state was associated with the changeability of its borders. Especially after the union with Lithuania, the geographical determinants of the two states, which were also linked with the directions of expansion of neighbouring states, had a significant impact on practical politics. The 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period in which Poland’s position in international politics considerably weakened, which became significant not only for the fate of Poland but also for European politics. The partitions of Poland were analysed from within

this context by foreign authors such as Edmund Burke (1729–1797) and Friedrich von Gentz (1764–1832), who emphasised the negative processes triggered by partitioning. In his work entitled *Fragmente aus der neuesten Geschichte des politischen Gleichgewichts in Europa* (1806), Gentz wrote about the distortion of political balance in Europe in the context of the Napoleonic wars, which according to Burke in the *Annual register, or a view of the history, politics and literature, for the Year 1772*, constituted “the first very great breach in the modern political system of Europe”. However, Polish authors did not make this European and peculiarly universal dimension of the fate of Poland a dominant point of reference in their deliberations over what had led to this chain of events (although they did write plenty about the role of the partitioning powers). Instead, the geopolitical aspects of the process of Poland’s downfall, which occurred in stages that were marked by consecutive partitions, were incorporated into discussions about the causes of Poland’s loss of independence, thus permanently defining the character of Polish disputes over geopolitics (with and without the use of the term in question). Geopolitical determinants became an important point in analyses of not only the causes of the historic defeat of this once-powerful kingdom but also (and most of all) of the conditions that had to be met in order for Poland to regain independence and then be able to maintain it and protect itself from further hostile attempts by its neighbours. At that time, geopolitics and independence fused together in Polish political thought. Our tradition of geopolitical reflection can be distinguished from the geopolitical determinants developed in other states that – although not free from turmoil themselves – avoided any long-term loss of their statehood.

During the period of partitions, the reasons for the collapse of the Polish state were discussed, one of which was Poland’s failure to adapt its politics to its geographical location, which later came to be referred to as geopolitical. This argument was raised by those for whom the loss of independence was the fault of the Polish political elites. However, their deliberations centred more on issues raised by the political system (in particular, the inability to create a strong central power or the lack of will to do so) and political culture (the spirit of anarchy, short-sightedness, etc.). At the forefront of these discussions were conservative historians and political thinkers associated with the Krakow historical school:

Walerian Kalinka (1826–1886), Józef Szujski (1835–1883), and Michał Bobrzyński (1849–1935). Throughout the partition period, disputing the past was an element of discussions concerning the shape of Polish politics in the face of a lack of independence and the division of Polish territories among three hostile powers. The geopolitical component was an important aspect of those deliberations. On the one hand, it related directly to Polish territories and the policies pursued by Russia, Austria (later Austria-Hungary), and Prussia (later Germany) in this regard; on the other hand, it directed the attention of Polish politicians and political thinkers towards various determinants and conflicts in international politics (including those taking place far away from Polish lands), which were perceived as opportunities or threats for the national cause. Thus, the core of geopolitical deliberations includes numerous analyses connected with, for example, the July Revolution in France (1830), the Crimean War (1853–1856), the French-Austrian War (1864), the Austrian-Prussian War (1866), the French-Prussian War (1870–1871), the Turkish-Russian Wars (especially 1877–1878), and the Russian-Japanese War (1904–1905). Polish thinkers, journalists, and politicians also analysed long-term political processes (e.g. the unification of Italy and the gradual dismantling of the Papal States) and the situation in the regions that affected the political position of partitioners (e.g. the interests of Austria and Russia in the Balkans or English-Russian rivalry in Asia), as well as those states that could potentially challenge the partitioning states in European politics (e.g. France).

The aforementioned trend in the history of Polish geopolitics, which was not yet associated with a separate branch of science or journalism but encompassed wide-ranging considerations, can be divided into two periods. The first covered the period between the November Uprising and the January Uprising, when discussions and practical actions were dominated by circles of Poles in exile. At that time, the main role was played by the “Hotel Lambert camp”, headed by Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770–1861). This circle, known for its “diplomacy without credentials”, attempted to actively influence international politics; this was accompanied by works that could be now called analytical studies, written by politicians and journalists associated with this camp. The leader of the Hotel Lambert camp wrote a number of memorandums and documents that provided abundant reflections on the determinants of international

politics. Some were written many years before the November Uprising, when Czartoryski played an important role in the entourage of Tsar Alexander I as his friend, political advisor, and Russia's *de facto* minister of foreign affairs. Once the policy of linking the Polish cause with Russia had been abandoned, Czartoryski settled in Paris as an exile, where he was already known as the former head of the national government from the time of the November Uprising. Here, he made sure that discussions on international policy in his circle were accompanied by practical actions. This was mentioned by Walerian Kalinka and Julian Klaczko (1825–1906) in the magazine “Wiadomości Polskie”, which was associated with the Hotel Lambert. Reflections on international politics were also present in other emigration circles: in his article entitled “*O polityce wschodnio-południowej gabinetu petersburskiego*” [“*On the eastern-southern policy of the Petersburg Cabinet*”], published in “Pamiętnik Emigracji Polskiej” [“Memoirs of Polish Emigration”] on 8 July 1832, Maurycy Mochnacki (1803–1834) included a short, concise analysis of the geopolitical determinants of Russia's foreign policy (e.g. the issue of borders, access to sea routes, trade routes, etc.). Analyses of the Polish “analysts” were also used by various persons. For example, General Wojciech Chrzanowski (1793–1861) advised the British and the Turks on matters related to Russia's activities in Asia Minor and Central Asia (e.g. *Nota o Rosji i Wschodzie podana rządowi angielskiemu w październiku 1835 r.* [Note on Russia and the East given to the English Government in October 1835]).

The second period is associated with the changes that took place in Polish politics in the years immediately preceding the January Uprising and were connected to its outbreak and consequences. At that time, the main contributors to reflection on Polish politics and its leadership returned to Poland. At the same time, following the failure of the uprising, opportunities to act for the Polish cause on the international arena were radically reduced because the position of the partitioning powers was strengthened (of particular importance was the unification of Germany after France's defeat in the war with Prussia, as France was considered the best potential ally in Poland's fight for independence). That is why Polish geopolitical thought was for several decades pursued mainly in the sphere of journalism and political writing, where it rose to a high standard. Indications of this had already appeared before the January



Uprising (1863), for example, in articles published in “Wiadomości Polskie” [“Polish News”] in Paris and in articles about international affairs published in the conservative Krakow daily “Czas” [“Time”], which was launched in November 1848 during the turbulent period known as the Spring of Nations. “Czas” was associated with Maurycy Mann (1814–1876), who was particularly adept at analysing international politics. His articles, published in 1856–1860 in “Dodatek Miesięczny”, the monthly supplement to “Czas”, can be regarded as a “geopolitical treaty” in instalments; they presented the objectives of the foreign policies of European powers and the methods they used to achieve them. The January Uprising was followed by the development of the Polish press (both periodicals and daily papers), in which the issue of international politics occupied an important place; the press published foreign correspondence and articles that were often in-depth analysis of current events which were part of broader political processes.

Each of the important trends of Polish political thought that emerged in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century devoted a lot of attention to these issues, and the Polish national democrats were particularly active in this area. Roman Dmowski (1864–1939), the author of numerous press articles and books (e.g. *Niemcy, Rosja i kwestia polska* [Germany, Russia, and the Polish Question], 1908), played a major role here. In his texts, he presented the Polish cause against the backdrop of the rivalry between European empires, especially Russia and Germany, and considered non-European factors (such as the conflict between Russia and Japan) that were important. Other people who wrote about international affairs included Jan Ludwik Popławski (1854–1908), a leading ideologist of the national democratic movement, who emphasised the role of careful planning for the borders of a future Poland (this time oriented towards the west and north rather than the east, as it had been previously, so as not to repeat past mistakes), and Tadeusz Grużewski (1870–1938), an expert on Russian politics. Another centre involved in conducting significant and high-level geopolitical analyses was a group from Krakow called Stańczycy. The most notable member of this group was Stanisław Koźmian (1836–1922), who very skilfully analysed Bismarck’s policies and the conflicts between empires over the Eastern Question, among other things. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Julian Klaczko, who has already been mentioned above, gained European recognition

as a commentator and analyst of international politics. In the French magazine "Revue des deux Mondes", he brilliantly analysed Prussian, German, and Russian politics, allegedly incurring the wrath of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck himself (e.g. *Deux chanceliers: le prince Gortchakof et le prince de Bismarck*, 1876, in Polish: *Dwaj kanclerze [Two Chancellors]*, 1905). Koźmian and Klaczko were the leading representatives of the view that the January Uprising not only worsened the situation of Poles but – in the political game being played between the European powers – also made a new opening possible that was in line with the interests of Chancellor Bismarck and facilitated the realisation of his long-term goal of German unification. At the same time, this was an illustration of the significance of the Polish issue in European geopolitics before and during the January Uprising (in the next decades this significance diminished markedly). It was not until World War I that the issue of the Polish territories returned to the forefront of geopolitical affairs. This time, the partitioning powers fought against each other, and Polish political circles pinned their hopes for independence – or at least the unification of the Polish lands under a single authority – on allying with one side of the conflict. What was usually not foreseen in this geopolitical scenario was what would eventually happen: the fall of the entire partition system, resulting in there being no winner among the former partitioning states. This significantly shortened the Polish road to independence, although at the same time it opened new fronts in the fight for it that involved armed conflict on almost all borders.

As can be seen from the above, geopolitics played an important role within Polish reflection on international politics during the partition period. Most often, this was not along the lines of theoretical reflection, although there were exceptions. Oskar Żebrowski (c.1809–1883) is considered a forerunner of this type of reflection. In Paris in 1847, he published a work entitled *Polska. Ogólny zarys przyczyn wzrostu i upadku dawnego państwa polskiego [Poland. A general outline of the causes of the rise and fall of the former Polish state]*, which included considerations devoted to the large areas of Europe and Poland's position in it. Similar topics were also discussed by Wincenty Pol (1807–1872) and Wacław Nałkowski (1851–1911). They recognised the importance of factors related to climate and terrain and appreciated the role of cultural determinants, which were closely related to the issue of Poland's natural borders.

Nałkowski's ideas met with a particularly critical response and inspired further discussion on geopolitical issues. The origins of geopolitics as a theoretical and scientific discipline in Poland are especially connected with the work of Eugeniusz Romer (1871–1953), a Lviv University professor who was one of Nałkowski's opponents. He began publishing whilst Poland was still in the period of partitions (*Rola rzek w historii i geografii narodów [The Role of Rivers in the History and Geography of Nations]*, 1901; *Przyrodzone podstawy Polski historycznej [The Natural Foundations of Historical Poland]*, 1912; *Polska. Ziemia i Państwo [Poland. Land and State]*, 1917) and continued in the Second Polish Republic, when he published his most prominent geopolitical work: *Ziemia i Państwo. Kilka uwag geopolitycznych [Land and State. Several geopolitical remarks]* (1939). Nałkowski argued, for example, for the transitory nature of Poland's territory, while Romer stressed its "bridging" dimension, rejecting the concepts of Central Europe that were popular in Germany at that time. He was able to put his research findings to practical use, e.g. as a member of the Polish delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. This may symbolise the changes that took place in the Polish understanding of geopolitics after November 1918.

The regaining of independence entailed a fundamental change of perspectives in Polish geopolitical deliberations. One significant reason for this was the political earthquake caused by World War I. Two partitioning states (Russia and Germany) underwent radical systemic, political, and ideological changes. Austria-Hungary (which, during the war, was one of the major reference points in Polish political deliberations and in the practice of Polish politics) disappeared from the political map of Europe, whereas Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia appeared on it. The fundamental difference consisted primarily in the fact that the point of reference of Polish geopolitical reflection was again the independent Polish state, which had a specific international position. Poland could finally become an actor in the geopolitical game (albeit with limited influence). As a result, analyses of international politics now focused on Poland's immediate neighbourhood, which somewhat neglected those farther-away regions that had formerly been closely monitored with a view to identifying factors that could potentially weaken the partitioning powers. The main theme of considerations on geopolitics (now this term was used directly) conducted in the Second Polish Republic was based

on the obvious thesis of the complex geopolitical situation in the newly reborn state. This opinion was not always expressed as clearly as it was by Aleksander Skrzyński (1882–1931) in his book *Poland and Peace [Polska a pokój]*, published in 1923: “A more unfavourable geopolitical position than in the new Poland is simply impossible to imagine” (as cited in: Kloczkowski, 2018, p. 286).

This comment by Skrzyński, who was minister of foreign affairs twice and held the position of prime minister of Poland, was not groundless. He explained it by reference to the fact that Poland “is, next to Germany, the most typical inland state in the sense that the majority of its borders are on land and are of a consequential and linear nature, while the sea constitutes its minor part”, which meant that – bearing in mind Poland’s neighbours – “75 per cent” of its entire “border line” had to be “considered permanently under threat” (ibid.). Similar concerns were expressed by Stanisław Bukowiecki (1867–1944), who argued in his book *Polityka Polski niepodległej [Independent Poland’s politics]* (1922) that “the geographical location [...] constitutes a special characteristic of Poland which affects it in an extremely unfavourable way” (as cited in: Kloczkowski, 2018, p. 267). Along with many other politicians and journalists of that time, Skrzyński and Bukowiecki fully agreed that the location “between Germany and Russia” meant that throughout the interwar period the issue of protecting its independence from potential and actual threats from both its neighbours was a fundamental challenge for the reborn Poland. As a result, geopolitical deliberations returned again to considerations of political analyses (analytical and journalistic), although scientific reflection on geopolitics also found a place in the intellectual life of the Second Polish Republic. As well as the aforementioned Romer, its representatives included the geographer Stanisław Srokowski (1872–1950), head of the Baltic Institute in Toruń, the economist Władysław Wakar (1885–1933), and Zygmunt Wojciechowski (1900–1955), a historian from Poznań University and the founder of the Western Institute after World War II, who was also known in journalism for his national democratic affiliations. Scientific analyses of geopolitics frequently had an ideological and political dimension, as they occasionally responded to the ideas of foreign scholars, especially German ones.

In the Second Polish Republic, many politicians, experts, and journalists analysed the geopolitical aspects of international politics,

the most prominent being, apart from those mentioned above, Ignacy Matuszewski (1891–1946), Adolf Bocheński (1909–1944), Stanisław Kozicki (1876–1958), Stanisław Łoś (1890–1974), and Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz (1896–1966). Geopolitical themes appeared in military works, e.g. the writings of General Władysław Sikorski (1881–1943) and General Tadeusz Kutrzeba (1886–1947). Being situated “between Germany and Russia”, the location of Poland determined the main direction of reflections. However, the same set of premises led to differing conclusions, especially at the level of political recommendations as to what the Polish state should do in order to limit threats and make the best possible use of its assets. The best-known dilemma of the time was related to the choice of allies in the second half of the 1930s that was made within Minister Józef Beck’s (1894–1944) foreign policy. Although the geopolitical aspects of this dilemma are not strongly emphasised, especially in today’s discussions concerning decisions taken in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of World War II, the geopolitical determinants are nevertheless considered. Other geopolitical issues of the interwar period that are widely commented on in Polish reflection on international politics include the following: the concept of the Intermarium [*Międzymorze*] region, associated primarily with the federation plans of Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935); the Promethean idea, which grew out of this concept and was expressed by, among others, Włodzimierz Bączkowski (1905–2000), editor-in-chief of “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński” [“Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin”]; and the ideas for various Central or Eastern European federations put forward by the aforementioned Bukowiecki and Władysław Gizbert-Studnicki (1867–1953). However, these intellectual and political concepts, although undoubtedly interesting and sometimes of great political significance, were never realised. During World War II, ideas for a federation were still being proposed, which included the prospect of a Polish-Czech union or a broader federation of Western Slavic lands, which was postulated in the 1930s by Kazimierz Studentowicz (1903–1992) as being the next step after the Polish–Czechoslovak confederation. Studentowicz was associated with the “Bunt Młodych”/“Polityka” [“Youthful Rebellion”/“Politics”] circle and during the war was involved in the work of Christian Democrat circles. After 1939, for several decades Polish geopolitics reverted to the situation it had been in prior to 1918, and

Poland once again became merely the object of a political game, this time enslaved by the Soviet Union.

Another form of return to the past was linked to the re-birth of Polish intellectual life in exile (including in the area of political thought). The emigrants included authors who had made their debuts and a name for themselves back in the Second Polish Republic, such as Ignacy Matuszewski, Włodzimierz Bączkowski, Jerzy Niezbrzycki (alias Ryszard Wraga, 1902–1968), Eustachy Sapieha (1881–1963), Wojciech Wasiutyński (1910–1994), Wiktor Sukiennicki (1901–1983), and Juliusz Mieroszewski (1906–1976). In Paris, “Kultura” [“Culture”] played a similar role to that played previously by the Hotel Lambert camp, i.e. the centre with the greatest power of attraction and influence that was the most important point of reference in ideological and political discussions and disputes among emigrants. Unlike Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, Jerzy Giedroyc (1906–2000), the founder of “Kultura” [“Culture”] was not a political writer. The results of geopolitical activity conducted in exile were mainly intellectual and propagandist, and any attempt at political diplomacy in the style of the Hotel Lambert was out of the question. Sovietological studies were a major achievement of Polish post-war émigré thought, even though geopolitical themes did not often occupy a prominent place in them because they focused instead on communist ideology and the realities of life in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, these analyses were helpful in geopolitical analyses of the USSR and were also used by Western experts, opinion makers, and politicians.

In the People’s Republic of Poland, geopolitical considerations were determined by censorship. In official media, these mainly appeared as justification for Poland’s post-war situation as shaped by geopolitical realities, which was supposed to explain Poland’s alignment with the communists and its pact with the Soviet Union. Old geopolitical traditions could be referred to only if they did not contradict the “new situation”, which was adherence to communist ideology and the practice of functioning as a communist state, albeit *de facto* deprived of independence. Hence, for example, some of the pre-war national democrats were able to continue – although far from freely – their reflections on Polish-German relations, especially in the context of the Recovered Territories and Poland’s place in the Baltic Sea region (e.g. the work of the Western Institute in Poznań, headed in the first years of its existence by

Zygmunt Wojciechowski). Geopolitical topics related to political realism also appeared in the works of neo-positivists, led by Stanisław Stomma (1908–2005) and Stefan Kisielewski (1911–1991). Nevertheless, analyses of international politics, including geopolitics, at universities and in official journalism were entangled in the system of communist indoctrination and a radical restriction of freedom of discussion.

However, analyses of international politics were conducted in the so-called second circuit or samizdat publications, which were published unofficially. Especially in the 1980s, much attention was directed at the Soviet Union, especially towards processes that could lead to its weakening and, consequently, to the possibility of it failing to compete with the United States, which could eventually result in its collapse. This trend included, for example, works written by thinkers from Krakow, including Mirosław Dzielski (1841–1989), the Christian-liberal philosopher, Leszek Moczulski (born in 1930), the leader of the Confederation of Independent Poland [Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej], Stefan Kisielewski (e.g. his famous text *Czy geopolityka straciła znaczenie?* [Does geopolitics no longer matter?]) published in “Res Publica” in 1979), Henryk Kreczkowski (1921–1986), members of The Young Poland Movement [Ruch Młodej Polski], who published their texts in “Polityka Polska” [“Polish Politics”], and authors who wrote for “Głos” [“The Voice”] magazine (who, in 1983, formulated the principles of the “Głos” team and published them in a text entitled *Chrześcijaństwo i geopolityka* [Christianity and geopolitics]). After the fall of communism, all these texts remained a valuable intellectual legacy of the period of enslavement; however, in this new geopolitical reality it was necessary to create Polish reflection on geopolitics from scratch. This reflection should refer to history and at the same time address the issues that had so far been on the margins of reflection (especially practical reflection) or had even been completely absent from it (such as Poland’s accession to the integration processes in Europe and its embarking on the path to NATO membership). Several old Polish geopolitical ideas, such as the creation of an independent Ukraine and Belarus, were finally realised, albeit not as originally visualised when they were proposed during the Second Polish Republic or by post-war emigrant circles.

## Discussion of the term

When analysing the history of Polish geopolitics, we encounter two potential problems at the outset. The first is related to the arbitrary manner in which the various texts from this area (including interviews, speeches, lectures, and programme documents) are assigned to the categories mentioned in the introduction: geopolitics as a branch of science, a subject of political analysis, a focus for journalistic debate, and an ideological stance. For example, a text that is regarded as scientific by one person can be classified as journalistic by another; moreover, the boundaries between expert analysis and journalism are sometimes blurred. The second problem is related to the fact that some geopolitical works do not refer to this concept directly. A case in point is the work of Adolf Bochenski (2019), who was widely regarded as a classic author in the area of geopolitical reflection and who rarely used the term in his works. The terms “geopolitics” and “geopolitical” do not appear at all in his well-known book *Między Niemcami a Rosją [Between Germany and Russia]* published in 1937, which is sometimes considered the best Polish geopolitical treatise written. However, their absence, as is the case with many other works by this and other authors, does not disqualify them from being treated as a voice belonging to the Polish geopolitical tradition. Of course, the subject of what geopolitical consideration should be and how it should be treated is in itself highly debatable. Thus, since attempts to create a precise and clear-cut definition of geopolitics seem futile, it makes more sense to be content with general and common-sense descriptions and to focus on geopolitical reflection itself, as it is much more interesting and informative.

Very occasionally, Polish authors were geopolitical ideologists who created programmes of political action in which they claimed that geopolitical conditions determine the policies a state (nation) should pursue or that these conditions fully justify and legitimise a political plan (especially plans involving the conquest of other countries, e.g. to obtain *Lebensraum*). On the other hand, these authors were often involved in critical analyses and evaluation of geopolitics as an ideology. This can be partially explained by the specificity of Polish history: when the first ideologically motivated geopolitical concepts were developed, e.g. in Germany, Poland was a country deprived of independence and later



threatened with losing it again precisely because of its geopolitical location – a position that is expressed in the well-known phrase “between Germany and Russia”. Ideologically motivated geopolitics (intended as the justification for an offensive programme of action recommended to any state capable of undertaking it) was often simply not possible or not desirable for Poland. It is worth noting, however, that a distinguishing feature of all our political thought in Polish reflections on geopolitics is the orientation towards practical issues alongside a certain restraint in theorising.

This does not mean that Polish geopolitical reflection never formulated proposals for bold offensive actions. It did, but usually they were not of an ideological nature as they were based on analyses of the practical needs of Polish politics or the situation of Poles. They were formulated during the partition period, when they included visions of breaking the oppressive chains as part of a revolutionary uprising on a European scale. Some supporters of the national uprisings saw them as part of a larger game in international politics that would bring freedom to Poland (usually thanks to France). In the first months of the January Uprising, such hopes, which were associated with Napoleon III’s expected intervention on behalf of the Polish cause, were strong, and before they disappeared they gripped the minds of even some conservatives who had opposed this Uprising. Other offensive geopolitical ideas were formulated in the Second Polish Republic. However, it is sometimes difficult to separate two aspects of this period: the propaganda dimension and the conviction that Poland needed offensive activities in order to forestall the offensive activities of its enemies. Thus, what is not clear is when the idea of Poland being a superpower in international politics was something people actually began to believe in and when it was only used to mobilise public opinion or bring popularity to the state authorities (frequent in the 1930s) or political factions wishing to mark their position clearly. In this perspective, questioning the quality of Polish geopolitical deliberations is at the same time another chapter in the dispute as to whether political realism was sufficiently present in Polish political thinking or whether the exaggerated romanticism (of which Polish politics was sometimes accused) crept into places that it should not, i.e. into deliberations on geopolitics. The answer to these questions is deemed to be subjective as it depends to a large extent

not only on one's opinions concerning particular situations in the history of Poland and Europe (sometimes even on a global scale) but also on one's ideological and even personal affiliations (for example, the aforementioned dispute over Beck's policy is mostly a popularity poll to evaluate Sanation rule and opinions about the main political alternatives to Sanation).

## Systematic reflection with conclusions and recommendations

Combined with the great willingness to discuss politics of Polish politicians, scholars, journalists, and people of other professions (including international politics), the special nature of Polish history and the significant share of international and geopolitical factors in it have made our tradition of geopolitical reflection very rich in content. Of course, geopolitical reflection cannot be treated as a stock of ready recipes to be freely applied in solving today's geopolitical dilemmas in Poland, Europe, or the world. This is not the role of history. The role of history is to provide excellent material for practising political thinking (including geopolitical thinking) in order to learn the mechanisms of international politics. The numerous examples described by Polish authors over the centuries reveal what leads states and nations to success, what may contribute to their failure, what the nature of international relations is, and how these relations were shaped between particular states or nations (and which are sometimes of great importance to their situation today). Thorough analyses of an abundant number of Polish works on geopolitics – ranging from thick books to ephemeral articles in the daily press that are of widely varying quality – leads to avoidance of dogmatic adherence to positions formulated on the basis of our past experiences when thinking about international politics today. Trust in our allies and the associated successes or disappointments of several decades or several hundred years add little to our assessment of currently existing or proposed alliances; the overly expansive or overly cautious politics pursued in various past situations (and its consequences) will not tell us how expansive or cautious we should be now, etc. Rather, becoming familiar with the history of Polish geopolitical reflection should lead us

to more comprehensive analyses of the realities of international politics. The point is that we should try to perceive not just snapshots of current events (such is the picture of international relations that is usually presented by the electronic media) but its long-term processes and trends, and we should be reasonably flexible in drawing conclusions from our analyses.

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# Geopolitics and international security

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, geopolitics reached peak popularity as both a scientific discipline and a school of political thought. After World War II, geopolitics almost became a “prohibited science”, but it was still practiced as a subdiscipline of international relations called “international security studies”. Numerous concepts were developed within this field of study that generally followed the main paradigms of international relations.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** The end of the “Cold War” opened up a new era in geopolitical reflection which, in comparison to traditional schools, underwent a specific metamorphosis and often took into account constructivist elements. This was most fully reflected in the theories formulated within critical geopolitics, which is sometimes even described as an amalgam of geopolitics and constructivism.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article presents the evolution of international security within politics, including attempts to create an effective system of collective security; it also discusses international security as a scientific category, namely a sub-discipline of international relations studies.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** As a field of study, national security was developed using geopolitical tools, while the “new” geopolitics is focused on issues related to international security and its subjective and objective determinants.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, critical geopolitics, international relations, security, international security



## Definition of the term

The term *security* derives from the Latin phrase *sine cura* (*securitas*) and is commonly used to denote a “state” or a “sense” of security, an absence of threats, and/or possessing adequate means to defend and protect an optimal order of public affairs. Traditionally, the state was the subject and object of security, but in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the scope of this term far exceeded these boundaries. “Security itself is a phenomenon that encompasses several scientific disciplines and specialisations. At present, the subject literature provides more than a dozen definitions that [are created] from different perspectives” (Pokruszyński, 2010, p. 8), while “different approaches to state security define this notion using the categories of values, processes, and states” (Wojtaszczyk, 2009, pp. 12–13). The international context of national security (state security) has always been present, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century

has revolutionarily transformed the field of state security. The number of challenges and actors involved in various undertakings and expectations concerning the protection of these actors’ values has increased. Consequently, it is very difficult to predict how far-reaching the consequences of threats might be (Wojtaszczyk, 2009, p. 16).

These words reflect the growing complexity, multidimensionality, and dynamics of the field of security. Satisfying existential needs such as “existence, survival, wholeness, independence, identity, peace, possession, certainty of functioning, and development” remains the unchanging domain of security (Zajac, 2009, p. 17; Zięba, 2006, pp. 937–938; Czapotowicz, 2012, pp. 35–37). Ryszard Zięba, who is often linked with a static approach to security (Zięba, 1999, p. 27–28), emphasises its processual nature:

Therefore, security can be described as the certainty of existence and survival, one’s possessions, and the functioning and development of an entity. This certainty results from the absence of threats (their non-existence or elimination) and also stems from the creative activity of a given entity and is changeable over time, which means that it has the nature of a social process (Zięba, 2015, p. 87).

A dynamic understanding of security is emphasised by Stanisław Koziej, who perceives it as a continuous *process*:

a field (...) of activity that aims to ensure the possibility of survival, development, and freedom to pursue one's interests in specific conditions by taking advantage of favourable circumstances (opportunities), undertaking challenges, reducing risks, and counteracting (preventing and opposing) all types of threats to an entity and his interests (Koziej, 2006, p. 7).

Krzysztof Karolczak draws attention to the subjective dimension of security that is linked to protection of the individual:

it is a state of being aware of the existence of protection against any action (...) that will limit or completely abolish the rights of the individual, both natural and those arising from state law (Karolczak, 2011, p. 15).

Security can be divided into several separate categories, including general security, state security, public security, human security, personal security, and economic security. It is therefore necessary to adopt a specific perspective that will place security issues on the horizon of politics. In the liberal paradigm (i.e. a liberal vision of the state), security is the axis that constitutes the existence of the state, and one of the main functions of the state is to guarantee both the external and the internal dimensions of "broadly understood security" (Karolczak, 2011, pp. 16–17). It is worth noting that these functions are present in all views on the role of the state, where they form the level of minimum expectations. The subjective dimension of security stems directly from the assumption that, to some extent, security is a "sense" of the absence of any threat, which can be described as

subjective (and thus dependent on the perception of the agent) or/and objective (actual) existence of a threat to the agent's essential values that are considered to relate to his security. The threat is directed at specific values that require the agent's protection (Zięba, 2015, p. 92).

Agata W. Ziętek (2011, pp. 199–200) quotes Daniel Frei's well-known formula, which proposed that security and the absence of security are categorised by demonstrating the four relationships that exist between perception and reality in this respect:

- a) a state of insecurity – real threats are present, and they are adequately perceived;
- b) a state of obsession – threats are perceived although real threats are absent;



- c) a state of a false sense of security – real threats are present, but they are not perceived;
- d) a state of security – real threats are absent or insignificant, and their absence or insignificance is adequately perceived (Frei, 1977, pp. 18–20).

Reducing Frei's categories to that of risk (Beck, 2009, pp. 296–298) leads to the emergence of two states of collective consciousness: a sense of threat and a sense of its absence. These must be considered fluid states and thus subject to change that is introduced intentionally from outside (i.e. subject to attack). Some researchers who acknowledge the accuracy of this approach reject the view that security is objective in nature; instead, they consider its subjective and conscious nature to predominate (Pietraś, 1986, pp. 161–163). Ryszard Zięba rejects this approach as it significantly narrows the field of research and omits a positive approach to building security mechanisms and values (Zięba, 2015, p. 93). Roger Fisher's positions-interests-needs model helps to clarify the contradiction between these approaches. While it is possible (and even desirable) to search at the level of needs and interests for ontologically rooted (i.e. objective) elements of social life (threats, challenges, risks, and opportunities), the domain of positions is marked mainly by subjective (conscious) factors. Zięba justifies this dichotomous consistency in the following way:

It is necessary to take into account the sphere of reality of the subjects of security, including states and the international system within which states exist, and the sphere of consciousness in which the perception of these types of risks and the formation of a sense of certainty takes place (Zięba, 2015, p. 93).

In another publication, he argues that:

International security has a broader content than national security. It is not merely the sum of the security of individual states [but] its essence is built out of a set of international conditions, norms, and mechanisms, as well as interactions that provide each state of an international system or region with bigger or smaller certainty of unthreatened existence, survival, possessions, and developmental freedoms (Zięba, 2018, p. 23).

Thus, in both global and regional dimensions, peculiar international regimes are formed that are characterised by, for example, the

generation of supranational sets of norms and values as well as patterns of behaviour and conduct. As is the case of state security, two approaches (static and processual) clash in relation to international security, with the growing predominance of the latter, which is linked to the highly dynamic, turbulent, and labile international situation, the dominant feature of which is *change*. However, we should not forget that the determinants of the processes taking place within international security give rise to new qualities, organisations, institutions, and procedures, all of which create new “fields” of security. In this perspective, international security becomes a conglomerate of phenomena that should take into account the existence of many subsystems grounded in different values, operated by different mechanisms, and conditioned by different determinants. In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the global system, which is based on the League of Nations and the United Nations, has remained “loose” due to the need to reconcile different and often contradictory tendencies. Since the 1950s, a growing area of international relations (and thus of security) has been run by non-governmental actors that are described as international organisations. Their number, which skyrocketed towards the end of the last century, and the process of their empowerment have increased the complexity of the international system. “Technological revolutions”, being another factor that contributes to this complexity, open up new areas for international relations. The benefits and opportunities brought about by globalisation (which is one of the features of modernity) are accompanied by new challenges, risks, and threats.

## International security in politics

In international politics, issues of international security, which are understood to be integral and systemic, comprehensively marked their place at the end of the World War I. Prior to this time, with a few exceptions, the dominant approach was linked to the question of how to win a possible war. The devastating loss of life of the Great War made the question of how to avoid future wars paramount. Initiatives that were intended to “soften” the brutal face of the world’s crises appeared during WW1, which included “humanising” fighting methods, treatment of the wounded

on the battlefields, and the protection of civilians. However, it was not until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that these issues began to be brought together by systemic reflection on the avoidance of war. Interwar attempts to create an effective system of collective security in the form of the League of Nations ended in failure and the main goal of the League, which was to avoid another world clash, was unsuccessful. The doctrine of the League of Nations included mechanisms intended to delay the outbreak of war and to create negotiation and arbitration mechanisms that were supposed to reduce the likelihood of resorting to military force. These solutions proved ineffective: wars broke out, while the apparatus introduced in the Covenant of the League of Nations was effectively ignored or circumvented. It should be emphasised that these solutions did not apply to non-sovereign territories and internal phenomena, thus international security was limited solely to relations between states. Disarmament was another issue related to international security. This was based on the conviction that “excessive” armaments were one of the most dominant (if not the main) cause of war. Disarmament initiatives undertaken under the auspices of the League of Nations and elsewhere (e.g. the negotiations that led to the Washington Treaty and the Treaty itself) became an expression of these tendencies. They demonstrated an inability to overcome international tensions and the chain of interdependences in state politics. With few exceptions, they failed to go beyond declarations and ambitious projects. In various arenas – most especially during the Conference on Disarmament that was held in Geneva – technical, quantitative, and detailed issues were torpedoed by political considerations, and the provisions of Article 8 effectively blocked any possibility of reaching real agreement.

The first collective, universal, common security pact, which was a League of Nations project, marked a new quality and a new direction in international politics. It is assumed that this is how the category of international security found its place in world politics. Despite the eventual failure of this project, it showed the direction taken already during World War II that led to systemic solutions regarding post-war security. Between 1941–1945, as a result of multi-stage negotiations, the international system was redesigned and found its final form in the Charter of the United Nations. In January 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt outlined the pillars of future international security in his New

Year's address to Congress. Its four "freedoms" included freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear (including the reduction of armaments). This last element was new; of course, it had previously been observed that social inequalities and stratifications in living standards led to serious tensions and conflicts, but never before had this resonated so strongly. The fate of later war-time conferences demonstrated that "freedom from want" was treated by Soviet diplomacy as an announcement of the opening of a new field of competition.

Established in 1945, the United Nations set itself the following objective:

To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace (Article 1, § 1 of the Charter of the United Nations).

Although the category of "international peace and security" frequently appears in the UN Charter, the charter does not provide a definition of these terms. As a result, "international security" became the subject of debate in scientific and political circles, where it was interpreted more or less broadly and its scope was subject to the natural changes that followed from the great dynamism in international relations. The Cold War directed the main interest of international security towards interstate relations and the balance of power. In such optics, it became vital to avoid global and interstate war or to ensure maximised potential for victory in any possible clash. In practice, this meant developing deterrence capabilities on both an individual and an alliance (interblock) basis. It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that domestic issues, human rights, energy, ecology, etc. gained importance. It is assumed that the conventional beginning of a "new era" in the political perception of international security was marked by the Charter of Paris for a New Europe in 1990.

## International security as a scientific category

As a scientific category, international security was finally established after World War II and subsequently gave rise to a new discipline called security studies. This eventually became a subdiscipline of international relations studies. In the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, some security studies were undertaken by civilian scholars. The European continent was more “conservative”: here, reflection on international security was part of strategic thought, which for a long time remained subordinated to military purposes. In the “golden age” of security studies, they found their place at the junction of the study of strategy (strategies) and foreign policy, and they became a permanent feature within the remit of “civilian strategists”. Security analysts were primarily concerned with developing theories of nuclear deterrence (and nuclear warfare), analysing systems related to the structure of the armed forces and resource allocation, and refining crisis management tools. As an area of politics, international security requires reflection on its nature and character, and, as it is dynamic in nature, discussions regarding the “state of security” can at best be treated as preliminary. Security has a processual nature, and due to the highly unpredictable and changeable nature of current and future realities it requires constant monitoring and a flexible response that allows for amendment of predictions regarding the future. A significant proportion of security threats is generated by conscious entities (e.g. other participants in the international game), so it should be assumed that their activity changes depending on the direction, fields, intensity, etc. The resistance (friction) of the defence can be treated as a factor that modifies hostile activities. This is well illustrated by the metaphor of the race between “the sword and the shield”. In this scenario, the potential for attack is balanced by the potential for defence, which enforces the development of new offensive technologies and methods that in turn trigger progress in defence technology. The complexity of and the need for a flexible approach is discussed by Andrzej Misiuk, who advocates a departure from the static understanding of security issues:

Threats are changing, the natural and social environment in which human beings, social groups, and whole nations function is becoming increasingly

complicated, and therefore the needs and challenges in the area of security are evolving (Misiuk, 2013, pp. 11–12).

During the Cold War, or at least in its first two decades, security studies focused on four perspectives (the four S's: *state*, *strategy*, *science*, *status quo*): 1) state-centric – with a particular emphasis on the place and role of a state as the main actor in international relations, and thus the main object and subject of international security; 2) strategic – indicating military issues as the main component of research and as the reference point of all state activity (the main objective being to maximise the defence capabilities of a state); 3) scientific – strategists and researchers were expected to develop sound and verifiable knowledge regarding the mechanisms of politics which would allow a state to optimise the efforts it has undertaken to rationally increase its potential; 4) status quo – assuming the maintenance of the *status quo* as the goal of efforts by preventing an adversary from realising his intentions and upsetting the existing balance of power.

Developed in the 1960s by Abraham Maslow, the hierarchy of needs pyramid is well known, but it is worth noting that it refers to both individual and collective needs. At the base of the pyramid are physiological needs, with safety needs placed above them on the second level. Meeting the needs of these two levels falls within the spectrum of security, which can be defined as ensuring the conditions for survival. The other three levels of the pyramid also fall into the category of security that ensures the conditions for proper development. Most often, security is associated with avoiding or mitigating threats to vital life areas and values, especially those that threaten the survival of an individual in the immediate future if left uncontrolled. Security and survival are often linked but are not synonymous. Survival is an existential condition, while security requires the ability to realise political and social ambitions. Hence, according to Ken Booth, it can be concluded that security is comprised of two elements: the capacity to ensure survival; and “survival plus”, where “plus” implies a certain freedom to make vital choices after ensuring existential sustainability (Booth, 2008, pp. 134–144). In the literature on this subject, this dichotomy is more precisely referred to as *security from* and *security to*. In other words, it is possible to identify two main “philosophies” of security, each originating from different starting points.

The first sees security as synonymous with the accumulation of power. In this perspective, security is understood as a *product* that is realised as a result of the ability to dispose of a certain resource (in order to be secure, actors must possess certain material resources, such as property, money, weapons, armed forces, raw materials, etc.). It is believed that power/potential is the path to security: the more potential a state can accumulate (especially military power), the more secure it will be.

The second approach is based on questioning the view that security stems from power or that security is the direct and only function of power. Security is considered a function of emancipation and social stability, with a strongly marked role played by individuals. It involves concern for social justice and ensuring human rights. From this perspective, security is understood as the relationship between different actors rather than a product of power. Either of these relationships can be understood in negative terms (security refers to the absence of any threatening factor) or in positive terms (security covers phenomena that enable the achievement of goals). This distinction is often reflected in the ideas of *freedom from* and *freedom to*. In terms of interdependence, security involves obtaining a certain degree of social acceptance for goals. This acceptance results from sharing certain conscious obligations (rights and responsibilities), which in turn provides a degree of certainty and predictability. This view argues that the key to understanding the “equation of safety and uncertainty” is the relationships and interdependencies between actors rather than the specific means (e.g. nuclear weapons).

Both those study perspectives can be further divided into “realistic” and “liberal” approaches (international relations), or more broadly, into coercive and cooperative social visions (sociology). These are not mutually exclusive and can even complement each other under certain conditions. In terms of security and security “plus”, they are inextricably linked and depend on one another. The “plus” sector can only be formulated under conditions of ensuring security “from”/“before”, while the realisation of the “to” sector (i.e. security “plus”) provides the means to develop the capacity to defend and protect the existential basis in a dynamically changing and competitive environment.

Several paradigms have emerged in the sub-discipline of international relations and its category related to international security, but the most intense debate concerns its duration and subject matter and

has been held between realist and liberal attitudes. Simply put, it can be assumed that both trends were based on a similar “diagnosis” of the nature of security and the international environment. This diagnosis is characterised by a high level of anarchy and a certain level of chaos (uncertainty and unpredictability). Anarchy results directly from the nature of the international structure, which consists of sovereign actors (state and non-state actors) in the absence of any superordinate regulator of relations between them. Chaos is a result of the large (and growing) number of participants in the international game who pursue their own (often competing) activities. This leads to many clashes with net results that are impossible to predict. It can be assumed that as the complexity and networking of contemporary international relations and security increases, their chaotic nature and “uncertainty” will also increase. Despite a similar diagnosis, each paradigm proposes different solutions and recommendations. Classical realism proposed activities that were calculated to maximise self-power, which was supposed to guarantee the ability to design political reality and the security field according to one’s own needs, interests, and objectives. Consequently, the international system was to be based on a self-help system, continuous competition, and changes in the model of power distribution. The realist paradigm has given rise to approaches that take into account various characteristics and specificities of the international system, including structural realism, offensive realism, defensive realism, etc. In the liberal-idealist paradigm, the dominant approach is an attempt to reduce anarchy and chaos through normalisation and institutionalisation of international relations at the global, sectoral, and regional levels. Cooperation leads to less chaos, and new normative regimes initiate automatic algorithms that lead to expanding and deepening integration. The apparent paradox of reducing anarchy and chaos by increasing the number of participants in the “game” is overcome thanks to assigning a certain number of system participants into subsystems based on shared value systems. This is done at the cost of actors giving up some of their sovereignty, thanks to which the Hobbesian domain of competition and anarchisation of the entire system are reduced.

The constructivist approach, which is the third paradigm, emphasises the subjective and discursive nature of security. The Copenhagen School of security studies has undertaken an interesting exploration of



this approach. On an operational level, the concepts of *securitisation* and *desecuritisation* correspond to the subjective and, in a way, “causal” nature of security. They are based on the conviction, strongly rooted in constructivism, of the need for a systemic approach to conflict transformation (Williams, 2003, pp. 514–517). One of the main areas of interest is how to transform a goal into a security problem (as this constitutes the essence of conflict) along with issues linked to the dynamics of conflict that result from securitisation processes. In this understanding, conflict is rooted in one actor’s defining a situation as directly threatening to their survival, guaranteeing the possibility of fulfilling “vital needs”, etc. (Moravscik, 1999, pp. 669–675). The essence of conflict is not the objectively existing state of affairs but the subjective definition of one’s position in the system that is threatened. The Copenhagen School emphasises that security has an exclusively subjective nature:

The definition of security turns out to be explicitly constructivist in the sense that we do not ask whether the problem itself is a threat; instead, we focus on when, under what conditions, and who securitises the problem (Buzan and Wæver, 2004, p. 71).

When an actor securitises a situation, he justifies his rights to use extraordinary means and to break existing norms. In this way, by imposing the “label” of *security* or *danger* on a situation, it changes qualitatively and becomes what it has been defined to be (Buzan and Wæver, 2004, p. 72). Ole Wæver captures this issue even more bluntly:

Security is not a matter that relates to something real – a statement is itself an act. By stating that something has been done (...) and by declaring “security”, an actor sets in motion a particular development in the area in question, and thereby grants [to those he represents – J.R.Z.] the special right to use whatever means are necessary to guarantee it (Wæver, 1995, p. 55).

On the other hand, it is worth pointing to an opposite process, i.e. *desecuritisation*, which Barry Buzan considers the “optimal long-range option”. This should be understood as a process of ‘removing’ from the discourse those chains of “existing threats against which we must take extraordinary measures” (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998, p. 29). Ultimately, this makes it possible to break the action-response (threat/defence) sequence and attempt to return to regular social relations.

According to operational constructivism, simply referring to a threat (verbalising it) is enough to trigger a self-propelling sense of danger (even if the judgement has been exaggerated or artificially generated) and reinforces the observer's perception of threat through self-distancing from the source of this threat. In other words, diversification of the communication system while in danger equates to the creation of a self-propelling system of conflict which, based on the assumption of general systems theory, tends to continue into a chronic phase. Conflict thus results from the continuous communication of threat, which Wæver and Buzan describe as securitisation (Buzan and Wæver, 2004, pp. 75–76). The success of securitisation is determined not only by the actor who declares a need for security but also by the addressee (audience) of this declaration. What matters is whether the addressee will accept that something is an existential threat to his values (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998, p. 31). It should be emphasised that the concepts of securitisation and desecuritisation do not relate to the ontological sphere of security but focus on decision-making processes and their determinants, particularly in the initial stages.

In the subject literature these days, it is assumed that there are three basic levels of reflection on security, which are related to agent, subject matter, and the future. The first level addresses national security (which is usually equated with state security) and international security. Towards the end of the Cold War (Buzan, 1983), Barry Buzan divided security into five sectors:

1. military: focused on the study of the interrelationship between offensive and defensive capacities of states and mutual perceptions of intentions. This level was called "strategic";
2. political: focused on the organisational stability of states, systems of power, and the ideologies that give them legitimacy;
3. economic: focused on access to resources, money, and the markets necessary to maintain acceptable levels of a state's prosperity and strength;
4. societal: focused on the sustainability and evolution of traditional patterns of language, culture, identity, and religious and national customs (called a way of life);
5. environmental: focused on preserving the local and planetary biosphere as an essential support system on which all other human endeavours depend (Buzan, 2009, pp. 107–119 and 221–236).

In this perspective, there is no doubt that international security is a multifaceted and multidisciplinary issue. It can be assumed that after 1983 the scope of security as a category, as well as its content, was broadened significantly. Rigid separation between the indicated areas does not stand up to criticism as they constitute a complex network of interdependence and interpenetration. Politics should be the common denominator in at least one of the available perspectives, with particular emphasis on its vital and strategic aspects. Regardless of the differences between them, the indicated areas are addressed by policy makers within the scope of “diagnosis – doctrine – optimal outcome”. This applies both at the level of states and at the level of the global game.

## International security and geopolitics

After the end of World War II, primarily after the Nuremberg trials, geopolitics came to be perceived as an ideologised science that constituted an intellectual base for the aggressive politics of the Third Reich. National security, which developed dynamically as a field of study, took over much of the scope previously covered by geopolitics. In fact, many concepts within international relations that dealt with security issues used geopolitical tools. The elements that belong to geopolitical thought are evident in the works of authors such as George Kennan, Hans Morgenthau, Herbert Butterfield, Saul B. Cohen, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Kenneth Waltz, Robert O. Keohane, Joseph Nye, Raymond Aron, and many others (Donnelly, 2000). During the Cold War, this discipline was practised within international relations and international security. Despite the proliferation of optimistic and futurological theories of the end of history (Francis Fukuyama) or the end of work (Jeremy Rifkin), the end of this bipolar world marked a return to geopolitics, and its contemporary face has a much broader spectrum of approaches to the issue. Alongside the “classical” trends, geopolitics now encompasses concepts that include subjective elements (B. Buzan, O. Wæver) in defining the security sectors, and the concept of “critical geopolitics” (Gearóid Ó Tuathail), which combines the geopolitical approach with post-structuralism and the perspective of the constructivist schools. Regardless of the scientific

and practical approaches, the “new geopolitics” is vitally interested in issues related to international security and in studying its subjective and objective determinants.

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# Geopolitics and strategic studies

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The term “strategy” has several interrelated meanings. The article discusses the relationships between geopolitics and various types of strategy.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** For many centuries, the term “strategy” was reserved for the military activity of a state and was linked to the final phase of dispute between conflicting sides, i.e. war. The meaning of this term began to change with the transformation of war into a clash of apocalyptic proportions (resulting from the invention of nuclear weapons). Due to the existence of nuclear weapons, which meant armed clashes stopped being a feasible option within the limits of rationally acceptable risk, strategy increasingly became used as a way to seek an advantage in other domains not directly connected with the military. As strategy has become a tool used in both the economic sector and in management, this phenomenon has intensified. History has come full circle: strategy, equipped with new tools that have been developed in the domains of the economic and management sectors, has returned to the domains of politics and the military.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** Today, strategic studies, which cover a very complex area, are taught mostly at non-military universities. State (national) strategies contain military components, but these are only their less important part. Strategic studies are constantly evolving due to the increasing complexity and unpredictability of the international environment. New paradigms are aimed to order the chaos of the contemporary world and to “predict the future”. This is the

task of both strategists and strategy itself, although it is impossible to achieve.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** This section draws attention to the limitations of strategic models that focus on the management of available resources, while the dynamically changing world requires that strategy focuses more specifically on the “future”.

**Keywords:** strategy, strategic studies, doctrine, geopolitics, linearity, chaos



## The concept of strategy

The term “strategy” (in Greek στρατηγία *stratēgia*) is a combination of the words *stratós* (army) and *ágein* (to command); it originally meant commanding (leading) an army into battle. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, strategy was rather narrowly understood as leading troops to battle, but it excluded direct contact combat, while commanding a battle was considered part of tactics. Since antiquity, strategy included such aspects as supplying the army (logistics), guaranteeing a stable drafting system, renewal of military personnel, and obtaining the necessary means for maintenance (both in peacetime and in battle). Some researchers are of the opinion that the history of civilisation is, for the most part, the history of the military and its organisation, and it is therefore the history of strategy. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the notion of strategy began to move beyond issues related to military matters. Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke recognises strategy as the science and art of using all available means to achieve a political end. This approach was greatly inspired by Carl von Clausewitz, but the “father of modern strategy” pays more attention to the separation of the military from civilian life. In Clausewitz’s triad, the three vertices of the triangle, i.e. power, society, and the army, retain their individuality while maintaining a relationship with each other.

Nowadays, strategy is described using four separate but interrelated meanings: 1) strategy as a plan to travel from point “A” to point “B”; 2) strategy as a model for action over time; 3) strategy as a decision to use force (military means) in order to meet specific political ends; 4) strategy as a forward-looking way of acting. The third approach prevailed in politics for a long time and focused on the involvement of (military) forces to achieve political ends. Colin S. Gray considered strategy to be “the direction and *use* made of *force* and the *threat* of *force* for the purposes of policy and decided by *politics*” (Gray, 1999, p. 17). This “power play” interpretation can also be found in Basil H. Liddell Hart’s definition, in which strategy is “the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy” (Liddell Hart, 1959, p. 387). Józef Kukułka considers strategy to be a military part of the implementation phase of a state’s politics (Kukułka, 2003). The conviction that the use of military measures (i.e. war) is a part of politics underlies the foundations of the European (transatlantic) strategic culture that was developed by

von Clausewitz. Similarly, André Beaufre treats strategy as “the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute” (Beaufre, 1985, p. 16). In his opinion, the traditional understanding of strategy needed modification due nuclear war’s potential for total destruction, which was an unacceptable proposition. Hence, he advocated the need to transfer the principles of strategy (its methodology, mainly in the area of planning and resource management) to other areas of politics. As a result, strategy means merely selecting the measures that “make the most effective contribution towards the ends set by political activity” (Beaufre, 1997, p. 50).

Politics and strategy are in constant interaction in the form of feedback systems (Zalewski, 2013, pp. 54–58). Politics defines the overall intention and end result, while strategy focuses on assessing possible courses of action and their impact. Strategy serves to set and specify coherent objectives for all resources involved (military, economic, diplomatic, etc.). Beaufre believes that political ends can be achieved through two modes of strategic behaviours: direct and indirect. In contrast, Roman Kuźniar argues that strategy is a comprehensive way to pursue political ends, including the threat of or actual use of force, in the (dialectic) feedback of will between at least two actors (Kuźniar, 2005, p. 25). It should be emphasised that strategies are not created in a void but as a response to specific challenges that can be embodied by, for example, the opponent and his military potential.

Contemporary political thinkers advocate separating “peacetime strategy” from “wartime strategy” or consider the latter a part of the former. This is illustrated by an example of the concept of political strategy, understood as a “tension” between sectoral strategies in a state’s politics. This concept allows us to go beyond perceiving strategy as simply a powerplay; instead, we should treat it as the art of “measuring and combining all national resources to ensure the success of assumed future interests and benefits” (Kukułka, 2003, pp. 165–166). Hence, in this perspective, war strategy becomes a sectoral and branch aspect of political strategy. This approach corresponds to the division into Grand Strategy and strategy that is assumed in Western strategic thought: the former is to some extent the equivalent of political strategy, while strategy itself (without any prefix) relates to military concerns. Gray recognises that “strategy is a bridge that links the use of military force to political

objectives. It is neither military force *per se* nor a political objective” (Gray, 1999, pp. 17–18). The quote below complements this view:

Strategy is fundamentally about identifying or creating asymmetric advantages that can be exploited to help achieve one’s ultimate objectives despite resource and other constraints, most importantly the opposing efforts of adversaries or competitors and the inherent unpredictability of strategic outcomes (Krepinevich and Watts, 2009, p. 19).

Similar elements can be found in definitions that go beyond the domain of politics and military issues. Richard P. Rumelt points out that strategy is “a coherent set of analyses, concepts, policies, arguments, and actions that respond to a high-stakes challenge” (Rumelt, 2011, p. 6). Lawrence Freedman takes a broader view, calling strategy “the art of creating power” (Freedman, 2013, p. xii). In a narrower perspective that limits reflection on strategy to security, strategy is sometimes defined as “a *state’s theory* about how it *can best* ensure its *security*” (Posen, 1986, p. 13) or as “a theory of victory” (Fryc, 2019, pp. 61–63). This understanding of strategy comes close to the definition of doctrine, which is strongly emphasised by Bolesław Balcerowicz. He defines strategy as “a theory and practice of action aimed to achieve assumed goals in a given field that are generally recognised and have a long-term nature” (Balcerowicz, 2002, p. 94; *idem*, 2004, pp. 17–18). He considers “a way, i.e. a course of action” as the key constitutive element of strategy (*ibid.*). In his opinion, strategy is primarily a method of optimising the objectives in relation to the resources available, and proper allocation of those resources to achieving the indicated objectives. This leads to almost equating strategy and doctrine, which may be seen as a controversial view (Dybczyński, 2015, p. 184).

## Strategic studies – linear approaches

In linear approaches, strategies can be reduced to analyses of the steps that need to be taken from a certain point in the present political reality to reach a hypothetical point in the future political reality. This latter point should be characterised by optimisation of the emerging conditions from the perspective of a “strategic entity”. Thus, strategy will “create the

future reality”, and “doctrine” will become an essential phase in it. At this point, all the following must be taken into account: the variability of the complex relationships between an accurate diagnosis of the present, the possible scenarios, possessed and achievable means, internal and external determinants, the changeability of the strategic environment, etc. The complexity and multidimensionality of the strategic matter are effective barriers to creating stable models.

Throughout most of history, strategic studies have focused on analysing past events and processes and have attempted to offer synthesising conclusions (based on created generalisations). This way of practising strategy consisted in analysing selected cases that are considered important from the point of view of strategy. In the prevailing historical approach, what was important from the point of view of data completeness was to collect as many facts and as much information and feedback as possible. Based on this material, it was possible to reconstruct the strategic process relatively completely; once this was done, the strategic process was mapped in order to evaluate it in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. The next step was to create abstracted scenarios of “strategy games” as the basis for practical exercises and theoretical studies for the military. This has developed into a system of “war games” (strategy games, serious games) that are played at both strategic and operational levels. It would appear that as the complexity of the understanding of strategy grew, this approach turned out to be increasingly limited. This model of strategic reflection was modified by Anatol Rapoport, who was inspired by a system of sectoral debates and their general strategic synthesis (Rapoport, 1989). The methodological premise was the assumption that strategic rivalry is the clash of sets of convictions, complex visions of the future, and implementation doctrines (preparatory and final) that are subordinated to these sets. Thus, strategy became the domain of “debates” (intra-state and international) and feedback. This “practical” approach enlisted the use of techniques and strategies that were typical of both combat and games. Rapoport’s “debates” enabled analysis of the appropriateness of decision-making; a proper balance between sets of promises, threats, and motivations that were based on reality and beliefs; and the projection of a clash of wills, goals, beliefs, and preferences. Here, a “strategist” plays the role of a “game master” who is capable of synthesising conclusions.

Contemporary national strategies that are presented in the form of “white books” are an example of the outcome of such actions.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas Schelling proposed another tool for strategic analysis, called “Schelling’s Exploitation”. Based on the idea of analysing the competitive environment and the behaviour of other actors, this approach is widely adopted in market and business strategies and is often used in work on political strategies (Schelling, 1960, p. 3). In Schelling’s approach, strategy should not be concerned with planning for the effective use of force but with the potential for the use of force. This applies to both competing rivals and partners (co-operators) who find themselves in a situation marked by divergent positions or uncertainty regarding their intentions. The role of strategy is not simply that of estimating the distribution of profits and losses between two rivals, but strategy also entails identifying and implementing optimal solutions. This approach is close to finding solutions based on the Nash equilibrium and the preference for cooperative solutions. The study of competitive strategies is based on the conviction that the majority of conflict situations are primarily negotiation potentials. It is essential to anticipate the actions of an opponent (or partner) in an interaction, and this requires searching for and analysing information, designing manoeuvres, and making calculated decisions for the future. Understanding contexts and consciously “immersing” oneself in the processes of creating the future while taking into account the positions and actions of other players becomes crucial. The nature of such a strategic paradigm has undoubtedly been determined by the personality of its creator. Schelling is considered one of the pioneers and classic figures in the application of game theory in international politics.

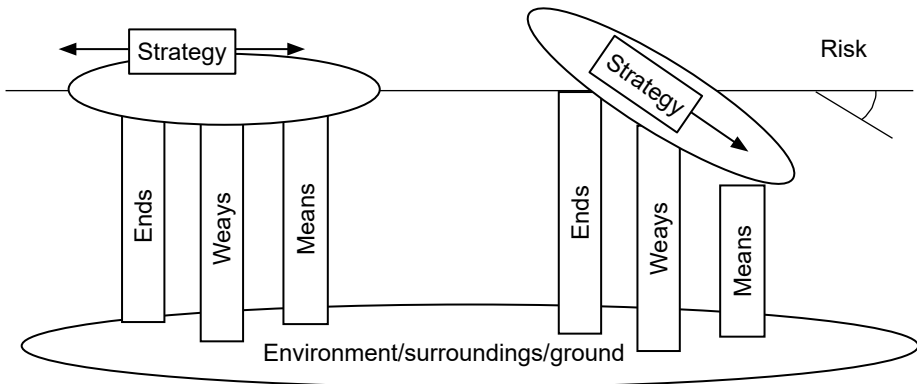
Another strategic paradigm that has been gaining popularity since the late 1980s is the model proposed by Arthur F. Lykke Jr. He assumes that “strategy equals ends (objectives toward which one strives) plus ways (courses of action) plus means (instruments by which some end can be achieved)” (Lykke, 1989, p. 3).

Strategy = ends (objectives) + ways (courses of action) + means (implementation methods)

Described in this way, the formula can be simply stated as the skill (art) of the proper allocation of available resources. The risk (“angle of inclination”) can be illustrated by the metaphor of a tripod for which full

stability is achieved with equal leg lengths. The system remains stable even if the legs are of different lengths within the limits of acceptable risk (scheme 1).

Figure 1. Arthur F. Lykke Jr.'s strategic model



Source: Own study (based on: Lykke, 1989).

Despite its enormous popularity and unquestionable “elegance”, Lykke’s model has several important shortcomings and limitations. It has led to a widespread conviction that the domain of means is more important in relation to ways and (above all) ends. As a result, strategy has been reduced to the “administration” of means and their possible accumulation, and to attempts to increase potential within sectors without defining an end. As a result, the means used to create power were divided into the following sectors: diplomacy, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement (all abbreviated as DIMEFIL) (Moon, 2006, pp. 6–9). The interpretative practice of doctrinal assumptions has led to the understanding of strategy being narrowed down to the art of appropriate selection of particular instruments or their elements in order to respond to immediate threats, challenges, and risks. While resources and means in most sectors (DIMEFIL) remain unchanged or are modifiable to a very limited extent, the domain of ends (which are definitely subjective) can be liable to profound and ad hoc modifications. The element that is defined as ways (courses of action) is clearly secondary to ends (objectives) and means. Thus, Lykke’s model may lead to a reductionist approach to the domain of ends. It is worth

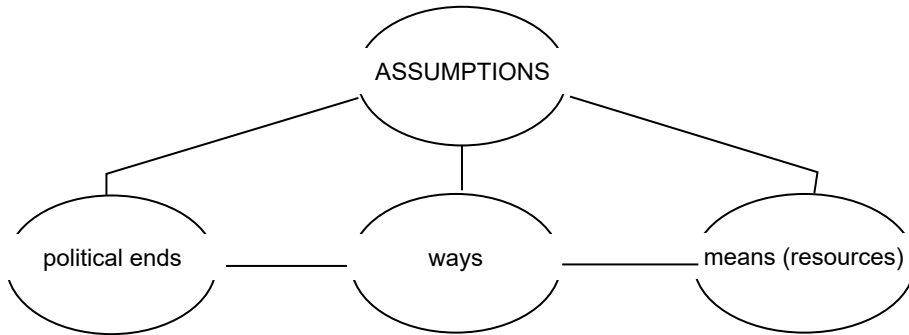
emphasising that one of the basic tasks of political decision-makers (“strategists”) is to strive for minimal risk.

Unlike Schelling’s paradigm, Lykke’s model takes little account of the strategic environment and other actors. It can be said that it assumes, in an absolutely unjustified way, the static nature of deep determinants which are beyond the direct influence of the strategic actor. This model was formulated in the late 1980s, when the Anglo-Saxon worldview was governed by the “end of history” paradigm. The events of 1989–1991, which brought about a fundamental change in the architecture of international relations and security, have left no doubt that the thesis concerning the lack of influence of objective factors on the choice of strategies was false. Similar remarks can be made with reference to the domain of means (Reginia-Zacharski, 2013, pp. 62–63). The technological revolutions observed today allow the formulation of the hypothesis that a stable assessment of instruments available in the medium-term perspective is, at the very least, a risky undertaking. There is also much to suggest that the appropriate application of opportunities that arise in the technological field (innovation) is directly related to the sensitive sectors responsible for increasing economic and overall power.

With a “balanced” approach to all elements, Lykke’s model is useful and reasonable, as it reduces the risks that arise primarily from resource scarcity. The model prevents this scarcity being ignored, which should theoretically prevent the adoption of unrealistic strategies (Lykke, 1989, pp. 6–7). Some interpretations of this model (Balcerowicz, 2004; Gray, 2015) focus on strategy as doctrine, i.e. a course of action. In Gray’s view, it is a “bridge” that connects mean and ends. This formula of conceptualisation goes beyond ends (objectives) and means (resources) (Gray, 2015, p. 43). Strategy becomes synonymous with an “action plan”, i.e. activities to be undertaken using the resources available to achieve an objective. This approach brings strategy down to the management of available resources (means) (Gray, 2006, p. 5).

The model proposed by Colin S. Gray in 2015 seems to be a way out of this trap. To Lykke’s “traditional” model he added a fourth element, assumptions (Gray, 2015, p. 46), which consists of ends, ways, and means. Assumptions are linked to each of the strategic sectors but remain a specific dominant feature of the strategic process as a whole (Figure 2).

Figure 2. “The fundamental architecture of strategy” – C.S. Gray’s four-component strategy model (2015)



Source: Own study (based on: Gray, 2015).

The domain of assumptions relates primarily to the future, i.e. the prediction of what form the future may take. At the same time, the domain of assumptions “binds” the future and the present: the future in terms of its predictions and the detailed ends for the actor planning the strategy; the present in terms of ways and means (resources). The present has a clear context and roots in the past (Czaja, 2013, pp. 22–23). With regard to methods and procedures, it is necessary to take into account the multi-faceted strategic culture, whose main components are past experiences. In this way, Gray’s strategy becomes a “bridge” connecting the present with both the past and the future.

## Strategic studies – chaotic approaches (non-linear)

The notion of strategy seems to be much more complex. If strategy is assumed to be the same as a “theory of success” or a “theory of victory”, it is necessary to take into account the accomplishments within the sectors responsible for these areas (Fryc, 2018, pp. 64–65). In simple terms, success can be described as achieving the intended results with reasonably calculated and optimised costs. Victory, however, cannot be equated with success because this term has taken on other connotations recently (Kupiecki, 2013, pp. 7–16). The key question is how to



define victory because reducing it to “success” as defined above does not withstand criticism. It seems definitely more appropriate to emphasise in its definition the pursuit of solutions that are functionally stable and guarantee the fulfilment of one’s interests. To an extent, however, this functional stability also requires taking into account an opponent’s interests and aspirations. Of course, this only applies to situations in which the adopted strategy assumes the “survival” of the opponent. “Annihilation” strategies aimed at the physical elimination of an opponent do not need to take into account his aspirations (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2012, p. 26). In Western strategic culture, annihilative solutions remain inaccessible due to civilisational and legal determinants.

At this point, it is necessary to return to the importance of the ends that are assumed at the stage of planning a course of action, as it becomes necessary to conceptualise the form of reality that strategic decision makers consider optimal. It also seems justified to emphasise the maximal complexity of the adopted vision of reality, taking into account as many variables as possible. Thanks to this “multi-elementality”, the assumed form of an optimised future can be complete, but there are also significant risks involved. Strategies are built in a specific context which is strongly rooted in time and space and based on an awareness that is ingrained in the right “decision moment”. This moment is burdened with the “indelible uncertainty dilemma” (Booth and Wheeler, 2008, pp. 4–5), which concerns not just the completeness of the information available but also that adequate time is allowed between a strategy’s time of conceptualisation (the adoption) and the time of its implementation. Therefore, it is worth emphasising the issues of “time” and “data”.

From this perspective, it can be said that strategy is a comprehensive conceptual and implementation activity that is aimed to guarantee optimal ends in an unknown future (as cited in: Rogers, 2009, p. 56). Strategy concerns the “accurate prediction of the future”, developing scenarios, and providing means, procedures, social support, etc. that guarantee the realisation of the interests of the (strategic) decision-maker in an optimal way. The paradox is that these activities are at the same time both necessary and impossible to perform (Gray, 2014, pp. 84–95; Barrow, 1999, pp. 61–62). The future is unpredictable due to an infinite number of determinants (which can be described using the term “chaos”). Predicting the future

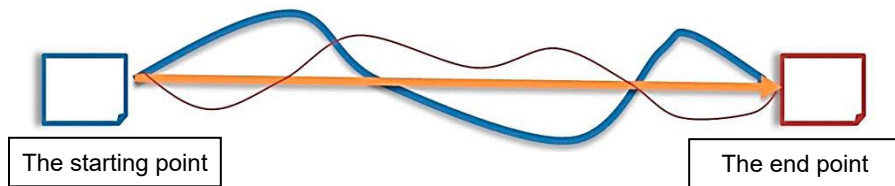
carries a huge potential of risk (Waltz, 2015, pp. 49–50), so it is better to talk about “creating the future” rather than predicting it.

The fact that linear models are of little use in predicting the future justifies replacing them with models based on chaotic approaches. Chaotic systems can be described as

[areas] where simple causes lead to significant irregularities in behaviours which appear to be random. However, careful analysis reveals specific patterns in these behaviours that are subject to certain rules. In order to differentiate such behaviours from those which are completely random and cannot be ordered, the former are called deterministic chaos (Krupski, 2010, p. 5).

Organisations operating with such determinants and in such an environment are characterised by specific features, such as unpredictability, limited control, short-term ineffectiveness, activity, continuity, and diversification (Krupski, 2010, pp. 9–10). These are characteristic features of models used in the management of business organisations; however, in the light of the above reasoning they seem appropriate for use in analysis of contemporary terrorist organisations (or at least some of them). The difference in the approach to “strategy” in these two models is illustrated (in a simplified form) in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Simplified strategic model – a linear approach

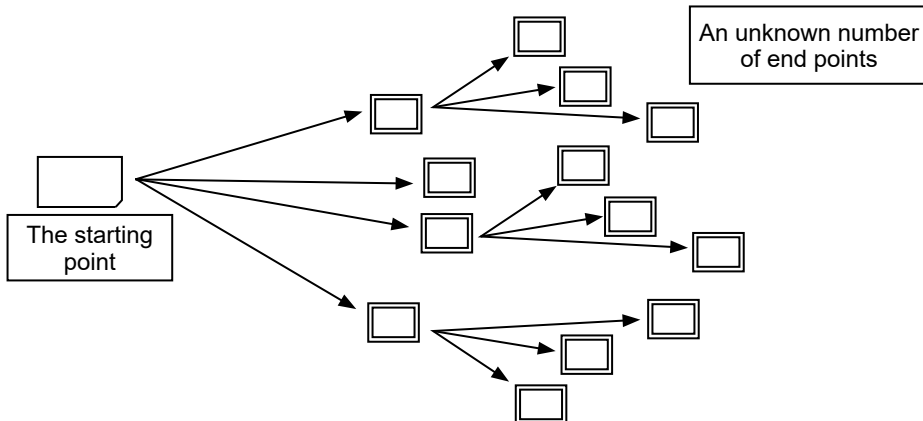


The straight line in Figure 3 corresponds to the optimal path (the shortest and least costly) from the point of entry into the system (“here and now”, diagnosed in terms of resources and possibilities) to the end point (described by specific “political” objectives). The wavy lines represent modified strategies 1) that are still characterised by linearity, 2) which appear as a result of negative corrective factors (Reginia-Zacharski, 2014, p. 70; Booth and Wheeler, 2008, pp. 4–5), and 3) which increase costs and increase the time needed to reach the objective (end point). However, the pursuit toward the objective remains unchanged. This

simplified approach illustrates a strategic model which is much more rooted in the Anglo-Saxon tradition (Gray, 1999, pp. 318–319; Freedman, 2013, pp. 578–580) than that of continental Europe (Gray, 2009, pp. 58–59; Trade, 1986, p. 288). This approach is based on a specifically understood “three-stage” approach and is characterised primarily by linearity, predictability, and a detailed specification of ends and resources. This paradigm is of little practical use with regard to terrorist groups.

As noted above, organisational models that address functioning in the area of determined chaos (or on its edge) emphasise non-linearity in political processes and thus seem to be much more adequate for analysing the issue in question (Elliott and Kiel, 1997, pp. 65–69; Brown, 1996, pp. 119–121). The essence of this approach is the lack of a system’s defined “end point” (i.e. the vector of activities that are defined at the beginning). At a particular “moment of decision”, “windows of opportunity” are defined, which can be described as available options. The choice of one of these determines the decisions that are subsequently taken, which are in fact a repetition of the previously adopted pattern. Such decision-making processes have either a “box” pattern or a multiplying output scheme pattern (scheme 4).

Figure 4: Non-linear model of chaotic strategy



Source: Own study.

This model takes account of the fact that the link between cause and effect can be far from symmetry or proportionality; processes of

enormous magnitude can be launched with little effort and resources, which can result in an immediate and profound change in the competitive environment. In other words, even a slight distortion of the starting conditions causes exponentially increasing changes in the behaviour of the system, known as the “butterfly effect” (Mosco, 2005, p. 23). From the point of view of the social sciences, the core of this approach is the conclusion that from one point of reality (e.g. decisional reality), many potential solutions may emerge which are conditioned by a significant number of factors (Reginia-Zacharski, 2014, p. 99). In the reality that is defined this way, a strategic approach to the decision-making process in the classic (linear) sense is deprived of its *raison d’être*. It seems much more reasonable to identify and influence the “saddle points” of the system in a way that guarantees change (Mitchell, 2011, p. 77). Participants of international relations, which are treated as systems, have a tendency to “self-isolate”, which falls within the definition of autopoietic systems (Luhmann, 2011, pp. 74–78). The essence of such systems is that they are closed to other systems and they reduce their activity in order to ensure their survival. In the light of these arguments, it may seem a little confusing to send messages directed at the outside and to resort to violence, terror, etc. outside of their “own” areas and regions. These messages are not tantamount to entering into interactions with other “systems” as they create ad hoc “lodgements” for the sole purpose of survival. This fits in with the mechanisms of the functioning of “organisations at the edge of chaos” and requires addressing the potentials that may be triggered and the outcomes that are difficult to assess.

## Strategic studies and geopolitics

Understood as a conceptual activity, geopolitics concentrates on unchanging or slow-changing factors and introduces relatively stable reference points to strategic studies and strategic cycles which are marked by uncertainty, chaos, and unpredictability. This formula is partly contained in geostrategy, which is sometimes described as a method of political action in space. In traditional geopolitics, space and time were treated as fixed factors, while contemporary geopolitics and geostrategy are characterised by relatively high dynamics of change, especially in

non-material sectors. Thanks to harmonising with determinants that are to some extent predictable, geopolitics provides the basis for creating (at least partially) stable and predictable areas in strategic identification matrices. Contemporary states (the main actors of global politics) are still structures of spatial (territorial) and political (not necessarily ethnic) national dimensions. Their mutual relationships remain competitive.

With the focus on building relative power, geopolitics introduces to strategy and strategic studies strong demands for the continuous creation of material potentials and attractive ideologies (non-material potentials) that in a competitive international environment can provide an advantage. Here Lykke's and Gray's models are useful, while the approaches based on Schelling's paradigm provide opportunities to ensure efficiency and rational risk management.

Strategic models that focus on the management of available resources appear to be insufficient in the face of the tasks of the decision-makers. In a dynamically and rapidly changing world, strategy must primarily focus on the "future", which – with its uncertainty, vagueness, and the need to predict it – requires a significant remodelling of the approach to strategy. If strategy is understood as a particular "strategy of victory", the key issues will concern creating a functionally optimised future order as well as its shape, components, and the relationships between them.

Offensive strategies have a component of "chaos management", while defensive strategies are, in a way, condemned to risk management. In this case, due to their imperative of predicting and, consequently, preventing and overtaking competitors, they become "offensive". The old maxim, according to which attack is the best form of defence, is thus gaining in importance in the contemporary world.

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# Geopolitics and international law

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Geopolitics and international law are closely linked. The former is understood either as a research approach to international relations or as a political doctrine that supports the thesis that important relationships exist between the geographical environment and the character and developmental tendencies of states (including their political expansion). Such links arise from the state-centric nature of international law, which consists in the creation of legal principles, their application in daily practice, and the enforcement of liability for their violation that is based on the will and consent of states in order to secure their interests within in a particular territorial space.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** As a political doctrine, geopolitics was already being applied in practice before it emerged in the study of international relations as a mature research area that aspired to be autonomous. The article outlines the concepts of authors who structured geopolitical notions (Kjellén, Haushofer, Mackinder) or used them in the science of international law (Schmitt). Also mentioned are the doctrines of Monroe, Stimson, and Brezhnev, as they have direct links with the basic principles of international law.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The relationship between the particular interests of states (realised within geopolitical strategies) and the protection of the interests of the “international community as a whole” (community interests) reveals that the substantive, procedural, and institutional dimensions of international law that operates in the world of politics is shaped by states. Thus, it is states that are responsible

for the often-observed gap between legal arguments and arguments of force.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** In the context of the relationship between international law and geopolitics, the article emphasises the role of sovereign territorial entities as they have the greatest influence on the development, application and enforcement of the principles and rules of international law. The will and choices of the states that make up the international community determine whether there is symbiosis or antagonism between their individual interests and the interests of the “international community as a whole” (community interests).

**Keywords:** international law, geopolitics, territory, state interests, community interests

## Definition of the term

The links between geopolitics and international law are solid but ambiguous. The strength of these links stems from the fact that it is states that create and apply the principles and rules of international law. States are sovereign territorial entities that pursue established political objectives and interests in a specific geographical space. There are at least two reasons for ambiguity in the relationships between geopolitics and international law. The first is controversy over which of the two is more important; this leads to either favouring the shaping of international law by geopolitics or using laws to moderate political actions taken by states both near and further afield. The second reason relates to the meaning of the term “geopolitics” itself, which may be understood as 1) ideology used by state authorities that aim to expand their sphere of influence; 2) the manifestation of states’ geographical awareness (first reported in antiquity), which implies their political involvement and their perception of a specific geographical space as a sphere of influence and control (Czaputowicz, 2007); 3) a specific arrangement of factual and political relationships that result from political geography (states, being the main territorial and political entities of the world, border other states with which they may share interests or be in conflict as a result of attempts to pursue divergent interests); 4) a discipline or branch of the theory of international relations; 5) a political doctrine created at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that postulates the existence of significant relationships between the geographical environment and the character and developmental tendencies of states and their political expansion.

Today, geopolitics is often associated with the politics of power that are pursued by states in particular parts of the world. The politics of power is usually pursued by states with significant military and economic potential; the aim of their actions is to secure borders, ensure security, or expand their spheres of influence by providing broad access to natural resources. In this understanding, geopolitics is associated with realism that is practiced within the theory of international relations, although not all representatives of realism are united in their views about geopolitics as a doctrine and its role in explaining the actions taken by states in international relations. The position of Hans Morgenthau, a classic representative of the school of realism, is the best example here. Although

he questioned the geographical determinism that underlies geopolitics understood as a political doctrine, he also argued that "Geography is, of course, the most stable factor on which a nation's power is based" (Morgenthau, 2010, p. 135).

As a political doctrine, geopolitics points to the need or even the necessity for a state to have a political strategy that is based on its geographical location. In this view, the geographical location of a state is what directly influences its history. The main proponent of this approach in Poland was Roman Dmowski, who formulated specific goals on the basis of Poland's location between Russia and Germany both before the Great War and in the interwar period (*Germany, Russia and the Polish Question [Niemcy, Rosja i kwestia polska]*, published in 1908; *Polish Politics and the Reconstruction of the State [Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa]*, published in 1925).

Evidence of the close relationship between geopolitics and international law can be found in states' political doctrines that were reflected in their long-term activities. They took the form of unilateral acts, and two of them, the Monroe and Stimson doctrines, permanently influenced the principles and rules of international law. According to Thomas D. Grant, these doctrines differed from states' day-to-day practice and declarations (Grant, 2014). These two doctrines were declarations made at the highest level (heads of states or governments) and, although each of their origins was linked to a specific, short-lived political incident, they foreshadowed the long-term activities of states in particular territories. These activities were intended to produce lasting legal effects in relation to other states and to protect the particular vital interests of a state that issued a specific unilateral act. The particular reaction of other states (approval, criticism, or even the absence of an explicit reaction) to such unilateral acts is a measure of their impact on international law. Two consequences emerge from the above. First, the protection of states' particular political and economic interests that are linked with their geographical location and are expressed in political declarations made by states at the highest level may have a lasting impact on the shape of international law. Second, the positions of other states, in particular those that are the most powerful, are decisive here since they determine whether a given unilateral geopolitical strategy and the actions that are taken on its basis will be reflected in the principles and rules of

international law. As practice demonstrates, unilateral actions that were not approved by other states were not reflected in the norms of international law, i.e. they were not legitimised. On the one hand, this testifies to the state-centric nature of international law; on the other hand, it attests to the importance of the multilateral mechanism that shapes the norms of international law, including the norms that may be applied to all states, i.e. the principles of law. In supporting or opposing particular legal solutions, states are guided by their own interests, including those arising from their geographical location. Scientists interested in international relations take this claim for granted, and it is also accepted by lawyers, some of whom even talk of the necessity for a state to have its own “international law doctrine” to protect its interests. In the Polish science of international law, this postulate was formulated before World War II by Ludwik Ehrlich:

Every great nation whose members cooperate in the development of international law has produced and produces a number of its own ‘doctrines’ corresponding to its own interests that result from the deeper principles on which international law is based. Each nation must also defend itself on the international stage against doctrines created by other nations that are harmful to its interests (Ehrlich, 1958, p. 96).

This approach found its expression in Ehrlich’s justification of Poland’s full legal title to the territories in the west and north of the country that were obtained under the Potsdam Agreement, which was contrary to the legal position of the Federal Republic of Germany.

## Historical analysis of the term

The establishment of territorial spheres of influence between states, i.e. the use of geopolitics as a political strategy, has accompanied the creation of international law. It could be said that this understanding of geopolitics is as old as the concept of international law itself (its clear traces may be found, for example, in Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*). A spectacular practical manifestation of the implementation of geopolitical strategies in modern times was the division of the New World in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the subsequent colonisation of Africa,

the Middle East, and a substantial part of Asia. These delimitations of spheres of geopolitical influence were expressed in international agreements and were legitimised in the international law of that time (modern international law also legitimised the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). The aforementioned practical applications of geopolitics as a political doctrine occurred before the emergence of geopolitics in the study of international relations as a mature research branch that aspired to be autonomous. It is worth mentioning that balancing the geopolitical interests of different political powers has a positive impact on the development of international law. This was particularly noticeable in the formation of the legal status of territories that were not under the exclusive jurisdiction of a specific state. The origins of the modern status of the high seas, the seabed, the sea floor, and the subsoil beyond the outer limits of national jurisdiction, including the concept of the “common heritage of mankind” (as expressed in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea) are connected with a seventeenth-century dispute over the status of the high sea between the Netherlands, which was represented by the East India Company, and Spain, Portugal, and England. The legal position of the former was expressed in a work with a telling title, *Mare liberum* (1609), which was written by the “founding father of the science of international law”, Hugo Grotius.

The impact of the balance of geopolitical interests on international law is well illustrated by the legal situation of the polar regions. What was characteristic of the determination of the legal position of the South Pole was the action of the great powers whose territories are not adjacent to the pole, such as the United States and the Soviet Union; this demonstrates the independence of geopolitical interests from geographic proximity. These were the states that contributed to the adoption of the Antarctic Treaty in Washington on 1 December 1959. Although this treaty failed to definitively settle the territorial claims to the Antarctic that had been made up to this point, it also prohibited any new claims and gave the Antarctic the status of an international territory. The relationship between the geographical location of states, their economic and political interests, and international law is also well illustrated by the situation in the Arctic Sea and the adjacent seas and islands, i.e. the North Pole (the Arctic). The lack of an unambiguous legal regulation of this territory remains symptomatic. The model of geographical sectors, which was

supported in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by those states whose territories were adjacent to the Arctic (Denmark, Canada, Norway, the USA and the USSR), has now been abandoned. Today the territorial claims to the Arctic concern the seabed and subsoil beneath the Arctic waters and are connected with the establishment there of continental shelves wider than 200 nautical miles. For this reason, these claims are made under the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea by states whose maritime areas are adjacent to Arctic marine waters.

In the political sciences and in the study of international relations, geopolitical concepts were systematised by Rudolf Kjellén, Karl Haushofer, and Halford J. Mackinder. Some scientists claim that Kjellén was the first to define geopolitics both as the science of the state treated as a system linked to a particular geographical space and as the science of the influence of physical terrain on states' politics (Wolff-Powęska, 1979, p. 23). Haushofer, who published "Zeitschrift für Geopolitik" magazine in the 1920s and 1930s, is regarded as both a pioneer in analysing world politics from the perspective of spheres of influence and as a proponent of the view of that dynamic nations should be provided with the *Lebensraum* necessary for their development. After Hitler came to power, this idea of "living space" became one of the aims of the foreign policy of the Third Reich (Wolff-Powęska, 1979, pp. 135–140). However, it is the English geographer Mackinder, the author of *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1919), who is most often regarded as the person who gave geopolitical concepts a coherent and mature form.

Mackinder laid the foundations on which most of the geopolitical literature created in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was based, and his core theses became either the object of criticism or, conversely, the inspiration for other thinkers (Buzon, Little, 2011, p. 82).

The core of this structure is the statement that all political relationships that had been pursued throughout history were heavily dependent on geography and its impact on the ability of people to move around. Mobility is the key determinant of political power and importance. Geographical factors may either facilitate or inhibit mobility; thus, they determine states' ability to define the degree of their influence in international relations.

The German lawyer Carl Schmitt's position was a significant expression of the presence of the geopolitical concept in the science of international law at the time of the establishment of geopolitics as a political

doctrine and as a perspective for the study of international relations. In a lecture given on 1 April 1939, on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Law in Kiel, Schmitt criticised international law and the legal order based on the Treaty of Versailles. He attempted to replace the established understanding of international law as law that governs the relations between personally and territorially closed entities (states) with an understanding of international law as the order that regulates relations between “large spaces”. In his view, *Großraum* was an alternative to *Lebensraum*, which was an idea that had been expressed by Haushofer and was one of the key concepts of Nazism that was used to justify the expansionist policy of the Third Reich. “Large space” is the ideological centre around which nations in a given region of the world come together under the leadership of the most developed nation. As Schmitt claimed, national territory retains a general, neutral, mathematical-physical sense alongside its various specific meanings, whereas “large space” is a “concrete, historical and political concept of the modern era”, which found its first significant application after World War I in the term “large-scale spatial economy” (Schmitt, 2018, pp. 18, 19). He believed that the core of international law was not the regulation of relationships between nations but the regulation of spatial relationships between “large spaces”.

In addition to the revision of the existing doctrine of international law based on the concept of a nation, a new study is needed from the perspective of spatial order. In doing so, I consider it necessary to go beyond the abstract concept of space contained in the general concept of “state” and to introduce into the science of international law the concept of a *concrete large space* and the associated concept of a *large space principle* belonging to the field of that law (Schmitt, 2018, p. 18).

After World War II, international law did not develop in the direction outlined by Schmitt. Instead, emphasis was placed on the personal scope of its operation, which was reflected in the following: the process of decolonisation based on the principle of self-determination of peoples, the dynamic development of human rights, and the formation of international criminal law during the next 25 years. Nevertheless, in the most important act of contemporary international law, i.e. the Charter of the United Nations, one can find clear signs of the geopolitical position



of the great powers in the form of the status of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. The actions (or rather the inactions) of this institution – being a consequence of the permanent members' right to veto proposals – allowed the establishment and protection of the spheres of influence of those powers during the “Cold War” period. Other examples include the Council's lack of a reaction to Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the armed conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and eastern Ukraine. These examples illustrate the existence of strong links between international law and geopolitics, since the relationships between sovereign territorial entities, whose interests include the establishment and development of spatial spheres of influence, are the foundations for the development and application of the principles and rules of this law.

In addition to the historical outline of the relationship between geopolitics and international law that is presented above, it is also important to consider the aforementioned unilateral acts of states that announced the intention to react in a certain way towards other states in certain circumstances. The doctrines of Monroe, Stimson, and Brezhnev deserve particular attention due to their direct link with the fundamental principles of international law.

The Monroe Doctrine was the most famous manifestation of the application of geopolitical strategy as part of a unilateral act that produced measurable and long-lasting effects in international law. In his address to Congress on 2 December 1823, the president of the United States declared, among other things:

a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers. . . In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defence. [...] We owe it, therefore, to candour and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. [...] It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference (Winiarski, 1938, pp. 22–23).

An expression of the permanence and significance of this position for international law was its entrenchment in the Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 21 of which proclaimed that “Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace”. To be more precise, it was not an understanding but rather a unilateral act of the USA connected with the unstable situation on the American continent that resulted from the former colonies of Spain and Portugal gaining independence. From a legal perspective, the importance of this doctrine is associated with consolidation of the principle of non-intervention in international law. Also a consequence of the Monroe Doctrine and an important stage in the process of consolidating this doctrine was US support for the position taken by Drago, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Argentina, when he questioned the legality of European states’ armed intervention in the Western Hemisphere to recover contract debts. The Drago Doctrine, which was supported by President Roosevelt in 1904, was related to the interventions of several European countries in Venezuela in the years 1902–1903. This support also contributed to the adoption in the Hague of the Convention Respecting the Limitation of the Employment of Force for the Recovery of Contract Debts in 1907. Another aspect of the Monroe Doctrine which reveals its ambivalent relevance to international law was its strategic and, in that sense, geopolitical dimension. According to Grant (2014), the United States perceived the Monroe Doctrine as the basis for numerous military interventions in the Western Hemisphere. The extension of this interventionist policy is evident in the positions of Presidents Johnson and Reagan, who both resorted to armed interventions to oppose the emergence of communist governments in American states. A legal assessment of these practices was presented by, among others, the International Court of Justice in its judgement in the case *Nicaragua vs United States of America* regarding *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua*, which the USA lost (1986).

Another unilateral act adopted by the USA, known as the Stimson Doctrine, was less ambiguous for international law. After Japan’s intervention in China in 1931 and the subsequent establishment of the puppet state called Manchukuo, the US Secretary of State Henry Stimson

declared to Japan and China that the USA did not intend to recognise any situation or legal act that was a consequence of actions contrary to the General Treaty for the Renunciation of War of 27 August 1928. This treaty, known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact, established an absolute prohibition on aggressive war and declared the acquisition of territory by such use of armed force to be legally invalid. From a geopolitical point of view, Stimson's position can also be viewed as protecting US interests that might be depleted as a result of the imbalance of powers in the Far East. Nevertheless, the Stimson Doctrine was the catalyst for a process that led to the formation of customary international law with an *erga omnes* effect, and which prohibited the recognition by states of situations contrary to the imperative rules of international law.

The Brezhnev Doctrine, also known as the limited sovereignty doctrine, was an expression of the desire to protect the geopolitical interests and influence of the leading state in a particular region, which was contrary to the general rules of law. The doctrine was formulated by the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union after the intervention of Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia in 1968, which took place after the Czechs' attempt to change the regime in their country. Brezhnev proclaimed that the weakening of unions in some socialist states had an impact on all of them, which was something that had to be prevented. Communists from allied states would not allow these states to be threatened by anti-socialist degeneration in the name of abstract sovereignty. Brezhnev claimed that legalistic considerations could not override communist principles.

Evaluation of this position under international law arouses no doubt. In this doctrine, "legalistic considerations", i.e. the force of legal arguments, were explicitly subordinated to (geo)politics. This position was in conflict with the principle of the sovereign equality of states (equality of states in terms of sovereignty), the principle of non-intervention, and the principle of the self-determination of peoples. The geopolitical strategy present in the Brezhnev Doctrine had a destructive effect on the international legal order and did not win approval of the states that are beyond the Soviet spheres of influence.

## Discussion of the term

The relationships between geopolitics and international law are based on the political grounds on which states operate. The outcomes of these relationships are territorial dependencies and the changes that occur in them, including legally ambiguous situations such as territorial regimes (e.g. South Ossetia or Abkhazia). International law is primarily shaped (created, applied, and enforced) by states that are sovereign geopolitical actors. Political choices include attempts to expand states' spheres of influence and also their neutrality concerning specific international conflicts, disputes, and situations. The extent to which these choices are influenced by legal considerations remains a matter of dispute. This question is particularly relevant when considering the opposition or coexistence of politics and law. When analysing this issue, two points deserve attention: on the one hand, the positions of the English school of international relations and the school of realism in international relations; on the other hand, the approach of the American doctrine of international law (policy-oriented jurisprudence) and the area of international law and international relations that has emerged in recent decades. What these schools have in common is the perception of international relations and the politics conducted within them, including the implementation of geopolitical strategies as a natural place for the operation of the principles and rules of international law. Hans Morgenthau, a classic representative of realism in the science of international relations, claimed that if no interests are shared by states or if there is no balance of their powers, there is no international law. In his opinion, two factors contribute to the development of this law: the common consent of states and the protection of common interests. As he observed,

states generally comply with the vast majority of rules that constitute international law without the need for coercion, because it is generally in their interests to honour their legal obligations (Morgenthau, 2010, p. 266).

On the other hand, Headley Bull, who is a representative of the English school of international relations that refers to the Grotian tradition in international law, claimed that

by establishing basic rules of coexistence among states, international law may contribute significantly to the stabilisation of the international order only if these rules find confirmation in the mutual relations of states (Bull, 1977, p. 143).

Louis Henkin, an American lawyer, argued as follows:

Although their relationship is not simple, there is no essential distinction between law and politics. All law is an instrument of broadly understood politics. Law is not an end in itself. It is a means of establishing an order of stability, peace, prosperity, and justice (Henkin, 1970, p. 86).

One of the main representatives of international law and international relations, Anne-Marie Slaughter (2000), emphasised that political relations between states indicate what must and what may be established legally. In her view, international lawmaking is the search for solutions to international problems, while the purpose of the science of international relations is to propose new solutions to old problems for which the assumptions of international law have become outdated or been discredited. She concluded her reasoning on the relationship between law and politics as follows:

Law and politics have always been and will always be intertwined, but a better world can only be built when it is imagined and framed in legal structures. This is the task of international law and lawyers dealing with international law (Slaughter, 2000, p. 235).

The views outlined above encourage conceptualisation and consideration of whether there is room for effective compliance with international legal obligations and enforcement of accountability for their violation in a decentralised international community, i.e. a community that suffers from a deficit of central legislative, executive, and judicial authority. Realistically minded scientists who investigate international relations, and even some recognised lawyers, such as the aforementioned Henkin (1970, p. 65), acknowledge that the cost of non-compliance with international law is sometimes lower than the cost of compliance with it. This is even more true (at least at first glance) in the world of geopolitics, in which the main actors are sovereign territorial entities that pursue their interests within the framework of specific geopolitical conditions. The attitudes of states to international law and the obligations arising from

it (such as approval, rejection, seeking change, or tolerating violations of law) are linked to the construction of a geopolitical space that is beneficial for a state's interests. Geopolitical space is determined by linking political phenomena, processes, and facts with particular geographical conditions. If the principles and rules of international law safeguard the interests of the states concerned, there is no conflict between law and politics in a given geopolitical space. As revealed by the currently applicable international law concerning the status of the South Pole, air and space, or the sea, seabed, and subsoil, it is possible to secure the common interests of all states legally. In practice, the opposite phenomenon also occurs, which is the inability of the community of states to reach a legal consensus regarding strategic territories, as exemplified by the status of the North Pole. The question that recurs here is whether international law effectively constrains the geopolitical aspirations of states, or whether it is geopolitics that shapes international law, including when it inhibits the development of international law.

## Systematic reflection with conclusions and recommendations

One of the fundamental principles of international law is the principle of the sovereign equality of states (Art. 2.1. of the Charter of the United Nations), i.e. the equality of states in terms of sovereignty. In light of this principle, all states enjoy equal protection before international law, regardless of their GDP, military potential, or the size of their territory. The judicial body of the United Nations (the International Court of Justice) has repeatedly challenged the geopolitical aspirations of powers; as mentioned above, this was spectacularly demonstrated with the case that the United States lost in its dispute with Nicaragua concerning *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua* (1986). A weakness of international law, however, is that the jurisdiction of courts in interstate disputes is not mandatory. Such jurisdiction is based on the consent of states. As many states put their own interests above the judicial (binding) resolution of disputes, they do not participate in litigation before the courts, especially the International Court of Justice. Under a unilateral declaration submitted pursuant to Article 36.2 of the

Statute of the International Court of Justice, the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice is only considered compulsory by 74 out of the 193 states that are UN members, including Great Britain, which is the only permanent member of the UN Security Council (as of 7 April 2021). Furthermore, the legal regulations included in the Charter of the United Nations to some extent reflect the impact the geopolitical position of the great powers exerted on international law (this was even more the case before World War II). These are regulations concerning the legal and political position of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. The ability of the UN to take effective action in the event of “any threat to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression” (Chapter VII of the UN Charter) is dependent on the consensus of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and, in particular, the absence of a veto by any of the members. The opposition of even one of the permanent members is a legal impediment to action taken by the organisation as a whole. As the practice of the Security Council demonstrates, considerations aimed to protect the geopolitical interests of one state frequently outweighed legal rationales in the activities of the permanent members, including the “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security” entrusted to the Council under Article 24.1 of the Charter of the United Nations. What should also be mentioned is the UN Charter regulation, which violates the principle of *nemo iudex in causa sua* as it gives members of the Security Council the right to vote on matters that directly affect them. This is how contemporary international law legitimises the position of the great powers (i.e. the permanent members of the Council), which, under the UN Charter, cannot be subjected to collective coercive measures, including the use of armed force. This allows the great powers to pursue their strategic geopolitical interests, both nearby and further afield, as was demonstrated in recent years by Russia’s actions in Ukraine and its involvement in the armed conflict in Syria. This poses the question of the extent to which the applicable international law is “hegemonic law”, i.e. law defined by Detlev F. Vagts as operating primarily in the interests of geopolitically powerful states (Vagts, 2001). The gap between the static nature of legal norms and the dynamics of change in the international community is what creates situations that offer states the opportunity to express hegemonic aspirations that confirm the vitality in international

law of the *ex factis ius oritur* principle. Some lawyers, in particular those representing policy-oriented jurisprudence, perceive the practice of violating existing international law as simply being an announcement of a change of its rules rather than as a violation of that law. Thus, they share the opinion of representatives of the school of realism in international relations theory. As was already mentioned, Morgenthau criticised the low effectiveness of enforcing violations of international law due to the position of the great powers within international law, and he considered the protection of national interests to be the main vector of state foreign policy. This thesis, which was expressed over 70 years ago, is clearly approved by some contemporary lawyers. Jack L. Goldsmith and Eric A. Posner argue that international law is shaped by states that are rationally seeking to maximise their interests. The relationship between obeying laws and securing state interests, including the issue of which has priority between the two, is resolved by rational choice theory, which leads these authors to the following conclusion: activity that is consistent with international law remains dependent on whether it serves state security, economic growth, and the protection of other goods that enhance state interests (Goldsmith and Posner, 2005).

In contemporary international law, the consolidation of the geopolitical position of states is weaker than it was before World War II. Many examples exist of activities undertaken by states that are regarded as unlawful today but would not have been officially classified as such in the light of early modern *ius publicum europaeum*. The aforementioned principles of the sovereign equality of states, the political pluralism of the international community, the prohibition on using threats or armed force, the injunction to settle international disputes peacefully, and the disallowance of interference in the internal affairs of states are officially accepted under the UN Charter, i.e. they are recognised as law by all states. This does not allow the legalisation of unilateral actions taken by states pursuing geopolitical interests that are contrary to these principles. The conclusion that may be drawn is as follows: international law is what states want it to be, especially for those states that are capable of pursuing their individual geopolitical interests, both near and further afield. The state of international law is not only a certain disposition of the principles and rules of substantive law; it is also the observance of established rules in practice, the response to their violation and the



effective institutional means of enforcing liability for violations. The unsatisfactory state of international law in this regard was mentioned in the context of the legal position of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and the absence of the mandatory interstate judiciary. Therefore, international law as presented in the general forum is not shaped in a satisfactory manner. This stems from states' lack of adequate will, in particular the will of powers with an established geopolitical position in various parts of the world, and from the prioritisation of individual state's interests over community interests.

The situation of the regional forum for the operation of international law is more positive. European integration is still the most important example here. Since its inception in the 1950s, the implementation of the obligations of the Member States of the European Communities has been subject to the scrutiny of the international court, as was the intention of the states that formed the European integration structures that led to today's European Union. The members of this organisation, as well as other European states, have also agreed to judicial review of their compliance with the human rights guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its additional protocols. The judicial review of the compliance of states with the law in various areas of international legal transactions is one of the most important measures of the state of international law and its relevance in the clash with states' geopolitical interests.

The relationship between international law and geopolitics is enduring or even natural because international law operates in the world of international politics. International politics is shaped by sovereign territorial entities, which also have the greatest influence on the development, application, and enforcement of the principles and rules of international law. It is the will and the choices of the states that make up the international community that determine whether there will be symbiosis or antagonism between their individual interests and those of the "international community as a whole" (community interests). This relationship is an expression of either the belief of the states in the power of legal solutions or their conviction that such solutions are ineffective in shaping the world order. In any case, it is a test that checks the condition of the community within which international law operates, i.e. the international community and its main members that are states. Paraphrasing

a well-known maxim, *ubi societas, ibi ius*, it can be said that “like international community, like international law”.

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# Geopolitics and political science – the controversies

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The relationship between geopolitics and other social sciences has always been a highly controversial issue.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** The article discusses the lines of dispute concerning the genesis of geopolitics and the ways it is practised within both neoclassical and critical geopolitics. It also presents the controversies related to the position of this field of knowledge within the paradigms of international relations theory.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** This section discusses three areas of controversy: the first is linked to the questioning of geopolitical reasoning and geopolitical concepts; the second concerns the theoretical aspect of geopolitics; the third addresses distinguishing geopolitical investigations from other related fields of knowledge.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The article indicates problems related to the absence of methods, techniques, research tools, and analytical instruments used within the framework of different geopolitical trends; these problems can be solved by, for example, adopting research methods from other social sciences.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, classical geopolitics, critical geopolitics



## Definition of the term

Geopolitics and its relationship with other social sciences is often the subject of disputes related to the genesis of geopolitics itself and its current scientific status. There is no single, universally accepted definition of geopolitics. Differences of opinion between researchers working within this subject area concern fundamental issues, including the question of where to place geopolitics within the various related fields of knowledge. Geopolitics is defined as one of the following: an independent scientific discipline, a component part of other sciences, a research paradigm (within the social sciences), a research method, a political doctrine, a way of thinking about the world, and applied knowledge (Macała, 2010, pp. 9–20; Sykulski, 2014, pp. 10–27; Sykulski, 2013, p. 91; Dybczyński, 2013, pp. 22–44; Klin, 2013).

Although geopolitics has its roots in geography, today its main area of focus is international relations and security. According to Jakub Grygiel, there are three related areas of knowledge that research physical space and political processes from different perspectives: geography, geopolitics, and geostrategy (Grygiel, 2006, pp. 21–39). These areas also attempt to describe the processes of change but (depending on the subject under consideration) the pace of change they take into consideration varies.

Physical space, which is directly linked to geography, is unchanging (except for catastrophes such as earthquakes). Geopolitical research investigates the relationship between space and politics and focuses on the “human factor” that acts on the space described by geography, e.g. communication routes, the emergence of new routes for the exchange of people and goods, the existence of natural or economic resources, natural resources already processed, or production facilities. Within geopolitics, areas of interest include the slow-moving changes that take place at the international level, where technology is one of the key factors that initiates change (e.g. by enabling the use of new communication routes). As a scientific discipline, geopolitics aims to explain the reasons and focus for the allocation of resources in state policy.

Geostrategy examines the processes of changes that occur faster and more dynamically in time than those described by geopolitics. Geostrategy is interested in state activities that are related to development,

primarily within military security but also within other areas, including economic and cultural development. The geostrategic importance of a given area can alter very quickly. This change can be the result of geographical circumstances, actions undertaken by a state (motivated ideologically or by the activities of interest groups), or political leaders' decisions.

Those who engage in disputes concerning the status of geopolitics as a science mention the absence of a reality that would provide a specific field of study for geopolitics. Defenders of its scientific status emphasise that – as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge – geopolitics draws on many related sciences: geography, political geography, political sciences (including international relations), and security studies. This dispute also relates to the kind of science practised by geopoliticians. Supporters of the positivist approach assume that the world is an objectively existing cognitive reality in which it is possible to capture cause-and-effect relationships (Marsh and Furlong, 2006, pp. 22–23). This nomothetical approach to acquiring knowledge assumes that it is possible to formulate the laws and regularities that govern the world. In the context of geopolitics as a science, this would mean that geopolitics would enable the explanation and formulation of laws that govern international politics, which are stable over time and thus yield accurate predictions within this field (Sajduk, 2006, pp. 3–18). Any postulate formulated in this way would be difficult (or impossible) to be met by any of the social sciences; it can only be considered achievable within a narrow dimension corresponding to the exact sciences. On the other hand, if geopolitics were treated as an idiographic science that deals with the description and analysis of individual facts and is not interested in formulating timeless laws, then this field of knowledge would be closer to the humanities.

Currently there are two schools of geopolitical research. One is neoclassical geopolitics (Bassin, 2004, pp. 620–626), which is interested in the areas of research conducted by the forerunners of geopolitics, i.e. the impact of geographical conditions on the international politics of states. This branch of geopolitics can be described as “an interdisciplinary science that researches the influence of geography on political phenomena and processes” (Sykulski, 2009, p. 180). It is distinguished by its process-oriented approach, the adoption of a “long-term” perspective (in French *longue durée*), and the assumption that

international politics is a constant competition between centres of power for influence. The perspective of “longue durée” refers to the methods used by the research community (mainly historians) linked with the magazine “*Annales de d’Histoire Économique et Sociale*”. Authors who wrote for this publication included Fernand Braudel, Jacques Le Goff, Lucien Febvre, and Marc Bloch, all of whom focused on the long-term processes of economic, cultural, and civilisational change that were invisible from the perspective of the individual but had an impact on the development of societies and countries. The other is critical geopolitics, which questions positivist ontology and epistemology and adopts an interpretative stance (Marsh and Furlong, 2006, p. 26), rejecting the position that reality exists independently of human knowledge of it (there is no objective reality but only its interpretations). In this paradigm, science is only one of many metanarratives that promote certain meanings at the expense of others. Continuing the critical reflections introduced by the Frankfurt School, humanist geography, and French postmodernists (for example, Jacques Derrida’s concept of deconstruction and Michel Foucault’s archaeology of power), critical geopolitics focuses on the deconstruction of geopolitical imaginations. Often, the goals of deconstruction are not limited to understanding these imaginations but aim to discover the power relations contained in geopolitical imaginations, which are the work of particular individuals (e.g. classical geopoliticians) and are conditioned by the socio-political context in which they are created.

In this sense, knowledge is not disinterested because it reflects the interests of the individuals and groups that create, possess, and disseminate it. Similarly, geopolitical claims are only a discourse (Müller, 2008, pp. 322–338) that serves to favour one group (e.g. a state) at the expense of others. This understanding of geopolitics moves it closer to sociological reflection than to international relations and geography. Its subject of analyses is society and the processes that take place within it, with particular emphasis on shaping geographical imaginations in an attempt to understand “how what is political is rooted in what is spatial” (Potulski, 2013, p. 26).

The above division of geopolitics roughly coincides with the division into the political right and left (Bassin, 2004, pp. 620–626). The views and practices of the political right are closer to neoclassical geopolitics,

which takes into account the classical geopolitical categories that are shared with realism within international relations theory, including Hans Morgenthau's six principles of political realism (2010, pp. 20–33). The political left is closer to critical geopolitics, which is mainly practised by academics and, as such, corresponds to constructivism in international relations theory (see Wendt, 2008).

Harold Sprout (1968) introduced a distinction that clarifies the contemporary meaning of geopolitics. He distinguished *geopolitics*, i.e. a discipline that studies the influence of geographical conditions on international politics, from *geopolicy*, i.e. the practice and doctrine of state policy implementation, in which geographical factors occupy a significant place (Sprout, 1968, pp. 120–121). In a similar context, Leszek Moczulski observed that theoretical geopolitics, which analyses reality, differs from applied geopolitics that provides knowledge useful to politicians in decision-making (Moczulski, 2009, p. 94). It would therefore be possible to assume that a geopolitologist is a scientist dealing with the influence of space on politics, while a geopolitician applies geopolitologists' findings in practice (Dybczyński, 2013, pp. 44–45); however, today the term "geopolitician" is reserved for researchers who take the relationship between politics and geography into account in their studies. This distinction clearly indicates the distinctiveness of political practice from science, and the blurring of the boundaries between them led to criticism of geopolitics in its early stages.

## Historical analysis

Geopolitics has always been seen as controversial; as it has developed, its concepts and claims have often been subject to opposition. Under the influence of the historical sciences, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a field of knowledge began to emerge that described the impact of geographical space on human activity. The forerunners of this approach included the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel (Eberhardt, 2015, pp. 199–224), the Swedish researcher of politics and policy Rudolf Kjellén, who was the first to use the term geopolitics (Eberhardt, 2012, pp. 313–332), and the German general and scholar Karl Haushofer (Eberhardt, 2009, pp. 527–549).



Ratzel, who lived and worked at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, compared a state to a living organism which, similarly to other organisms, needed space to develop (empirical positivism). In his opinion, “the territorial development of a state takes place through the absorption of smaller entities” (Moczulski, 2000, p. 9). This view directly referred to Darwinism and permeated the geopolitical thinking of that time, thus becoming a source of inspiration for national socialist ideology. Inspired by Ratzel, Kjellen also included elements of determinism and biologism in his concepts:

he saw states as living beings that are born and die. A state’s organs are political borders, its limbs – productive regions, its nervous system – the capital, and its cardiovascular system – a communications network (Wolff-Powęska and Schulz, 2000, p. 61).

In the 1940s, criticism of the beginnings of geopolitics focused on Haushofer’s work and his Institute of Geopolitics in Munich, with particularly strong criticism coming from the American press (Sondern, 1941, 1941a). Haushofer’s ideas were accused of inspiring and justifying the expansive policy of the Third Reich, especially the idea of *Lebensraum*, i.e. living space that

in Haushofer’s thought, partly inspired by Ratzel, takes the form of an argument for the partition of other people’s lands and the extermination of the local population – genocide (Moczulski, 2000, p. 21).

Within Anglo-Saxon thinking, the creators of geopolitics include the American navy officer Alfred Thayer Mahan, who is the author of the foundations of American reasoning on the role of naval forces (Mahan, 2013; Eberhardt, 2013, pp. 629–654); the British politician and scientist Sir Halford John Mackinder, the creator of the “Heartland” concept (Mackinder, 2009, 2017; Eberhardt, 2011, pp. 251–266); and Nicholas Spykman, the author of the concept of the “Rimland”, which was intellectually influential during the Cold War (Eberhardt, 2014, pp. 261–280). Mahan claimed that the outcomes of wars are determined by the advantage at sea and the ability to guarantee continued trade. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mackinder warned against the threat to Great Britain’s hegemony that was posed by the emergence of a centre of power that would gain access to the ocean after the conquest of the “Heartland”, i.e.

the central area on the World-Island, which consists of three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. Policies that aimed to strengthen the countries between Germany and Russia in order to prevent any of them from taking control of the “Heartland” were believed to be the way to counteract this. “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world” (Mackinder, 1942, p. 106). Spykman believed that control over the “Rimland” was crucial to world domination because “who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world” (Spykman, 1944, p. 43). He is considered a representative of political realism, although he emphasised the importance of the geographical factor: “ministers come and go, even dictators die, and mountain ranges stand unperturbed” (Spykman, 1938, p. 29).

After World War II, academics consciously avoided geopolitics. In the USA, geopolitics was equated with the German school of *Geopolitik* and rejected as an ideology that underlay the aggressive policy of the Third Reich. This rejection also occurred in the USSR for ideological reasons: in this country, geopolitics was treated as a reactionary concept that was incompatible with the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism (as geopolitics supposedly justified Western imperialism). During the Cold War, geopolitics was almost entirely replaced by strategic reasoning (Moczulski, 2009, p. 99; see Gray, 1977) that was practised by scholars and active politicians and diplomats. Several names should be mentioned here: Saul B. Cohen, who created, among other things, the concept of shatterbelts, which were strategically important regions characterised by a high level of political and social tension and were located between two geostrategic regions in which the USA and the USSR played a central role (Cohen, 1975, 2003, 2009); Charles F. Doran, the author of the power cycle theory, by means of which he explained the changes in positions and roles that countries played in the international system (Doran, 1971, 1991); George Modelski, the author of the hegemonic long cycle theory, which explained the process of structural changes taking place in the international system (Modelski, 1987). It is also worth mentioning politicians who applied geopolitical concepts in practice: George Kennan laid the intellectual foundations for the doctrine of the USSR’s suppression by the USA (Kennan, 1947, pp. 566–582); Robert Strausz-Hupé (see Klin, 2009, 55–79); Zbigniew Brzeziński, United States National Security

Advisor to US President Jimmy Carter (Brzeziński, 1998, 2008, 2010; Vaughan 2010); and Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State in the administration of US presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford (Kissinger, 1996, 2016; Ferguson, 2015).

Researchers and politicians of the next generation returned to analysing geopolitics in political and scientific debates, and geopolitics gradually began to return as a concept in the 1970s. In Europe it regained popularity, thanks mainly to the French geographer Yves Lacoste (see Lacoste, 2010; Eberhardt, 2014, pp. 243–279), whose work inspired other researchers, including Gearoid Ó Tuathail (1996), Klaus Dodds (2005, 2018) and John Agnew (2004, 2018; Agnew and Corbridge, 1995). This gave rise to critical geopolitics, according to which classical geopolitical concepts were not neutral because they were a reflection of power that, for example, favoured a Eurocentric point of view (Ó Tuathail, 1999, p. 108). Geopolitics returned to public debate on international politics thanks to politicians such as Kissinger, who – in his diplomatic efforts to defend the American national interest – was guided by geopolitical optics and the principles of political realism (Mamadouh and Dijkink, 2006, p. 352).

## Discussion of the term

Controversies related to geopolitics have several dimensions that are directly linked to the development of geopolitical reflection. Three intellectual areas can be distinguished that are related to geopolitics as a method of acquiring knowledge about the world. The first accuses geopolitics of political engagement and a lack of objectivity; the second covers theoretical arguments related to ontology, epistemology, and the methodology of the social sciences; the third argues against the specificity of geopolitical reflection in relation to earlier trends in international relations studies.

The first area of controversy, i.e. the questioning of the correctness of geopolitical reasoning and its concepts, indirectly stems from the origins of these views. In Anglo-Saxon countries, geopoliticians were mostly practitioners, i.e. diplomats and soldiers, while in Germany and Russia, geopolitics was practiced primarily by theoreticians and

ideologists (Wolff-Powęska and Schulz, 2000, p. 116). Anglo-Saxon thinkers used geopolitical concepts to describe and justify their own foreign policy and military strategy. German and Russian geopoliticians wanted to justify the changes in the international order of that time that were initiated by their own states (often by force), which meant that geopolitical knowledge – which serves political ends – was not an objective description of reality. It is no coincidence that as a way of practising *Realpolitik*, geopolitics developed within the great powers (Kuźniar, 2000, pp. 81–82, 88), which, because of their own potential, used force to pursue their own interests. In the context of the work of Mahan, Mackinder, Isaiah Bowman, and Spykman, Jakub Potulski (2013) aptly observed that geopolitics was expected to be practical knowledge that enabled better implementation of state policy:

The problem with geopolitics practiced by Anglo-Saxon researchers was that their deliberations could not be called science. These were a priori theories built on specific doctrinal interests rather than falsifiable theories about the essence of political phenomena (Potulski, 2013, p. 18).

According to Gearóid Ó Tuathail, one of the co-creators of critical geopolitics, geopolitics was a form of ideology developed in a specific place and time that initially served mainly to justify European territorial expansion and imperialism. In other words, it was a narrative, a discourse created by specific authors that was often guided by particular motives, including the financial benefits of their publications (Ó Tuathail, 1996, p. 30).

Critical arguments about geopolitics are also formulated on moral grounds. It was accused of inspiring, for example, German expansionism, which was expressed in the *Lebensraum* concept (living space, which the Third Reich would obtain in Eurasia by force). The strongest condemnation of geopolitics (in its German form of *Geopolitik*) was formulated in the USA, where its critics used not only ethical and moral arguments but also the ones that contrasted geopolitics with political geography. The former was considered a pseudo-scientific doctrine, while the latter was believed to be objective knowledge acquired through scientific enquiry (Bowman, 1942, pp. 646–658). This argument was also used by Polish and German researchers. Andrzej Piskozub believes that the aim of geopolitical research is to answer the question

of “how it should be” and provide justification for it, which makes geopolitics an “auxiliary science of imperial policy” (Piskozub, 2012). This distinguishes geopolitics from geography and history, which are forms of basic research tasked with answering the question “how it is?” Thus, geopoliticians became “advisers to princes” (this was the role played by Kissinger, Brzeziński, and Richard Pipes, among others). Tomasz Klin (2013) denies the scientific value of the first geopoliticians’ views by highlighting the subjectivity of their claims. In the context of the origins and development of German geopolitics until the end of World War II, Wolff-Powęska and Schulz concluded that “scientific theories are cold. Ideologies, however, have temperature and passions, and are more like faith, religion” (2000, s. 16). This comment has universal value as it indicates the political and ideological entanglement of geopolitics from its birth to the present day.

The second area of controversy concerns the theoretical aspect of geopolitics, which can be described by means of two pairs of oppositions (their extreme oppositional positions are presented below, which omit their milder variants). The first is the distinction between analyses that take into account the impact of structure (context) or agency (see Wendt, 2008, pp. 30–39). Stuart McAnulla observed that

agency is the ability of individuals or groups to exert (intentional or unintentional) influence on their environment (...) [whereas – B.S.] “structure” usually relates to context; to the material conditions that determine the scope of activities available to an actor (McAnulla, 2006, p. 273).

A characteristic feature of any geopolitical thinking is research into structure rather than agency. Another pair of oppositions is materialism and idealism (Hay, 2002, pp. 194–215). The simplified materialistic vision of science assumes that the material world has a direct impact on the results of human activity, and empirical observation of this impact is possible. This view is consistent with the analytical-empirical model of theorising, in which the aim is to explain the phenomena that take place. Idealism assumes that the world is created by means of interpreting it; science practiced according to this approach is close to the hermeneutical-humanistic model of theorising (Sajduk, 2008, pp. 11–30).

Both classical and neoclassical geopolitics are anchored within a geographical environment (in terms of terrain as well as when taking into

account demographic variables and economic issues) and are examples of thinking that fits into a structuralist approach. Classical geopoliticians (Mackinder and Ratzel) adopted the position of scientific materialism which, according to critical geopolitical theorists, served to promote the nationalistic goals of their own nations (Taylor, 2003, p. 379). The relative immutability of the geographical environment reinforces the role of materialism within classical and neoclassical geopolitical inquiries, both of which are capable of producing forecasts within a positivist and empirical approach to knowledge and of developing explanatory theories. The challenge for neoclassical geopolitics is whether the findings of geopolitics are limited to a specific country or area of specific historical and technological conditions, or whether geopolitical findings can serve as the basis for generalisations of a higher order. The disputes and controversies within neoclassical geopolitics were not about geopolitics as a science (its methodology and research techniques) but about the differences between ideas and concepts. An example of such speculation was the “rivalry” between Mackinder’s concept of the “Heartland” and Spykman’s concept of the “Rimland”, or between the “Rimland” concept and Cohen’s concept of shatterbelts. Similarly, the distinction between tellurocracy and thalassocracy or between the Kindleberger trap (Kindleberger, 1986) and the Thucydides trap (Alison, 2017) cannot claim to allow the formulation of convincing predictions

Critical geopolitics attempted to overcome these limitations but dissociated itself from geographical determinism and pointed out the difficulty faced by classic and neoclassical geopolitics in formulating (objective) cause-and-effect laws. The focus shifted from material (geographical) explanations to searching for the meanings ascribed to geographic conditions by groups that influence the foreign policy of a country. Peter J. Taylor (2003, p. 377) believes that geopolitics is returning from the periphery of scientific discourse and is introducing into the discussion topics that go beyond classical analyses of power and security strategies. This approach stems from criticism of positivist assumptions and includes a rejection of the concept of an objectively existing truth (in the context of geographical regularities that influence states’ politics); this has been replaced by (amongst others) the postmodern deconstruction of meanings assigned to a given area. The aim of critical geopolitics is to discover the interpretations given to places by individuals, the ruling

elites, social groups, and mass culture. Researchers try to understand the mechanisms of producing such notions and indicate the forces interested in promoting a given interpretation. In other words, attempts to *understand* global processes replaced attempts to find *explanations* for them that were pursued within neoclassical geopolitics.

To avoid the accusation of geographical determinism, the theoretical framework of critical geopolitics was extended to include ideology. For example, in this approach, different geopolitical discourses (such as the differing positions of Germany, France, and the United Kingdom concerning the European integration process) would be explained by the interpretation of the location and the conclusions that decision-makers draw from that location (including how it shapes their perception of foreign policy) rather than by the geographical location in and of itself. The research process tries to capture the mechanism by which an (objective) geographical fact (e.g. the insularity of the UK) shapes the mental maps of the elites and the emergence of imaginations about the meaning attributed to various areas (der Wusten and Dijkink, 2002, pp. 19–38).

Once the perception of geography as a structural element had been rejected, this was replaced by inclusive concepts of structure/context, such as discourse (Mamadouh and Dijkink, 2006, p. 356) or gender and the social groups that the latter defines (Dixon, 2015; Dixon and Marston, 2013; Macała, 2014, pp. 189–203; Potulski, 2011, pp. 99–108). In the context of the pairs discussed above, the core ideas of neoclassical geopolitics and critical geopolitics today would be placed, respectively, at the intersections between structuralism and materialism and between structuralism and idealism.

The third area of controversy addresses the specificity and distinctiveness of geopolitical research in relation to other related fields of knowledge. Critics of the view that geopolitics is a separate field of science argue that the differences between classical and neoclassical geopolitics and the theory of realism and neorealism/structural realism (Waltz, 1979; Gilpin, 1981; Mearsheimer, 2001) are so insignificant that treating geopolitics as a separate field is unjustified (Sykulski, 2011, pp. 115–120). Both approaches share the assumption of the essential role of a state as a central actor in international relations. In using force, states are guided by their own interest in the pursuit of increasing their potential,

but they often ignore the principles of international morality and ethics. Today, the world of international relations is described through the prism of military strategies and inter-state competition. Accepting the primacy of realism over geopolitics transforms the latter into a version of political realism which emphasises the importance of location and geographical space. Stefano Guzzini (2012, p. 29) observes that after the Cold War most concepts that included geopolitical thinking were developed by realists, such as Zbigniew Brzeziński (1998), John Mearsheimer (2001), Samuel Huntington (1998) (his concept of the clash of civilisations can be classified as constructivist), and Edward Luttwak (1999, pp. 17–23) (who, however, does not want his ideas to be assigned to the school of realism) (Luttwak, 2012, p. 9). Jacek Czaputowicz (2014, p. 27) believes that geopolitics can be treated as an application of the principles of realism to the international reality.

Critical geopolitics has much in common with postmodern and constructivist approaches to international relations (Wendt, 2008; Kratochwil, 1989; Katzenstein, 2005), but the ways in which it differs are not pronounced enough to justify treating it as a separate discipline or even as a field of science. Some researchers refuse to treat the constructivist approach as a stand-alone research paradigm within international relations theory and consider constructivism to be a perspective that is compatible with each of the main paradigms (Jørgsen, 2018, p. 40). It seems that a similar decision would also be justified with regard to geopolitics in international relations studies and national security.

## Systematic reflection with conclusions and recommendations

The weaknesses in geopolitical reasoning today are an indirect result of the evolution this area of knowledge has undergone from its birth to the present day. In the initial phase of its development, the German approach based the conceptual apparatus and methodological foundations on materialism, determinism, and biologism, which is related to the others. Alongside the moral controversy, the main scientific criticism levelled at geopolitics concerns the fact that the explanations these theories provide are based on only one factor. Theories based on a narrow



range of factors (Hay, 2002, pp. 59–88) are easy to apply but they are highly erroneous in their extreme single-factor version. The weakness of geopolitics practised in Anglo-Saxon countries was its subordination to the political interests of a particular state, which reduced the role it played to being merely a justification for current political interests.

Writing about the scientific autonomy of neoclassical geopolitics as a field of knowledge, Leszek Moczulski (2000, pp. 53–54; 2002) pointed out the risks that stem from the adoption of geographical determinism and from geographical nihilism, i.e. overestimating the impact of a geographical factor or treating it as equal to other factors. Today, geopolitical claims based on geographical determinism are rather rare, although they can still be found in the semantic and eristic layer (cf. Lubina, 2018). Rejecting geographical nihilism seems justified in the context of critical geopolitics, but a categorical “cut-off” from geography may lead to any remaining links with geopolitics being neglected. That research of opinions on reality takes primacy over research of reality itself is the result of radical reactions to accusations of geographical determinism (Moczulski, 2000). Critical geopolitics denies the existence of objective reality, so this remark can be treated as a defence of neoclassical geopolitics. The real “sin” of geopolitics is its dependence on current political needs and ideological fashions, which, according to Moczulski, is the effect of its too-radical separation from history.

Jakub Potulski claims that “the concept of geopolitics will always be a subject of controversy, and its content and application will be the subject of dispute between researchers” (2010a, p. 35), but it is worth mentioning the directions in which it has opportunities to develop. Within neoclassical geopolitics, the attempt to combine it with well-established paradigms in international relations, especially with neorealism, is one such direction. A good example here is the work of Øystein Tunsjø (2018), which lays the theoretical foundations for the paradigm of geostructural realism. The greatest weakness of geopolitics results from the absence of methods, techniques, research and analytical tools that would allow researchers to move beyond descriptions of the international situation that are no better than those provided by the daily press. At a theoretical level, there is a need for persistent work on the development and adaptation of research methods from other social sciences (Deudney, 1997, 91–123). In terms of conducting analyses and testing theories, it

is important to test the selected tools and techniques that are used when working with open sources of information and include them in geopolitical analyses (Sajduk, 2016, pp. 120–129).

Currently, the most lively branch of geopolitics is critical geopolitics due to its adoption of the model of creating knowledge and practising science with the aim of understanding.

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# Geopolitics as a media phenomenon in Poland

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The diversity of the various trends within geopolitics and the controversies related to these trends make geopolitics a significant media phenomenon.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** In the Polish media discourse, interest in geopolitics increased after the publication of Jacek Bartosiak's book titled *Rzeczpospolita między lądem a morzem. O wojnie i pokoju* [Poland between land and sea. On war and peace] in 2018. The promotion accompanying its publication spread knowledge of geopolitics to a significant proportion of Polish society, and the media debate on geopolitics and its meaning for Poland subsequently took a violent turn. In various media outlets, its supporters and opponents provided arguments for and against geopolitics, including open letters.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The mediasation of geopolitics entails a number of consequences. Major consequences include, on one hand, the possibility of multiple authors to express their views; on the other hand, there is a necessity to adjust public debate accordingly in order to meet the standards of the online media market. Generally, texts about geopolitics address three main areas: 1) the perception of geopolitics (as a science, quasi-science, or ideology); 2) the popularity of geopolitics; 3) the illusionary nature of the vision of the world that is offered by geopolitics.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The article presents not only the negative aspects

of disputes between supporters and opponents of geopolitics but also positive aspects such as the diversification of analyses, which can help decision-makers in creating state policies.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, media, discourse, Poland, debate

## Definition of the term

Geopolitics is a term that has gained in significance in recent years. Its supporters consider it a separate albeit interdisciplinary branch of science which is composed of elements of the political sciences, international relations, history, and geography. Geopolitics is seen as a “super-factor” that regulates contemporary relations between states, and this view is represented by Jacek Bartosiak (2018). Opponents claim that this approach contributes to oversimplification of the debate and thus to a shallow understanding of the relations between states. According to some supporters of geopolitics, it can even be said that these relations are predestined; the roles that are imposed on states in advance remain essentially unchanged despite changing conditions and the passage of time. Opponents of this approach to geopolitics treat it as a “fashionable” superstition that is unworthy of researchers’ attention (this subjective trend is visible in media discourse devoted to geopolitics). Treating geopolitics as a science is questionable, as is addressed by Stanisław Otok (2012, pp. 7–8), who asks whether political geography can be treated as an autonomous science. Critics of treating geopolitics as a separate science argue that it does not have a strictly defined research subject and a clear framework that could allow it to be distinguish from other branches of science. As it seems impossible to unambiguously define geopolitics’ scope of research, it is impossible to formulate correct and precise conclusions within this area.

Geopolitics can, however, be treated as an element of science (although not as an autonomous discipline of science) that is inextricably connected with political geography (Otok, 2012; Moczulski, 2019).

Political geography describes and analyses political phenomena occurring on our planet; it is a part of the general *description of Earth*. By using data borrowed from geography and history (and from many other sciences), geopolitics deals with spatio-temporal relations between states and groups of states (Moczulski, 2019, p. 30).

Geopolitics itself differs fundamentally from the science of international relations, which describes and analyses the functioning of states and the relationships between them (Moczulski, 2019). According to some supporters of geopolitics, placing it between geography, history, the political

sciences, the economy, sociology, and culture sets it at the centre of science (the consequences of this thesis will be presented below). The term “geopolitics” is often a stylistic device that has nothing to do with science per se as it merely adds expert and analytical value to texts.

The literature devoted to geopolitics often mentions the negative connotations of politics and geopolitics, specifically the concept of *Grossdeutschland Reich*, based on Karl Haushofer’s concept of *Geopolitik*, which did a lot of harm to the development of this discipline (Moczulski, 2019, p. 30). Haushofer’s concept was a tool used by Nazi Germany; however, it is unjustified to claim that geopolitics only serves the “science of imperialism”, as it can also serve peace. The year 1945 was followed by reflection, which was linked to the threat of world destruction as the consequence of a war that would last only one hundred seconds, as Pierre Gallois predicted. This meant that all the other factors that determined the existing balance of power in the world, which were political, demographic, cultural, or territorial, were no longer relevant. When the threat of self-destruction became dominant, politics began to rely on strategy: “space did not lose its meaning, but it was reduced to only two factors: determining optimal targets and directions for the transfer of nuclear weapons” (Moczulski, 2019, p. 36). Thus, after 1945 the term “geostrategy” replaced the term “geopolitics”. The “geo” prefix meant that the issue concerned the whole world. According to Moczulski, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, geopolitics – as a separate branch of science – is recovering from crisis and can provide answers to new questions and challenges that are connected to the turn of the century.

When academic debate devoted to geopolitics enters the media plane, it escapes the scientific rigours of argument-based discussion. The number of commentators and participants in the discussion expands and the media discourse differs significantly from that held within science. Ideological, stereotypical thinking that is filled with mental short cuts and is often based on superficial insights replaces substantive debate. It is therefore necessary to adopt a critical but idealistic assumption that participants in the discussion should have the basic knowledge that allows them to critically analyse and formulate a position (not necessarily in public) that is based on their knowledge and experience.

## Historical analysis of the term

Geopolitics gained importance as a media phenomenon after the publication of Jacek Bartosiak's books, *Rzeczpospolita między lądem a morzem. O wojnie i pokoju* [Poland between land and sea. On war and peace] in 2018, and *Przeszłość jest prologiem* [The past is the prologue] in 2019, which were widely promoted on social media. In mid-September 2018, Bartosiak became the president of a company that supervised construction of the Solidarity Transport Hub. He resigned from this function in February 2019 but is still a member of the Advisory Team of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Solidarity Transport Hub for the Republic of Poland. The institutionalisation of visions concerning the construction of STH (2017) and the highlighting of its importance in the context of geopolitics resulted in an increasing number of media publications devoted to geopolitics. Participants of the media discourse include supporters of geopolitics, journalists, columnists, scientists, analysts, and experts. Texts written by journalists and published in leading journals are mostly based on statements made by others (experts, researchers). The ideological profile of a given medium determines its attitude to geopolitics, and this dependence is also present in politics due to the polarisation of Polish political disputes. To a large extent, the United Right [Zjednoczona Prawica] government coalition justifies large investments (for example, for the aforementioned STH or for digging through the Vistula Spit) with the need to achieve independence and autonomy, both of which are threatened due to geopolitical circumstances (mainly related to the proximity of Russia). Left, liberal, and even conservative parties (which are not part of the United Right) take a different view and consider these government projects to be the manifestations of unjustified megalomania. This also applies to the assessment of foreign policy, one of the central points of which was the institutionalisation of the Three Seas Initiative (TSI). This was initiated by the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, in conjunction with the President of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, in 2015, and formalised at the Dubrovnik summit in 2016.

## Discussion of the term

Media discourse focuses on treating geopolitics as a factor that determines political activities; far fewer polemics are based on scientific sources. Geopolitics is widely discussed on social media and websites (mainly Twitter). The internet offers the fastest access to free articles and the ability to express one's opinions publicly (both under one's own name and anonymously). Despite having no substantial preparation to express their opinions, the universality of the internet popularises geopolitical knowledge among mass audiences, but this makes the debate superficial. The media is characterised by a specific framework that places great importance on the role that is played by time indicators on websites. The number of clicks, the content, and the time spent on a given website affect its advertising attractiveness. This means that in this respect geopolitics is also susceptible to commercialisation.

Introductory remarks regarding geopolitics as a media phenomenon should include a closer look at the term "discourse", which is inextricably linked to the media. The 1970s saw a growing awareness among citizens of the political processes of which they were subjects, which in response led to the professionalisation of politics. Discourse (in Latin *dis-cursus*) means dispersion or running hither and thither; according to modern dictionaries, it is "a conversation, discussion, or speech". Discourse is a communication event. In order for discourse to take place, it requires a language and words; through words, a recipient is afforded practically unlimited possibilities to create and interpret statements. However, there is a fundamental difference between the rules of a linguistic system (*langue*) and the actual statements made (*parole*). Language is a system of codes that have been adopted by a given community and integrated into its culture and traditions, thus determining the worldview of this community. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida observed that the linguistic system is incomplete, and he introduced the concept of "deconstruction", which refers to the multiplicity of ways of interpreting language. It is impossible to establish the one and only right interpretation of words that would be universal for all audiences. A huge role is played by context, which results, among other things, from the sum of personal experiences of a given community. Bronisław Malinowski listed four components of context: human (social) environment, cultural

environment (symbols, values), historical environment (traditions, shared history), and physical environment (natural environment) (Firth, 1967).

Teun van Dijk (2001) wrote that “discourse defines how people use language, think, and interact with each other, and thus how they co-create and recreate their groups, communities and cultures”. He distinguished three dimensions of discourse: the use of language, the transmission of ideas, and interaction in social processes. This concept takes into account both the language code adopted by a given society as well as the construction and survival of groups of people characterised by a given discourse.

According to Stefan Jerzy Rittel (2003), the specific situational context plays the most important role in the interpretation of utterances and is also necessary for discourse to take place. Every utterance will be interpreted differently depending on its context. Rittel observes that a situational context consists of the distinctive characteristics that express the identity of each participant in the communication process. In discourse, this identity refers to the language competences of individual subjects (monologues), subjects who communicate interpersonally (dialogue), and multi-subjects (e.g. a political scientist taking part in a public discussion). This last case will be the basis of further analysis below.

A common denominator was needed for communication and discourse, and this role is played by cultural context. Communication is the context of discourse. Discourse should fulfil the requirement of communicativeness, which according to Rittel consists of *cohesion* (a text is communicative if the combination of words results in a coherent whole); *coherence* (a logical connection between words in accordance with the norms of language); *intentionality* (adequacy between the aim of a text and the principles of the text structure); *acceptability* (the recipient desires information and expects a text); *informativity* (a text contains information that is known to the recipient; this decreases when information the recipient does not know prevails); *situationality* (a text is adjusted to the place, content, and conditions in which it is produced); *intertextuality* (a text is communicative if it matches the cultural competences of the recipient); additionally, the reception of a text depends on the recipient’s knowledge of other texts.

This article is based on written texts, which allows more thorough, in-depth analyses. TV or radio spoken texts follow different rules: they

can only be analysed after a speech is transcribed to text. There are also factors that affect whether the recipient will choose a given text; for example, whether there is a requirement to pay fees for access to a text (a paywall). Some texts are advertised by one or two paragraphs (a lead-in), and those who are interested can read them in full after buying (single or subscription) access rights. At least some recipients of texts will form their opinion based solely on the introduction; the same is also true if the text is, in the recipients' opinion, too long (texts are often accompanied by information on how much time they will take to read). Maintaining the concentration of a recipient is becoming increasingly more difficult as they seek quicker ways to find answers to questions. In such circumstances, the opportunities for independent thought are minimised.

So, how to capture the recipient's attention? Apart from interesting graphics, this must depend on the lead-in. Here are some examples:

Geopolitics provides simple solutions to complex problems and is a recipe for making Poland a regional empire. The problem is that it oversimplifies the debate on international relations and repeats ideas formulated by the Kremlin (Łuniewski, 2020).

In order to avoid the fate of Marxists, geopoliticians need to stop the deadly "sins" they commit in their thinking: from pride, through determinism, universalism, and reductionism, to sectarianism (Lubina, 2018a).

Geopolitics is a bad policy for Central and Eastern Europe. We are not Russia and we should not follow the Kremlin's perception of international relations. Surely, we should not support such an approach because if we begin to think in terms of a concert of empires and in terms of spheres of influence, it may suddenly turn out that we have become their victims (Purski, 2019).

In the last few weeks, we have observed an increase in attacks on geopolitics in Poland. Critical voices can be heard from the right to the left: from political circles (e.g. Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz), through post-communist uniformed circles (e.g. Colonel Piotr Wroński), to academic circles (e.g. Professor Adam Wielomski and Michał Lubina, PhD) (Sykulski, 2018).

Jacek Bartosiak: The world in which we move no longer exists. (...) China and Russia are determined to revise the world system. They do so by using the wise tactics of small steps to test the old hegemony. The world is completely different from the one we knew when we entered NATO, or even that of a few years ago. This can go even further (Kopański and Krajski, 2016).

Poles have a new hobby: geopolitics. It offers recipes for the greatness of Poland and a way to understand the world (Winnicki, 2018, p. 44).

When we look at intellectual fads prevailing in the political parties on the Polish right, which used relate to Budapest, Ankara, and Beijing, their focus



today is geopolitics. Unfortunately, perhaps against the intentions of those who claim that geopolitics is the ideal tool for analysing international relations, this latest fad is increasingly more in tune with the melody played by the Kremlin (Jurasz, 2018).

The excerpts quoted above evidently classify their authors as either enthusiasts or sceptics of geopolitics. A vast majority of material devoted to geopolitics is expressed in the black or white format: “yes” or “no” for geopolitics.

Supporters of geopolitics include Jacek Bartosiak, PhD, the head of the Strategy&Future company; Leszek Sykulski, an author of several dozen scientific articles and essays on geopolitics who is associated with the Konfederacja [Confederation] political group and is the founder of the Polish Geopolitical Association and the quarterly “Przegląd Geopolityczny” [“Geopolitical Review”], as well as editor-in-chief of the Nowa Geopolityka [New Geopolitics] website; Tomasz Deptuch, PhD, the editor-in-chief of the Układ Sił [Arrangement of Forces] website. Geosceptics worth mentioning include the habilitated doctor Michał Lubina, PhD, who is assistant professor at the Institute of the Middle and Far East, Jagiellonian University; Łukasz Fyderek, PhD, assistant professor at the Institute of the Middle and Far East, Jagiellonian University; and Wojciech Jakóbiak, editor-in-chief of the Biznesalert.pl website.

Analysis of the texts published during the last two years, which are mostly linked to Jacek Bartosiak, allow the formulation of conclusions that will be grouped according to the dominant themes and their attitudes to geopolitics. In autumn 2018, public debate on geopolitics was initiated between researchers and journalists on both sides of the spectrum. As mentioned above, it was at this time that geopolitics stormed public debate, and not only among experts. Observers, who sometimes also joined the debate, included people who had no previous interest in geopolitics and knew nothing about it, but they expressed their views, sometimes in lengthy comments, both on social media and in comments below published texts. In this context, it is worth noting that, in general, none of the key texts that were published as part of the dispute explained the essence of geopolitics to the public. It was common for the texts to point out that geopolitics emerged at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the debate often used the names *Hearthland* or *Rimland* without, however, any broader presentation of the necessary conceptual apparatus (which follows the

conventions generally pursued by the media). Often, commentators in the dispute lacked any knowledge on the issue. There has never been room for a broad debate that would include an educational component. The supporters and opponents of geopolitics stood by their views and indicated no desire to understand the arguments of their adversaries.

The discourse on geopolitics can be divided into three main areas. The first is connected with the dispute as to whether geopolitics should be perceived as a science, a quasi-science, or an ideology. The second concerns the phenomenon of the attractiveness of geopolitics. The third is related to the illusionary nature (according to critics) of the world that is created by geopolitics. Those who support treating geopolitics as a science, e.g. Leszek Sykulski, argue that it fulfils the conditions for becoming an autonomous scientific field.

Geopolitics is a research school within the political sciences. It is a school that exposes and studies the meaning of geographical space in political processes. It exposes, not determines. Practicing geopolitics in a way that maintains the basic principles of formulating scientific claims is scientific (...) (Sykulski, 2018).

According to this author, geopolitics has developed its research language and research methods (powermetrics). If geopolitics is considered a scientific discipline, then it should come as no surprise that it will attempt to create universal theories; however, these theories in no way determine how a given state will behave (Sykulski, 2018).

Geopolitics is neither geographical determinism nor the key that opens all doors. It is a very useful tool for conducting analyses and building national security, but only one of many (Winnicki, 2018).

Geopolitics is (...) one of the scientific disciplines. It has certain cognitive methods, but it cannot claim it is the only truth (Łuniewski, 2020).

Tomasz W. Deptuch (Deptuch, 2018a; Deptuch, 2018b) observed that geopolitics is the subject of academic research in many countries and that several doctoral theses devoted to this area have already been written, which can be viewed as a strong argument for considering geopolitics a science. This argument is refuted by Michał Lubina: "(...) just because something is taught and researched at universities does not necessarily make it a science" (Lubina, 2018b). Critical voices on geopolitics are clearly overrepresented within each of these points.

Łukasz Fyderek (2018) wrote that geopolitics in its classical form was based on two assumptions: geographical determinism and the objectivisation of geography. These assumptions about geopolitics were criticised and falsified in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which resulted in a decline in its popularity and a refusal to consider it a science. Since then, the thesis of geographical determinism has been replaced by an assumption that geographical location is just one (not the key) of many factors that affect the processes that take place in international relations. Researchers who believe in geographical objectivity follow the realistic paradigm of the science of international relations and – rather than relying on methods reserved for classic geopolitics (such as the already mentioned powermetrics) – also take into account other assumptions that are not related to geopolitics. This allows the formulation of claims that can be verified in accordance with scientific requirements. Apart from realistic geopolitics, researchers can choose the path of constructivism, according to which geography is a subjectively constructed social reality. By recognising that there are numerous different subjective geographies, it is possible to verify the claim that they have a significant impact on political decisions.

The cost of this, however, is the resignation from spectacular visions in which hard geographical determinants – depicted on a map and appropriately interpreted – constitute a universal key to explaining states' political decisions, plans, and strategies (Fyderek, 2018).

The main argument against considering geopolitics a domain of science stems from the limitations of geopolitics that are linked to the dogmatic treatment of the geographical factor. Postulating a priori theses as dogmas oversimplifies analyses because it does not take into account the significant variables that affect the actions of policy-makers or states. In order to understand these variables better, it is necessary to know the context of a given state/region, speak its language, and understand its culture, tradition, and elements that play a role in the decision-making process. Lubina wrote about the error of intentionality, according to which geopoliticians believe that “states and their leaders are guided by interests that are forced on them by geopolitical circumstances, which is why they either win or lose depending on whether they understand them. However, geopolitical circumstances are always the bases of their

decisions. Rational bases, it must be said” (Lubina, 2018a). Geopolitics does not take into account the specific factors existing in a given state that affect the decision-making process and that are connected with, for example, this state’s history or the shaping of its political elites. The decision-making process may also be affected by impulses (e.g. mutual aversion between political actors) and political pragmatism. “The absence of time and space constraints and the use of precise, universal terms allow geopoliticians to deal with virtually any issue” (Winnicki, 2018). According to Roman Kuźniar, geopolitics aspires to be classified as a scientific discipline, although practical implementation of the assumptions of geopolitics in purely scientific terms does not confirm this claim (Winnicki, 2018). Jacek Sokołowski wrote:

Geopolitics is not (...) a science in the traditional understanding of this word because it fails to provide a holistic explanation of a clearly defined fragment of reality (either social or natural). Geopolitics is rather a cognitive paradigm (and in this sense, it can be a part of scientific theories) that is based on the quite obvious observation that geography, i.e. the terrain, transport routes, and distribution of natural resources, affect the security of a state and consequently its policies, especially its foreign policies (Sokołowski, 2019).

Participants of the discourse also include those who consider geopolitics to be an ideology with followers (Lubina, 2018a; Maciążek, 2018, p. A6). Witold Jurasz calls the representatives of geopolitics “priests” and believes that the problem with geopolitics lies in the fact that “it is extremely difficult to argue with its founders because they do not go beyond the level of very general statements and have not attempted to formulate a concrete written political programme. As a result, they have created a perfect theory which cannot be either confirmed or falsified” (Jurasz, 2018). Other participants of the discussion wrote:

We do not a priori dismiss the thesis that some leaders or interest groups (...) find inspiration in the geopolitical school of thought when making decisions. However, there is no real evidence to support this because the supporters of geopolitics have never presented any research results (...) that would prove the impact of geopolitics on the thinking of decision-makers. Until they do so, it is better to stick to what political sciences have already researched. We know that decision-makers are driven by a desire to retain or maximise power. In order to accurately analyse and predict states’ foreign policies, it is necessary to rely on studies of each of the political systems and political cultures we are interested in (Fyderek and Lubina, 2019).

The debate on whether geopolitics can be considered a science or not is summarised by Paweł Wójcik: “Geopoliticians are therefore convinced that their approach is superior to others, whereas the truth is that geopolitics is one of the *least* useful approaches in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (Wójcik, 2018).

The second area of the ongoing debate on geopolitics in Poland concerns its attractiveness: geopolitics is considered a breath of fresh intellectual air. By providing simple answers to difficult questions, it satisfies the human need for order and meaning in the world (Lubina, 2018a). “The public wants to read about geopolitics because in their view it explains the world better than any other theory” (Sykulski, as cited in Winnicki, 2018).

Geopoliticians are not hampered by the rigours of political correctness and can freely speak their minds. (...) What they say seems fresher; they themselves seem very open, bolder, and more competent than other experts in matters regarding the condition of the world. They tend to recognise the complexity of reality, especially in the face of the advancing erosion of morality in international relations (Winnicki, 2018).

Geopoliticians strike critical tones when it comes to Poland’s strategic partners, e.g. they protest against American security guarantees or consider relations with Germany to be of a vassal nature. Fyderek and Lubina warn against falling into the “geopolitical trap”, in which all forecasts appear sound, coherent, and credible, and yet they never come true. Geopolitics is in opposition to academia because it explains difficult issues in a way that is more modern and easier to digest. According to Fyderek and Lubina, “it was not geopoliticians who predicted rivalry between the US and China. It had been known on the expert-academic level for a long time, in Poland as elsewhere”; however, most recipients would say that this prediction was more accurately put forward by geopoliticians. “The merits, therefore, (...) are not in forecasting but rather in popularisation and marketing” (Fyderek and Lubina, 2019). In an interview for a Polish national daily, “Rzeczpospolita”, Fyderek spoke of the weakness of the political sciences in popularising various schools of thought in international relations in a way that would be interesting to the public (Łuniewski, 2020). The existing gap has been filled by geopoliticians who present interesting solutions to difficult issues in an attractive

format, using social media and lectures posted on YouTube (which have high viewing figures), among other forms of communication. Fyderek argues that geopolitics in its classic form has recently become ubiquitous, which is unfortunate as it

moves the discourse towards categories that were employed by the superpowers at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It completely disregards and ignores such aspects of international relations as economic interdependence, the role of innovation, the flow of capital and services, or the exchange of knowledge. We focus on the Suwałki isthmus; we feed on visions of future wars, yet at the same time we are forgetting about non-military threats such as climate change or the COVID-19 pandemic (Łuniewski, 2020).

Opponents of geopolitics observe that it damages public debate by, for example, narrowing the perspectives of the debate by reductionism, determinism, and, consequently, intellectual regress (infantilism). Roman Kuźniar claims that geopolitics is a tool which – by using short cuts – helps explain highly complex issues to people who are not sufficiently educated (Winnicki, 2018).

The popularisation of geopolitics also has positive consequences in terms of increasing interest in and thus deepening knowledge about issues of international relations. Unfortunately, texts on geopolitics do not explain this phenomenon from scratch but only illustrate the rhetorical dispute between supporters and opponents of geopolitics. Paweł Purski believes that the reasons for this interest in geopolitics are deeper than mere interest in international affairs:

Polish society is in the process of redefining its identity. Faced with increasing wealth, low unemployment, increasing immigration to Poland, a crisis of legitimacy in the European Union, and a general state of emergency in both the West and the East, many Polish women and men now believe the narrative of a powerful Poland (Purski, 2019).

This thought is further developed by Paweł Wójcik, who observes that the level of interest in geopolitics remains closely related with political views.

The overwhelming majority of Polish geopolitical analysts, if not all of them, are more or less associated with the right. No wonder young right-wingers excitedly absorb stories about the rivalry of the leading powers, ponder over

behind-the-scenes conspiracies, and maintain that humankind will always be ruled by eternal principles that are grounded in nature. While the left is dominated by the sociological approach to economic and social issues, relationships within society, and possibly identity issues, the right sees politics primarily as a fight for interests and a display of power. Geopolitics reflects the right's perception of the world, which is governed by elements and natural laws; if they wish to keep afloat, states must wage a merciless war for their interests and spheres of influence – and always at someone's cost (Wójcik, 2018).

The above thesis can be expanded on by including Purski's thesis that increased faith in the power of Poland is not merely the consequence of simple nationalism but rather of shedding long-buried inferiority complexes towards

a mythical "Europe" and [of] harbouring a stronger belief in Poland's agency, while at the same time maintaining a messianic attitude, although this time focused more on the allegedly crisis-ridden West. Geopolitics is supposed to provide intellectual "objective" foundations for finally making Poland great. Geopolitics brought to an extreme is a perfect political tool for mobilising the supporters of Poland's "hard power" and distorted realism akin to extreme rightist and national circles (Purski, 2019).

According to Jacek Sokołowski, "geopolitics is important to Poles, as there is no doubt that – from the point of view of the superpowers – we are actually in the "crumple zone" between them. By understanding how the elites of the USA, China, and Russia think, we can better understand their real intentions and predict their behaviour" (Sokołowski, 2019). Summing up, it can be said that the greatest benefit of geopolitics would be in the initiation of a public debate about the future of Poland in the context of security; both sides of this debate, however, fundamentally differ on how it should be conducted.

In the media, the dominant theme is to highlight the illusionary nature of the vision of the world offered by geopolitics. As Purski observed, before geopolitics became popular in Poland

some people linked it with Aleksandr Dugin, a Russian political thinker who appointed himself the Rasputin of Russia's international policy. World leaders are blind performers of decisions that are dictated by the objective laws of geopolitics. If you do not know what to do, look at the map! There, you will find everything you need to understand the complex reality (Purski, 2019).

The allegory of the map repeatedly appears in the discourse. Accusing geopolitics of the sins of universality, determinism, and reductionism, Michał Lubina claims that because geopolitics – according to its founders – has explained everything, it is sufficient for a geopolitician to grab a map and, based on the geographical location of a given country, project a set of visions about it. “There is no need to learn languages, understand culture, or to live in a given country. Just read an essay by Mackinder, watch one or two geopolitical films, look at the map and *voilà!*” (Lubina, 2018a).

Many of the voices that are critical of geopolitics question its arbitrariness, its reputation as infallible, and its arrogance in formulating far-fetched conclusions (Rajkowski, 2019). Lubina wrote that when he listens to geopoliticians, he is struck by the certainty with which they express their views:

Impressive panache! What momentum! What insider’s knowledge! They know it all. No secrets can hide from them. All intentions – both overt and covert – of each empire (they usually despise small and medium-sized states) are known to them. The motivations of leaders are clear to them. So are eternal national interests. The conspiracies of secret services. Deals offered to states behind the closed doors of private offices. Divisions among elites. Traps of political vectors. Security dilemmas [...]. Nothing can be hidden from the mind of a geopolitician! (Lubina, 2018a).

## Systematic reflection

The problem with analysing geopolitics as a media phenomenon lies in the fact that its supporters and opponents have entrenched themselves on two sides of the barricade and are holding strongly onto their positions; both sides have set the preconditions for further dialogue with their opponent. This significantly hinders anyone not expert on the topic from following the ongoing discussion and drawing conclusions from it.

Supporters of geopolitics expect their opponents to recognise geopolitics as a branch of science and to stop stigmatising it with the heritage of imperialism and the German concept of living space. Opponents of geopolitics ask its supporters to abandon the temptation to give in to determinism, universalism, the belief in their infallibility, and spinning visions that have no reflection in reality.



As mentioned in the introduction, the dispute between the supporters and opponents of geopolitics began in autumn 2018. Despite the initial “information overload”, the number of publications on the essence of geopolitics is not high. It has remained a seasonal phenomenon, appearing alongside much-commented-on book publications or interviews with geopoliticians (mainly from abroad) who herald Poland’s strong position in the upcoming years. This is taken up by supporters of geopolitics who expand these scenarios, whereas opponents point out the shortcomings of geopolitics, accusing it of wishful and magical thinking.

The claims raised during public debate on the essence of geopolitics, which has also taken on the form of open letters, have been filled with emotion, including *ad personam* arguments. In 2016, in an interview that accompanied the publication of his book *Pacyfik i Eurazja. O wojnie [Pacific and Eurasia. On War]*, Jacek Bartosiak said that although fundamental changes are taking place in the world, geostrategy and geopolitics remain virtually unknown in Poland:

The problem is that journalists often mix their ways of talking about reality with emotions, facts, and cause-and-effect conclusions, which do not reach deep and are not conditioned by certain unchanging determinants. (...) The foundation on which one stands and has solid ground is lacking. This foundation is geostrategy and geopolitics, because it is the basic function of the assessment of political actions (Kopański and Krajski, 2016).

Bartosiak observed that “if journalism and scientific debate do not fit into this space, then they are merely an intellectual game, and they do not address the essence of the issue: how to make Poland powerful” (Kopański i Krajski, 2016).

The discussion on geopolitics has become a permanent element of the Polish public debate devoted to international relations. Its distinguishing feature is fierce dispute between strongly antagonistic sides, in which mutual reluctance is so strong that it will not be possible to agree on a common position any time in the near future. At the same time, from the point of view of Poland’s state politics, one positive factor is that decision-makers can hear various opinions on the issue voiced by a range of researchers and journalists. It can also be hoped that the knowledge and experience of the political elites will facilitate critical and objective analyses of various geopolitical sources and those provided by other sciences.

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# Geopolitics and globalisation

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The article discusses the relationship that exists between geopolitics and globalisation, which is understood as the intensification of social, political, and economic processes on a global scale. It is assumed that globalisation is a derivative of geopolitics, and its development in a given historical period depends on the stability of the international order.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** The author outlines the concepts that indicate three phases of globalisation: 1) geographical discoveries at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, 2) the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, 3) the period after World War II. He also refers to three theoretical perspectives adopted when analysing globalisation: liberalism, realism, and Marxism.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The first section presents a discourse on the relationships between globalisation and geopolitics from the perspective of researchers who study the phenomenon of globalisation. Next, the same relationships are shown from the perspective of the debates that have been held between geopolitics experts. The third section discusses the crisis of the international order and globalisation at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it also lists the greatest geostrategic challenges that are the result of this crisis.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The article ends with a conclusion that both the present American geopolitical system and globalisation are in a phase of

decomposition, which means that the world is entering a period of chaos and a search for a new order.

**Keywords:** globalisation, geopolitics, crisis of international order, USA, China, EU

## Introduction

The term globalisation means the intensification of social, political, and economic processes on a global scale. This concept is strongly linked to economic phenomena that are a result of the expansion of economic exchange in the world. It is also linked to political systems, which means that political and economic institutions are established on an international scale, including monetary, financial, and trade regimes, among others. This also means that globalisation is directly linked to geopolitics. Although the impression given is that globalisation reduces the role of borders between states and the role of states as the main geopolitical actors, the contrary is actually true: globalisation shifts geopolitical competition to a global level, and the phenomena and areas of activity that accompany it become the focus of rivalry between the great powers. This means that the economic regimes and political institutions created on a global scale are a playing field and an instrument of geopolitics, which is understood primarily as the rivalry between great powers for power, territory, wealth, technologies, and other resources useful in international confrontation. According to this systemic perspective, globalisation is the result of geopolitics, and its stability in a given historical period depends on the stability of the geopolitical order, i.e. the international order based on the domination (hegemony) of the leading great power or on the balance of power between the largest states. At the same time, the geopolitical system and its derivative economic regimes may be asymmetrical, which results in unequal distribution of the benefits of the global exchange. This may lead to consolidation of the advantages of the leading great power (or a group of allied great powers) or to destabilisation of and inevitable change in the existing geopolitical order. With the threat of geopolitical instability, economic and social exchange are at risk on a global scale and the spheres of the economy, culture, and ideas become areas of geopolitical struggle.

After the end of World War II, the development of globalisation was based on the political dominance of the United States and was shaped by its interests, ideas, and institutions. The geopolitical order guaranteed by the Americans and their allies from the broadly understood Western world became the basis for the intensification of global exchange. When the Cold War ended, the geopolitical advantage of

the United States became so great that Washington's hegemony was a recognised feature of global politics. However, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen the beginnings of a delegitimation, decomposition, and crisis of the American geopolitical order. This has been manifested in numerous problems of globalisation, ranging from economic crises and trade wars to strong criticism of American values, institutions, and the regulations on which the processes of global exchange were based. Globalisation has become, in a way, a victim of the problems faced by the geopolitical system that existed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The rivalry that existed between the great powers was worldwide, even if some conflicts were regionally concentrated or only present locally.

## Globalisation and geopolitics

Globalisation is a historical process that not only changes the spatial organisation of social relationships and globally creates and intensifies network connections, including transcontinental and interregional ones: it also changes the power relations associated with them (Held and McGrew, 2002, pp. 1–2). This definition treats globalisation as a historical process whose specificity and course result from the determinants of a particular period in human history. Globalisation highlights the role that is played by network relationships and their intensification, which results from a given wave of globalisation and links globalisation to the distribution of power in international relations. According to David Held and Anthony McGrew, globalisation, especially in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, contributed to the growth of network governance and thus to a reduction of hierarchical systems. As a result, international relations became less pre-eminent, and actors other than states emerged in the global space (Held and McGrew, p. 11). These scholars consider economies to be the basis for global exchange. The current stage of globalisation is characterised by the intensive and rapid exchange of capital, which is also the cause of many crises and the instability of financial markets (*ibidem*, p. 3). In their opinion, globalisation triggers multilateral international agreements, including various economic and political regimes and the international institutions related to them, as well as the



development of international law that is simultaneously legally binding in individual states and across national borders (*ibidem*, p. 7).

Researchers have identified three waves of globalisation in human history (Robertson, 2003). The first began with a series of geographical discoveries at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the colonisation of other continents by European powers. This wave culminated in the Westphalian system (1648), which introduced the most important principles for the relationships between sovereign states. This wave was linked with the geopolitical system created by the greatest colonial powers of that time and with the economic dominance of the Netherlands. The second wave, which took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, is related to the geopolitical and economic dominance of Great Britain; at that time, geopolitical stabilisation was guaranteed by the “concert of the European powers”. Carl Schmitt described how the aforementioned powers created the international law of that time, which legitimised their colonial conquests and thus their control over and exploitation of other parts of the globe (Schmitt, 2019, pp. 199–214). In order to justify the seizure and subjugation of foreign territories, they cited their belief in European civilisation as a vehicle of human progress, including the dissemination of liberal norms such as freedom of trade on a global scale (Schmitt, p. 204). The third wave, which started after World War II, was based on the dominance of the US and on liberal values. In the economic sphere, these were neoliberal norms or norms related to the so-called Washington Consensus (Morawski, 2018; Rupert, 2005; Duménil and Lévy, 2004).

Historically, globalisation was associated with the prevailing geopolitical order and a set of dominant values. Successive waves of globalisation had specific phases: the beginning, a period of growth, and then the decline. With each phase, globalisation contributed to economic development; however, its fruits were unevenly distributed, with some social groups or states gaining and others losing. Those who considered themselves wronged or felt that they had not gained enough in a given geopolitical order protested. This included a number of social movements: for example, those who were protectionist towards their domestic economy, nationalists, or anti-immigrants. History provides many examples of this phenomenon: the period at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the “British” wave of globalisation, when a movement

against Chinese immigrants emerged in the USA; and the spread of nationalism and anti-Semitism across Europe in the same period (Ferguson, 2018, p. 176). “American” globalisation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought with it an increase in inequality in most Western countries, including income stagnation or even reduction among the middle and lower classes (Piketty, 2015). At the same time, it contributed to the redistribution of income to developing countries, especially China. This triggered an amalgam of anti-globalisation movements in the West, ranging from protectionist and nationalist movements to anti-immigrant and other extreme movements of both right-wing and left-wing provenance (Ferguson, 2018, pp. 360–363; Grosse, 2020a).

Three strands in theoretical analyses devoted to globalisation can be distinguished: liberalism, realism, and Marxism. According to the liberal perspective, after World War II globalisation was characterised by a proliferation of actors operating on a global scale, including non-governmental organisations, social movements, international corporations, and even criminal and terrorist organisations. At the same time, the role of states and thus of classical geopolitics was relatively diminished (Rosenau, 1999). Various multilateral and transnational institutional structures were created, including a growing share of actors that were not connected to states but represented the emerging “global society”. Liberals place emphasis on the role of mutual dependencies in the global economy and on liberal ideas and values. Consequently, most liberal researchers did not question the importance of the leading power (USA) in shaping the global order and even considered it crucial for the promotion of democracy and liberal values (Ikenberry, 2001).

Liberal researchers recognise the growing role of non-state actors on the world stage but argue that the role states play remains key to the establishment of regional and global institutions and international regulations. Christopher Hill points to the growing participation of representatives of civil society in discussions on issues related to nature and climate protection at international conferences. Hill emphasises that it is states that decide on the implementation of specific decisions relevant to climate policy; however, where national interests differ, it understandably becomes difficult for states to reach agreement on this matter (Hill, 2015, pp. 200–203). Daniel Drezner observes that it is the great powers that set standards and regulations relating to globalisation

and, whenever possible, attempt to shape them in accordance with their national models in a way that supports their national interests, including the interests of international corporations that were originally established in a particular state (Drezner, 2005). International regulations are becoming a subject of fierce geoeconomic competition between great powers that are aiming to maximise benefits for their own economies. Even if there is a gradual harmonisation of regulations on a global scale, this is mostly the result of their imposition by the strongest geopolitical actors and businesses linked to them, which is often achieved with the participation of international organisations.

Some researchers question the view that the influence of globalisation reduces the interventionism of states in the economy or in the level of public spending (Weiss, 2005). In particular, those countries that adhere to the model of state capitalism with a wide scope of government intervention in strategic areas of the economy, especially France, China, and the so-called Asian tigers, have not succumbed to neoliberalism. Democracy was another reason for not succumbing to neoliberalism, which exerted pressure on redistributive public spending in the European Union. Due to their geopolitical determinants, other countries, such as the USA, maintained a high level of spending and interventionism in industry. Even if Washington was one of the greatest proponents of liberalism in the world, it still sought to control the development of military technology and industry (as well as dual-use technology in the military and civil sectors) in its own backyard for reasons of national security (Grosse, 2020b).

Researchers with a liberal background also point to difficulties in the governance of globalisation (Ferguson, 2018, p. 397). On the one hand, the basic political structures are state based. On the other hand, the economy and many other phenomena and issues have become global in scope. This means that effective governance becomes difficult when there is a conflict of interests between the great powers, especially while the current geopolitical order is decomposing.

Within the realism approach, the role of states in the global economy was consistently defended (Krasner, 1982). Researchers of this approach considered states to be the most important actors in global relations, including in the shaping of global institutions and regulations. In their opinion, globalisation is a product of the greatest power, i.e. the US, and

is directly related to the geopolitical order guarded by Washington. Even if globalisation intensifies network relationships, it remains dependent on hierarchical power relations on an international scale, within which the United States is the greatest power. For realists, ideas that assume the decline of the importance of states and borders are merely empty rhetoric or utopian aspirations that have little to do with reality, at least in relation to the great powers (Gilpin, 2001). In addition to this, many political elites, especially the EU members or smaller states, have succumbed to this “utopian” rhetoric, accepting the gradual disappearance of the functions of the state in certain areas of public affairs and even in national security.

Realists frequently reiterate one of their most important claims, which is that international relations resemble an anarchic order (Gilpin, 2002). This means that global institutions and regulations can only conditionally facilitate the governance of globalisation – that is, as long as their credibility is ensured by the dominant great power (and its allies) and, more precisely, by the hierarchical power it exercises. States can act according to their *raison d'état* at any time and thus not recognise any superior institution such as international law concerning globalisation. This is the basis of the realists' belief that anarchy is the genotype of international relations. The collapse of the geopolitical order usually entails negative consequences for global exchange, as chaos ensues on a global scale until a new geopolitical constellation emerges to provide stability and enforce obedience onto weaker actors.

For researchers representing a Marxist approach to globalisation, the processes that took place in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were embedded in the hegemonic position of the USA. Americans championed the neoliberal doctrine on which the fundamental principles of the global economy were based (Duménil and Lévy, 2004; Rupert, 2005). The geopolitical power of the USA served to promote the interests of its largest corporations, which became a vehicle for capital accumulation on an unprecedented global scale (Cox, 1997). The capitalist class made profits at the expense of nature, the climate, and even many developing or peripheral countries, which was reminiscent of the practices employed by Western capitalists in the previous waves of globalisation (Gill, 1998). Marxist scholars attached great importance to the formation of increasingly powerful transnational elites, which they called the transnational

capitalist class (Robinson, 2001). This yielded a highly influential global elite that had enormous political influence over individual states and was both increasingly autonomous from political power and decreasingly loyal to any nation or state. In line with this, the great powers and their geopolitics did not disappear but were harnessed to serve the targets of the transnational capitalist class (Hardt and Negri, 2000).

## Geopolitics and globalisation

Geopolitics in its classical sense (i.e. dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century) is understood as the competition among the great powers for power and territory, or for power in geographical terms (Flint, 2012, pp. 31, 39; Ó Tuathail, 2006, p. 1; Cowen and Smith, 2009). This interpretation is advocated by the realist approach within international relations. Another definition of geopolitics focuses on exercising effective control over a territory. Francis Sempa (2007, p. 109), the author of this approach, also acknowledges that the era of global geopolitics began with the geographic discoveries and European colonial conquests of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. From this perspective, globalisation broadens the scope of geopolitics but does not fundamentally change its essence, which is the competition for power and territory between states. Other authors add that globalisation emphasises the role of economic instruments for geopolitical competition. They term this arena of international struggle “geo-economics” (Grosse, 2014, 2020c) or “soft geopolitics” (Gritsch, 2005).

Contemporary geopolitical researchers also approach this topic from the perspective of liberal or Marxist concepts. From the liberal perspective, geographic conditions are of great importance for geopolitics, as are the dominant political ideas and public deliberations that concern interpretations of the strategic situation. This approach to geopolitics is related to ways of “seeing the world” (Flint, 2012, p. 33), i.e. the dominant ideology or political paradigm present in a given community. It focuses on “grand strategy” and the mechanisms of its construction. Although this strategy is shaped in relation to specific international situations, including geographic conditions (Gray and Sloan, 1999), the territorial context is not always decisive for geopolitical interpretation. Sometimes the main role is played by other determinants, which may be social,

economic, or ideological, as is the case with feminist and alterglobalist geopolitics (Flint, 2012, pp. 33, 40). Moreover, liberals also maintain that the shaping of global economic and political relations and their related interdependencies undermine the previous significance of geography (and thus the classical understanding of geopolitics).

Marxist researchers developed critical geopolitics (Ó Tuathail, 2006, pp. 5–12; Ó Tuathail, 1999), which negates some of the assumptions of classical geopolitics and is thus sometimes termed anti-geopolitics (Flint, 2012, p. 35). Critical geopolitics is critical of, among others, treating the largest states as major geopolitical actors because social and economic interest groups operating across state borders are becoming increasingly important. It also undermines the leading role of “objective” geographic conditions and emphasises the role of cultural and ideological factors in the construction of geopolitical narratives. Referring to Marxist ideas, representatives of “critical geopolitics” recognise globalisation as leading to neo-colonial exploitation conducted by American and Western European corporations under the aegis of the “American empire” (Smith, 2003).

The aforementioned concepts alter the mutual relationships between geopolitics and globalisation. While, according to “realist” researchers, globalisation merely broadens the scope of geopolitical competition without changing the leading role of great powers in this struggle, researchers from the other two theoretical approaches focus on actors other than states that indicate the diminishing role of geography and state borders and place greater importance on ideas and narratives in geopolitics. For example, John Agnew (2003, pp. 85–113) emphasises the role of constructivism in successive waves of globalisation, i.e. the importance of ideology in shaping geopolitics; he also looks at history through the prism of the concept of post-colonialism. For Agnew, the first wave of globalisation was primarily motivated by the sense of civilisational superiority of the Europeans who conquered overseas territories and exploited the colonies they established there. The next wave was dominated by nationalist ideology and a belief in the natural superiority of the white race over others, which again contributed to colonial exploitation. Apart from overseas expansionism, ideas that justified conquests in Europe came to the fore: firstly, there was the Germans’ idea of expanding their “living space” (*Lebensraum*), which justified their domination of the Slavs;

secondly, there was economic imperialism, then called *Weltpolitik*, which made economic expansion one of the main tools of geopolitics. Agnew believes that the last wave of globalisation was based on the division into the First World, which held the leading economic and political position, and the Third World, which was backward, less developed, and sometimes even “fallen”, as countries were called when they plunged into political chaos or war. In this way, under the guise of economic freedom, modernisation, or aid, Third World countries were exploited by corporations from the richest countries.

When attempting to identify new characteristics in the contemporary wave of globalisation, Colin Flint (2012) looks not only at technological progress, especially new communication and information technologies, but also at globalisation-related threats that transgress national borders. This implies a greater role for non-state actors, international organisations, and network connections (which predominate over hierarchical ones). Flint emphasises the role of transnational corporations that gain access to new markets, new investments, or local resources by cooperating with the great powers for mutual benefit. This is nothing new in history because private corporations played similar roles in the past in the exploitation of colonies; both the United Kingdom and the Netherlands did this (Arrighi, Barr, and Hisaeda, 1999). When analysing transnational terrorism, including that associated with radical Islamic groups, Flint treats it as a geopolitical phenomenon. Numerous terrorist groups have had territorial ambitions, most often related to the desire for their own state. Moreover, many have been supported by regional or world powers, as exemplified by Iran’s assistance to Palestinian organisations and ISIS. Thus, globalisation has not reduced rivalry between the great powers but rather has led to proxy wars (Deutsch, 1964; Mumford, 2013) or terrorist threats. The essence of geopolitics is still competition for territory, and the activity of most terrorist groups is a clear example of this. Alongside traditional nationalist ideas, militant religious ideology have made a comeback in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which has been a recurring feature of geopolitical rivalry since the rise of Islam and the Crusades (Frankopan, 2015). For many followers of Islam, having their own state has been a crucial political objective, and the fight against the USA, the greatest power of this wave of globalisation, is seen as leading to the attainment of this goal.

Gerard Toal is also interested in the new characteristics of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century wave of globalisation. In his opinion, the state-centric Westphalian system has been stripped of its influence, which means that borders, territories, and states themselves are losing their importance. In particular, Toal believes that the decline in the position of states is manifested in several phenomena: the weakening of their exclusive sovereign authority over their own territories; the blurring of the boundaries between internal and foreign affairs; and an inability to define society through the prism of state borders. However, he forgets that all these tendencies have already been present in history. Moreover, internationalist ideas that by definition entailed crossing national borders were previously disseminated without undermining geopolitics at all. Such ideas were advocated by Christianity (especially Catholicism) during the first wave of globalisation, by the Enlightenment during the second wave, which later inspired the French Revolution, and by communist ideology and liberal values during the third wave. It is difficult to agree with Toal's claim that the world has entered the era of postmodern geopolitics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Like Flint, Toal focuses on the new threats arising from contemporary globalisation that the world powers now face, including climate change, migration, organised crime, terrorism, etc., all of which are serious challenges for the US security strategy. This does not mean, however, that Washington does not notice those traditional geopolitical threats that result from politics pursued by such great powers as China and Russia, or the smaller states that are their allies but are no less dangerous to the world power (such as Iran or North Korea).

It is hardly surprising that researchers representing classical geopolitics consider liberal or Marxist considerations on globalisation to be wishful or even utopian thinking (Black, 2016, p. 229). In their opinion, such considerations do not contribute to analyses of the modern wave of globalisation and are quite useless for analyses of the strategic games played between the great powers. Some liberal or Marxist "discoveries" resemble Francis Fukuyama's predictions regarding the "end of history" (Fukuyama, 1989), i.e. the triumph of the liberal geopolitical order, one of whose instruments was economic globalisation. Yet, after a period of triumph, the American geopolitical system began to erode relatively quickly, and the third wave of globalisation began to collapse.



## American globalisation and its demise

George Modelski's (1987) theory is very useful when analysing the contemporary wave of globalisation that started after World War II. In his view, globalisation is part of the geopolitical order, within which there is a world leader who creates the geopolitical structure and establishes the most important institutions, norms, and values of this order. The cycle of world domination covers roughly 100 years and is divided into four periods: (1) a period of chaos and war, out of which a leader emerges; (2) a phase of consolidation and growth for this new leader's global leadership; (3) a period of delegitimisation of this leader; (4) finally, the decomposition of the system, leading to anarchy in international relations. Modelski distinguished several cycles of world leadership. The first global leader was Portugal, which was supported by the Netherlands in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and whose main geopolitical competitor was Spain. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Netherlands dominated, supported by England, and its main rival was France. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Great Britain dominated twice: first supported by Russia, then by the USA but opposed by France and then Germany. The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the most recent cycle of globalisation, with American leadership, which began with the outbreak of World War I. The end of World War II was followed by a phase of US domination that was supported by allies from Western Europe, Japan, and other Western countries. Russia was USA's main geopolitical rival and was replaced by the PRC after the end of the Cold War. The Cold War brought about a short-lived American hegemony which was followed by the next phase, namely the delegitimisation of the American geopolitical order and its subsequent decomposition. Modelski's important premise is "imperial overstretch", i.e. the increasing costs incurred by the leading power in order to maintain its leadership position. In the case of the USA, one of the elements of this phenomenon was growing militarism and the high costs of subsequent military interventions in the Middle East. At the same time, Washington's aggressive actions contributed to a decline in its international authority and thus the delegitimisation of its leadership. This facilitated the decomposition of the world order, especially when the politics of the leading power was criticised by its closest allies.

The processes discussed above led to growing problems of globalisation, including successive economic crises, trade wars, and the fact

that the basic institutions and values of this wave of globalisation were questioned by the major players, including Washington. Based on the timeframe adopted by Modelski, it can be predicted that in the 2020s the world will enter a period of chaos or even war, after which a new (or the same) geopolitical leader may emerge.

Gérard Dussouy and Roger Brunet (2010) propose another interesting geopolitical concept that may be useful for reflecting on the American order. It is an analytical typology of the five spheres of globalisation and geopolitics: (1) territory and its resources – this sphere covers the whole earth; (2) people resources and the challenges posed by mass migration; (3) classical geopolitics, i.e. competition between states for power and territory; (4) the global economy and the related cooperation and competition between business entities and the states that support them; (5) the sphere of ideas, symbols, and values. All these spheres interpenetrate one another. These are established by the leading power (or a group of great powers) as part of a given geopolitical system, but they may also decompose with the crisis of the geopolitical order.

Let us try to combine the two models under discussion. On an ideological level, liberal values have been undermined for years, which lead to the delegitimisation of both the geopolitical order and its leader. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Samuel Huntington (1993) was already able to point to the civilisational differences between individual states that in his opinion led to international conflicts and posed a threat to the American order. Huntington's analysis aptly illustrates the growing contestation of the liberal values promoted by the West – values that had become the basis for the development of globalisation and the international order after World War II. Criticism came primarily from the Islamic world, which had been engaged in a geopolitical struggle with the leading great power for many years. Similar resistance to American values emerged in Russia and China, both of which attempted to present the values derived from their own cultures as alternatives to liberal ideas. At the same time, Western norms were being devalued as contributing to a new form of exploitation and colonialism in less developed countries (Winter, 2020; Jiang, 2017). Interestingly, liberal norms have also been contested in the West. According to John Mearsheimer (2018, viii), hegemony based on liberalism must collapse because it leads to hypocrisy, i.e. the inability of the leading great power to follow its own catalogue

of values. At the same time, the growing discrepancy between liberal norms and realistic politics leads to disillusionment in other states and thus to delegitimisation of liberalism-based leadership. In fact, many of Washington's European allies rejected American norms, especially with regard to the economy.

In Western Europe, contestation of American leadership has been most pronounced with regard to economic rivalry, which is fundamental to the contemporary wave of globalisation. The results of successive economic crises were fierce rivalries, verging on trade wars, such as the great recession that started in 2007 and the post-2010 eurozone crisis, which generated growing protectionism of Europeans wishing to impede external rivals in their access to the internal market (Grosse, 2020a). Americans themselves became one of the main destructive forces of economic globalisation. US President Donald Trump questioned the liberal norms underlying globalisation and initiated protectionist measures and trade wars, primarily with the USA's greatest geopolitical rival, China. He also took steps to weaken international institutions that sustain globalisation, such as the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations Conference on Climate Change. Americans attempted to limit the transfer of wealth to China and allied states, which had previously taken place largely within the framework of the American geopolitical order (Ferguson, 2018, p. 360). Nevertheless, the effect was the promotion of protectionism and anti-globalisation movements on both sides of the Atlantic. The period of "one world with one model that everyone was ready to implement" had thus ended (Morawski, 2018, p. 138).

The decomposition of the previous world order was visible at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, primarily at the geopolitical level. This decomposition was manifested in the increasingly aggressive behaviour of the Russian Federation, which sought to limit the expansion of Western institutions in Eastern Europe. Another example of the disintegration of the previous order was the expanding search for strategic autonomy from the USA and NATO by the Western European allies. The desire to develop defence policy in the EU and ultimately to create a European army that is independent of NATO and the US military can be used as an illustration of this process (Flint, 2012, p. 234). This desire led to increasing differences between the allies in many areas (Jiang, 2017, p. 53; Agnew, 2003, p. 120). A major challenge for American domination

was the rapid development of military potential in the PRC, especially its navy and its control of the waters in the South China Sea, which led to the actual displacement of the US navy from these waters (Johnson and Long, 2007). The confrontational policies of Iran and North Korea, both of which are supported by Beijing and Moscow, were an additional test of strength for the US. All this led to the emergence of rival geopolitical centres, which was called a multipolar order (Dussouy, 2010, p. 142). However, this was not a stable or long-term order but rather one progressing towards chaos and a political turning point in the global geopolitical system.

## Towards a new geopolitical order

The concepts of the “World Island” (Mackinder, 1962) and the Eurasian Rimland (Spykman, 1944) are of key importance in geopolitical considerations. These terms indicate that space is crucial from a geopolitical point of view as this is where the fight for power and world domination takes place. This area covers three continents: it begins in Western Europe, ends in East Asia, and includes Africa. According to Halford Mackinder, three great powers (Germany, Russia and China) stand the best chances in the competition for this space.

In analysis of the geopolitical situation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it should be stated that, since unification in 1990, Germany has again become a great power, especially economically, but with growing aspirations to play a key role in the EU and its neighbourhood. John Agnew points to two of Germany’s historical tendencies: first, it used its economic power for geopolitical purposes; second, it expanded extensively in Central and Eastern Europe (Agnew 2003, p. 99). Although the EU provides great possibilities for Germany to exert strong geopolitical influence, it also imposes serious limitations as a result of long-standing structural issues of European integration that became apparent in a series of crises at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This may mean that Germany and, more broadly, Western Europe will not play a leading role in the game of any new geopolitical order (Dussouy, 2010, p. 149).

As far as Russia is concerned, it emerged from the Cold War weakened on many levels and struggled with serious structural problems,

including a demographic crisis and an economy based entirely on oil, gas and military industries. It occupied a privileged geopolitical position which Mackinder termed the “Heartland”. In his opinion, this position allows Russia to launch attacks in all directions, but it also means that it can be attacked from many sides (Mackinder 1962, p. 262). Russia lost control of many territories during the Cold War but tried to make up for these losses in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. It did not have to fear aggression from its Western neighbours, except for the political and economic penetration of its former sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. This was due to the pacifism of Europeans as well as their search for strategic autonomy from the USA and NATO. Franz Josef Strauss observed that Russia’s primary objective in the Cold War period was to make Western Europe a neutral area and then immediately Sovietise the entire continent (Strauss 1982, p. 13). Jolyon Howorth’s (2018) assessment is similar, although it concerns the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In her opinion, the EU’s pursuit of strategic autonomy may end with the necessity of a geopolitical agreement with Moscow, probably on terms dictated by Moscow. The Russian Federation, however, is threatened by China’s growing power, and Russia’s prolonged structural weakness exposes it even more to this danger. Its first signals can be seen in growing Chinese immigration to Russian Siberia and Manchuria.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the PRC was the most dynamic emerging power to replace Russia as the main rival to the US in the fight for world leadership (Black, 2016, p. 254). Among the three main states of the Rimland, the PRC is best positioned to play the role of a maritime and land power. This gives China a huge advantage over other competitors for control over the “World Island” (Mackinder 1962, p. 70). Furthermore, China has undertaken intensive attempts to exert geopolitical influence over Africa and a number of Asian states (including Pakistan, Iran, and the former Soviet republics in Central Asia), and their Belt and Road Initiative can be understood as a form of geopolitical expansion not only within the “World Island” but also on a global scale.

Mackinder also considered the Midland Ocean to be of great importance; the Midland Ocean was previously synonymous with the cooperation of maritime powers such as the USA and the United Kingdom; after World War II, it became an imperative of transatlantic cooperation within NATO. However, with the emancipation of Western Europe and

the numerous disputes between the EU and the United States, the transatlantic relationships became severely strained. In this situation, the strategy of the US, i.e. the great power striving to maintain its geopolitical advantage, may follow several different directions. First, it would aim to rebuild transatlantic ties or at least maintain its strong presence in Europe, especially in Central Europe, which is growing in importance at a time of structural problems in the west of the continent. The geopolitics of England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and then of the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> century focused on maintaining a strategic balance in Europe. NATO, and to a certain extent the European Communities, served this purpose in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is worth mentioning that shortly after the end of World War II the United States planned to establish a European federation which would ensure Washington's control over the western part of the Old Continent (Sayle, 2019). At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the EU became not so much an instrument of American policy as an instrument for the strategic balancing of the United States. This process is likely to be exacerbated by Brexit, so Washington will have to answer the challenge of not only how to maintain its influence in Europe but also how to keep the geopolitical ambitions of Berlin and Paris in check. Second, the US strategy may aim to pit potential rivals against one another in the fight for dominion over the "World Island". The geopolitical conflict between the Soviet Union and communist China was one of the most important factors that accelerated the US's success during the Cold War. Henry Kissinger's policy of encouraging the PRC to cooperate with the West was also of some importance, but the strategy of including China in the processes of globalisation led to a huge increase in the power of this country that threatened the position of the current world leader. After the end of the Cold War, Moscow and Beijing drew nearer to each other once more. At present, Washington's objective may be to try to break up the anti-American alliance between China and Russia and (to a lesser extent) torpedo the rapprochement between Berlin and Russia, especially the one taking place "behind the back" of the US. The third and perhaps the greatest geopolitical challenge for the US will be China, especially concerning the need to contain its growing economic and technological power and territorial influences.

## Conclusions

Globalisation means the intensification of economic and social exchanges on a global scale. The stability of these processes depends on the stability of the geopolitical order within which this type of exchange operates. The leading great powers are not only crucial in shaping the geopolitical order: they also create the institutions, regulations, and values on which globalisation is based. In times of crisis, when a leading great power (or a group of allied powers) loses its geopolitical influence and ceases to control the globalisation processes, the geopolitical order can collapse. This is especially true with reference to controlling economic exchanges, accumulating capital, or redistributing income on an international scale.

We faced this situation at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when globalisation was based on the geopolitical dominance of the USA. Americans were the main creators of institutions and norms on which the global exchange was based. This led to an excessive flow of wealth to China, which, over time, grew to become the US's greatest geopolitical rival. This became one of the causes of the crisis of the previous geopolitical order and the associated economic globalisation. In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the United States embarked on a process that could be described as "creative destruction", which aimed to thoroughly reorganise the principles and institutions on which globalisation had previously been based. Other reasons for the decline of "American globalisation" can also be mentioned here: for example, a large proportion of the population in Western European countries felt that they were increasingly losing out as a result of the global economic exchange, and therefore they opposed globalisation, its basic values, and the leading great power that it symbolised. This led to increasingly heated transatlantic disputes which weakened the geopolitical position of the West as a whole. The US and its allies came under intense pressure from its rivals, who criticised their imperial tendencies, hypocrisy, and double standards in the application of liberal values. By the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both the US geopolitical system and globalisation have found themselves in the phase of decomposition, and the world is increasingly approaching a period of chaos and a search for a new order.

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# Geopolitics and global governance

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The concept known as global governance emerged in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on a wave of ideas advocating a need to change the approach to international relations.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** The United Nations was a supportive environment for the idea of global governance, and the first definitions and classifications were formulated within its institutions and initiatives. Global governance should be situated in the globalisation paradigm, but it also draws inspiration from liberalism and neoliberalism (e.g. the theory of complex interdependence and the concept of international regimes). Global governance is also influenced by the concept of global society and the normative approaches that were formulated within the constructivist paradigm (e.g. Alexander Wendt's social theory of international politics). In the 1950s, Morton A. Kaplan formulated the universalist model, which was based on analysis of behavioural systems.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** According to most researchers, global governance has failed to develop a uniform and autonomous methodology. According to its fierce critics, it is merely a collection of incoherent opinions and views regarding processes in the modern world. Global governance, which is supposed to be an alternative to state-centric geopolitical approaches, introduces many elements into the discourse that are important from the point of view of the dynamics of contemporary international relations, including the need for broader consideration of the processes that take place outside of state and supra-state levels.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** From an optimistic perspective, it can be assumed that geopolitical reflections and positions related to global governance complement each other. Despite the differences that underlie their foundations, it is possible to find areas in which they overlap in the modern world, such as reflections on authority, sovereignty, sources of power, etc.

**Keywords:** global governance, international society, globalisation, UN, authority, geopolitics

## Definition of the term

The term “global governance”, which is often translated into Polish as “global management” (other translations into Polish can also be found in the subject literature), is ambiguous and lacks a clear definition. The term emerged at the turn of the 1990s, but the foundations were laid by the globalist perspectives within political science and international relations as early as in the 1970s.

## Historical analysis of the term

The early 1980s saw the development of international relations studies. In American scientific centres, neoliberal regime theory (Stephen D. Krasner and Oran R. Young) was developed. According to this theory, regimes are formalised or customary sets of international norms, international rules, and relatively fixed decision-making principles and procedures. As a result of creative processes of evolutionary dynamics, permanent, specific “subsystems” were (and still are) created in international relations (Pietraś, 2002, pp. 81–84). Their structural axes are determined by 1) principles, on the basis of which facts are perceived and conclusions about causality are drawn; 2) norms, i.e. sets of rights and obligations; 3) rules concerning the implementation of tasks (doctrines); 4) procedures (Krasner, as cited in: Czaputowicz, 2007, pp. 230–231). These regimes have often undergone processes of traditional institutionalisation; for example, a regime may have been implemented by an existing organisation, or an institution may have been created on the basis of a regime (such as the CSCE/OSCE). The functional role of regimes mostly consists of regulating areas of uncertainty in the political reality, both present and future. The creation of mechanisms that limit the anarchic nature of international relations is a basic premise of the liberal paradigm. It should be assumed that the generation of fixed algorithms for managing reality through supporting cooperative patterns would limit the risks and dangers that result from functioning in a competitive environment. According to Jacek Czaputowicz, regimes are characterised by four distinctive features: 1) strength, i.e. the degree of compliance; 2) organisational form, i.e. the degree of formalisation

and centralisation of a regime; 3) its reach, i.e. the domains in which a regime applies; 4) allocation mode, i.e. the model of resource management within a regime (Czaputowicz, 2007, p. 234). Regimes create a supra-national network of connections within the regimes themselves and a network of interactions between different regimes. The latter dimension leads to interesting conclusions because it becomes the basis for the hypothesised formation of a “regime of regimes”, which is too not far from the concept of global governance.

To an extent, the theory of complex interdependence, which is primarily associated with Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, corresponds with the above views. This theory is based on the assumption that diverse and complex transnational connections and interdependencies between states and societies are increasing, while the role of traditional aggregates in international politics, which is sometimes associated with geopolitics, is decreasing. Economic integration, with its natural tendency to transcend borders and traditional barriers, is considered the major factor that shapes the nature of international relations. Attempts to secure a share in globalising economic mechanisms and their yields was expected to lead to an erosion of the roles of states and the “classic” determinants of power in favour of increasing the importance of international and supranational bodies in the form of international organisations, large corporations, NGOs, social movements, etc.

The end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the bipolar architecture of international relations, the intensification of globalisation trends strongly linked to the technological progress, and many other factors meant that the existing tools for analysing international relations were no longer sufficient (Czaputowicz, 2013, pp. 36–39). In the early 1990s, ideas of global governance began to emerge in Anglo-American academic centres. In 1992, under the auspices of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Commission on Global Governance, co-chaired by Ingvar Carlsson and Shridath Surendranath Ramphal, was established. Three years later, it published a report entitled *Our Global Neighbourhood*, which stated:

There is no single model or form of global governance, nor is there a single structure or set of structures. It is a broad, dynamic, complex process of interactive decision-making that is constantly evolving and responding to changing circumstances. Although bound to respond to the specific requirements of



different issue areas, governance must take an integrated approach to questions of human survival and prosperity. Recognizing the systemic nature of these issues, it must promote systemic approaches in dealing with them (*Our Global Neighborhood*, 1995, p. 1).

At the global level, governance has been viewed primarily as intergovernmental relationships, but it must now be understood as also involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs), citizens' movements, multinational corporations, and the global capital market. Interacting with these are global mass media of dramatically enlarged influence. [...] The new vigour of civil society reflects a large increase in the capacity and will of people to take control of their own lives and to improve or transform them (*Our Global Neighborhood*, 1995, p. 7).

It was anticipated that creating effective governance mechanisms would be difficult, as they should be integrative and participatory while also being more flexible. According to the authors of the Report, this required developing a multi-faceted global governance strategy that would gain international acceptance. This strategy would entail reforming and strengthening the existing system of intergovernmental institutions and improving cooperation with private and independent groups. The central role in these processes was to be played by the United Nations, which would have to undergo profound structural and competence reforms (e.g. both the Trusteeship Council and the Economic and Social Council would have to be remodelled).

The report was received with great interest but also with a wave of criticism that was voiced mainly by the supporters of national sovereignty, who observed that the proposition led toward the creation of a "world federation" and "world government," which would be a form of neo-colonialism. Although the report made it clear that "global governance does not imply world government or world federalism" (*Our Global Neighborhood*, 1995, p. 7), it was this very vision that became the focus of criticism. Among many definitions of "global governance", the following seems the most complete:

Global governance can be defined as the sum of the laws, norms, policies, and institutions that define, constitute, and mediate trans-border relations between states, cultures, citizens, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the market. It embraces the totality of institutions, policies, rules, practices, norms, procedures, and initiatives by which states and their citizens (indeed, humanity as a whole) try to bring more predictability, stability, and order to their responses to transnational challenges – such as climate change

and environmental degradation, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism – which go beyond the capacity of a single state to solve (UN, 2009, pp. 1–2).

Such a “broad” view aspires to be a universal “theory of everything”, and this is its greatest flaw. To some extent, this paradox can be explained by its background: as a universal and common organisation, the United Nations aspires, by definition, to deal with “everything and everywhere”.

## Global governance as a scientific category

In the 1990s, global governance emerged as a research category of international relations studies. The volume of essays edited by James Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel under the particularly telling title *Governance without Government. Order and Change in World Politics*, which was published in 1992, marks the symbolic beginning of an explicitly formulated area of scientific reflection on global governance. Admittedly, the term “global governance” did not appear in this collection (the authors used the phrases “global politics” and “new institutions of governance” (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992, pp. 272–273)), but diagnosis of the profound changes that are occurring in the world and the need to create new qualities in the global dimension were clearly articulated in the essays. The main assumption was the belief that rapid technological “revolutions”, the progress of globalisation, the depolarisation of international relations, and the resulting deepening of the processes of dispersion of power and might meant that the international game required a paradigm shift in studying international relations. “The age of turbulence”, i.e. sudden and rapid changes in the sources of influence (power) and its actors (Zachara, 2011, p. 67) in both the quantitative and qualitative sense, requires research tools capable of analysing three levels of international relations: the activity of international organisations; the activity of states; and the activity of all actors (formal and informal) who are engaged in these relationships (Zachara, 2012, pp. 36–39).

Jan Czaja (2008) describes a very interesting behavioural pattern within global governance. In an international order that is characterised by “uncontrolled chaos” and the re-evaluation of roles among traditional powers, global governance is supposed to be a tool employed by

international organisations, such as NATO and the European Union, to strengthen their positions (Czaja, 2008, pp. 282–283). Thus, the question arises as to what extent global governance covers understanding and interpreting the “new international order” and to what extent it is a political and doctrinal tool for the creation of this order. If the latter is the case, rejecting global governance as a scientific category may even be required. The vagueness of the term and the multiplicity of research approaches and tools greatly complicate the explanatory possibilities of scientific discourse. Similar doubts are raised with regard to diagnosis as well as recommendations and methods of implementation of the results obtained, as “regulations are partial, frayed, and characterised by limited effectiveness” (Kuźniar, 2019, pp. 214–215). The seminal work of Thomas G. Weiss and Ramesh Thakur, entitled *Global Governance and the UN: An Unfinished Journey* (published in 2010), should be placed in the “institutional” trend of global governance. The authors identified three important areas of implementation of the concept of global governance within the UN system: international security, development, and human rights. To address these areas, they proposed that the functioning of global governance be based on three (previously mentioned) levels: one level is composed of member states (the “First UN”); another is composed of offices, secretariats, and international agencies (the “Second UN”); the third is composed of NGO networks (the “Third UN”) (Weiss and Thakur, 2010, p. 157). In this way, a new and different global governance network would emerge, with the United Nations as its coordinator. The authors also described five major gaps between current global challenges and available solutions that the new formula would have to address: knowledge, normative, policy, institutional, and compliance gaps (at the implementation, monitoring, and enforcement levels). In this view, a global network is more effective in filling knowledge and normative gaps than in making vital decisions and acting on them. The implementation of a full global governance model would balance this disparity by expanding and modifying the “hard” elements of the system in the political, institutional, and law enforcement sectors.

It is worth noting that a wide range of coercive measures is provided precisely for the means of “hard” influence: from the pressure of non-governmental agencies through economic pressures, both positive and

negative, to the direct use of “classic” force measures that are employed to ensure peace and security (Zachara, 2012, p. 42). A particular asymmetry is evident here: powerful international actors remain outside of the influence of international regimes. For example, the World Bank, IMF, and WTO can make offers to developing countries, which will have to accept the proposed/imposed conditions. Powerful actors are not subject to these “incentives” and, having significant influence on the policies of international agencies, they themselves gain further tools in international politics. This is even more evident in relation to international peace and security. The ambitious plans of the first half of the 1990s (the Agenda for Peace) and later (the R2P concept) were often accused by less influential states of generating the threat of a “new form of colonialism and imperialism”.

From a methodological point of view, it can be said that scientific approaches that take into account global governance are “condemned” to eclecticism, which stems directly from the multidisciplinary nature of their research. There is justification for questioning (as Małgorzata Zachara and other researchers have) the ontological possibilities of diagnosing the present shape and completeness of the international system, as well as its forecasting possibilities (Zachara, 2011, p. 77). Cognitive limitations are caused by the dynamics and chaotic changeability of the environment, the emergence of new individual and collective actors, revaluations in both competence regimes and normative regimes, permanent changes in the architecture of power distribution, etc. (Pietraś, 2013, pp. 140–143). Zachara even calls global governance “an attractive commentary on contemporary international reality”, thus stripping global governance of the value of a “methodologically coherent concept” (Zachara, 2011, p. 79). Serious and legitimate criticism is also formulated at the axiological level. An extremely important assumption of the concept of global governance is the belief that international society shares not only a set of common values and beliefs but also scenarios that are built on their basis. However, the very category of “global civil society” (Pietrzak, 2013, pp. 196–200) raises serious doubts (Buzan and Little, 2011), and it should be treated as a project or an idealised vision of the future that is played out in fictional literature rather than as a description of science and reality. In the late 1980s and 1990s, many researchers, including Francis Fukuyama and Jeremy Rifkin, pointed

in their political-social and anthropological concepts to the existence of “objective” universal sets of values in both their general and sectoral dimensions (most of which have been falsified). Indeed, globalisation, the transboundary nature of information, the communication revolution, and the conditions of the modern world entail a certain unification of behaviours. However, this unification is realised rather superficially and exerts little influence on the re-valuation of deeply grounded cultural codes. Moreover, it should be observed that unification processes are accompanied by opposite reactions, which are often of a very explosive and conflict-inducing nature (Barber, 2013, pp. 77–82).

The sectoral approach seems a viable response to the criticism of global governance. Studies, reports, and documents that are generated primarily by the United Nations but also by other international agencies (Gruszko, 2013, pp. 290–291) clearly use the category of global governance in relation to specific sectors, such as sustainable development, shared global resources, partnership in development, etc. (UN, 2013, pp. 3–8). The sphere of globalised finance functions separately (Smagorowicz, 2013, p. 235). Networks are another solution: they are based on the premise of self-regulation of sectoral cooperation at the social level in order to realise common goals. However, it should be noted that these are chaotic and spontaneous realities, and it is difficult to address them in terms of coordinated and purposeful governance. Moreover, focusing on sectoral approaches negates integrated activities and even contradicts the original concept of global governance.

## Authority and power in global governance

In addition to the categories mentioned above, the concepts of authority and power (or potential power) are crucial in politics and the political sciences. Although they are different, they are inextricably linked. Global governance has a rather specific approach to these categories. The starting point is the assumption that global governance shares with liberal approaches that the system of allocation and the distribution of authority and power in the modern world have undergone thorough re-valuations. They are often described by the terms “post-Westphalian” or “late-Westphalian” (Pietraś, 2007), both of which are meant to emphasise the

increased importance of supra- and extra-state factors in international relations. Thus, authority and power are shifting to a much broader system than the international system that is linked to states (it can even be said that this system is monopolised by states). The tendency to delegate part of a state's sovereignty to supra-state actors intensified after the end of World War II, while in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this phenomenon was joined by non-governmental organisations and movements (formalised and non-formalised), transboundary organisations (multinational corporations), etc. They increase their importance and share in the global stock of power in both a formal way (by extending their competences, e.g. based on international agreements) and in an informal way (because of social, economic, political pressure, etc.). Ultimately, this leads to a significant dispersion of authority and power and to their multipolarity in the global dimension.

The factor that influences change in the nature of power is the generation of more fields of "what is political", or, in other words, an increase in the number of domains of socio-political-economic life that has resulted from the creation of new areas of reality. These processes are aggregated by technological revolutions, which open up new opportunities for competition between actors. These phenomena are largely spontaneous and are often realised away from the control and influence of states. It is necessary to return here to the levels of analysis mentioned above because the dispersion of power in different domains proceeds with different levels of speed and intensity. For example, this dispersion occurs very quickly in the areas of communication and economy, but the security sector is still under the overwhelming influence of states; however, it is certainly not justified to call it a "monopoly". The proponents of global governance acknowledge the significant role of states in contemporary international relations, but they emphasise that as the importance of other actors increases, the nature of the states' role and their power changes. The role and power of states depend on their ability to take advantage of the competitive and cooperative challenges that arise as states interact with other actors of international relations. Power is increasingly understood as the ability to determine what is legal and illegal, the ability to aggregate new norms and maintain or destroy old ones, to influence the stabilisation or destabilisation of the system, etc.

## Global governance and geopolitics – systematic reflection

Determining the relationship between global governance and geopolitics is not an easy task. This is largely due to the vagueness of global governance as a research and analytical category. Many researchers treat it as an opportunity to move beyond “traditional” geopolitical models or approaches in which the concentration of power and the pursuit of hegemony and rivalry are the main aggregates within the international game. On the basis of the definitions given at the beginning of the article, one may be tempted to favour these positions since, on the one hand, global governance is based on the assumed progressive process of the dispersion of power and authority; on the other hand, it is based on the recommendation that the model of relationships between the various international actors should be based on a cooperative paradigm. “Classic” geopolitics is based on very different premises and assumes that the rivalry within the international environment is its constitutive feature and that the pursuit of the accumulation of power and power potential is a natural and obvious pattern of behaviour in the global game (Sykulski, 2018, pp. 127–138).

It is worth mentioning here a certain paradox that emerges from the various approaches to global governance that were formulated after the 1990s. Taking the hypothesised progressive process of dispersion of power in the international system as a starting point, the proponents of this approach argued for the necessity of taking action that would lead to the creation of an integrated model in which governance would be concentrated within a single coordination centre. Critical voices argued against the creation of a “world government”. Other critics of global governance claim that it constitutes a set of “political strategies” (Zachara, 2011, p. 79) that are implemented by various international actors who compete for influence in the global dimension and often treat states as rivals. Such mechanisms can indeed be observed among hyperglobalists, but today’s approach to global governance is characterised by much greater moderation. On the other hand, efforts can be observed in geopolitics to expand “doctrine” to include other approaches, as exemplified by critical geopolitics.

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# Geopolitics and soft power

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The relationship between geopolitics and soft power is shown against the background of the concept of soft power (Nye, 2004), which can be defined as the ability of a state or a group of states to attract other states that share its political values and policies, which they adopt voluntarily. The aim of these states is to legitimise their politics by providing moral justifications that take into account the objections raised against them.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** In this section, the different theoretical approaches to soft power are juxtaposed with the way in which it is applied by international politics' most powerful actors, especially the USA, the EU and its largest member states, and China.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article presents the definitions and applications of the concept of soft power as well as its relationship with geopolitics. In particular, it determines to what extent soft power activities can contribute to the effective implementation of geopolitical goals.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** In this section of the article, it is argued that at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the soft power activities of the Western powers (USA, EU and its largest member states) were in decline. This was due to the crisis of the Western geopolitical order and the liberal values on which it was based. This crisis was exacerbated by the fact that soft power instruments were increasingly forced upon partners.

**Keywords:** soft power, geopolitics, liberal values, EU, USA, China, Russia



## What is soft power?

Power is one of the most important categories in the political sciences, especially in international relations. According to *Mały słownik języka polskiego (Concise Dictionary of the Polish Language)* PWN (1968, p. 398), power is defined as the ability to influence others in order to achieve the desired results and as the ability to influence and achieve intended outcomes. An important aspect of this definition is the achievement of results in relation to other entities as well as in relation to one's own defined goals. It is difficult to speak of power if an actor does not know what he wants to achieve. Moreover, power is relational in nature, thus it is linked with influencing other actors. Max Weber (1925) considered power to be the ability to make others do something they would not otherwise do. This definition of the term "power" has been adopted in international relations (Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p. 39; Dahl, 1957, p. 203). Weber's definition highlights the influence or even coercion exerted on other actors in order to make them do what they had not initially intended to do. The essence of power lies, therefore, in compelling others to act, either under the influence of force (compulsion) or because of the reorientation of their preferences, i.e. by changing the way they perceive their own interests.

There are various classifications of the concept of power. Raymond Aron distinguishes between power in domestic politics (in French *l'autorité*) and power in international relations (in French *la puissance*) (Aron, 1995, p. 73). In his definition, the issue of power in internal relations is of key importance as it can strengthen or weaken the potential of a given state in the international arena. In one of my studies, I drew attention to the category of "power over oneself", i.e. the self-steering of state authorities in the internal arena as an element that is crucial for the effectiveness of the foreign policy of a state (Grosse, 2019b). Weak central government or too strong an opposition can be exploited by external rivals and thus undermine a state's effectiveness in international relations. Susan Strange introduced a distinction between structural power and relational power (Strange, 1988, pp. 10, 24–25). In the former, the power of a state results in automatic structural adjustments of other actors in line with its interests but without the need for any direct political intervention. Relational power means exerting pressure

on external actors as a result of which they adjust their policy to the expectations of the dominant state. This distinction is often made with respect to international economic relations, and its essence lies in the difference between voluntary and compulsory adjustment.

The division into “hard” vs. “soft” power was introduced by Joseph Nye (2004), according to whom hard power is based on threats (the proverbial “stick”) or incentives (“the carrot”). This means that a given state or international organisation exerts pressure on other actors through coercive measures or by offering them certain benefits, for example, financial ones (Nye, 2004, p. 5). Among coercive instruments, the most radical involve military action, while others include various types of economic sanctions. In the case of incentives, the most common form is financial aid, e.g. aid that is intended for development but at the same time is subject to various political conditions.

Nye defines soft power in opposition to hard power: he recognises that it is power based on attraction and seduction, which means that a given actor appears so inspiring to others that it attracts them to itself, to its political values and policies. This facilitates voluntary adoption of the political ideas, international norms, and political values presented by this actor to other states, which result, finally, in their sharing its foreign policy goals. Common values and foreign policy goals are an important aspect of soft power, which undoubtedly facilitates international cooperation. Nye argues that while “hard power” is most often based on various forms of coercion or bribery, “soft power” is primarily voluntary. He also classifies soft power as the possibility of influencing the preferences of other actors. This means that the aim of broadly understood diplomacy and the shaping of ideas and narratives in the international space is to change the preferences (and thus the perception of their own interests) of the elites and societies of other states. Finally, an important aspect of soft power is the ability to legitimise foreign policy in the eyes of other states, i.e. a state’s ability to gain moral justification for pursuing a given policy (Nye, 2004, p. 11).

Nye’s concept has provoked a great deal of criticism. Above all, it was observed that even if America is attractive in terms of mass culture and consumption, this does not mean that other states will follow the goals of the US government’s policy. The societies in most Islamic countries like Coca-Cola and Big Macs and yet they spare no love for America

(Ferguson, 2003). Others denounced this concept for its lack of clarity in the separation between soft and hard power. Sometimes, promotional or propaganda activities performed by a state can be coercive (Hill, 2015, p. 144). Frequently, it is difficult to distinguish the political motivations of submissive actors in foreign policy as various instruments of power will often play a role that can be both coercive and incentive at the same time. Cultural attractiveness or shared values can also be a factor. Geopolitical goals cannot be effectively achieved based on soft power alone (for example, those concerning efficient diplomacy or the promotion of values in foreign policy). It seems that without the support of hard power measures, including military, economic, and financial measures, an actor can hardly hope to succeed in this area. Therefore, the use of soft power instruments without the support of financial resources or coercive measures can lead to weakness. Weakness has limited appeal: it results in disregard or it provokes exploitive intentions on the part of its rivals. Nye later modified his concept and spoke of the need to use a variety of instruments, both “hard” and “soft” depending on the circumstances, which he termed “smart power” (2008, pp. 43, 83). As one researcher put it, “soft power sources can reinforce hard power and vice versa” (Piskorska, 2017, p. 75); soft power is only one of the instruments for achieving the desired results (Piskorska, 2017, p. 78).

Many scientists highlight the role of culture and the power of persuasion in building authority and legitimacy for policies in international relations (Lebow 2008). Soft power also resembles Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “symbolic power” (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). It consists in the ability of the dominant actor to impose on those dominated a particular vision of the world and a way of perceiving and evaluating particular phenomena. Although Bourdieu’s considerations relate primarily to domestic politics, they can also be extended to the relationship between stronger and weaker states. For many scientists, Western values – especially those concerning liberal human rights and the functioning of the economy – constitute soft power resources for the foreign policy of the US, European states, and various international organisations, primarily the European Union (Chitty, 2017, p. 19).

Researchers from other cultures consider these resources to be an element of cultural violence, somewhat reminiscent of the concept of “symbolic power”. They serve the purpose of achieving geopolitical and

economic domination over other parts of the world that are considered less civilised, peripheral, and are characterised by weaker economic growth. Fei Jiang (2017) claims that in the era of colonialism and the industrial revolution, the greatest powers of the Western world developed a dichotomy of civilised and barbaric nations. This served to transfer values, norms, and behaviours from the more developed Western culture to the East in order to promote cultural standards and support progress and modernisation. More importantly, this type of narrative, i.e. soft power instruments, served to subordinate other states to the greatest European powers on a geopolitical and economic level. Later, in the post-colonial era, soft power mechanisms were intended to lead to a similar geopolitical and economic dependence of states considered peripheral or originating from cultures other than Western ones. The only difference was that the narrative shifted towards liberalism, especially with reference to the catalogue of values being promoted. Moreover, the USA became the primary power that exploited these values. These values were used to ideologically change social attitudes in other regions of the world and allow the Western world leadership in setting the norms and patterns to be followed on a global scale. The aim was also to limit indigenous cultures in other parts of the world and thus also limit the cultural resources they need to shape their own autonomy and sovereignty.

Fei Jiang indicates two important mechanisms that accompany soft power. The first refers to the category of “power over oneself”. Indigenous culture, values, and tradition are treated as being the foundations of one’s identity, strength, and self-confidence in international relations. Without such resources, neither sovereignty nor even autonomy is possible in relations with the greatest external powers, especially the US and the largest EU states. Local cultural resources are therefore a source of not only agency but also of authority in international relations. They also allow less emulation of external models, especially emulation that leads to thoughtless imitation and dependence on external geopolitical centres. The second phenomenon consists in instilling in the societies of peripheral states an inferiority complex towards the civilisational leaders of the international community. This contributes to some local elites aspiring to conform to models from the West, initially ideologically, but later also economically and politically.



This is reminiscent of the phenomenon of “cultural self-colonisation” that has been diagnosed in Central Europe (Kiossev, 1999, pp. 114–118) and which stems from believing in the superiority of Western European culture and values but results in losing the ability to establish a more partner-like relationship with the Western part of the continent. The greatest success of this soft power is the creation of an avant-garde of “self-colonising” local elites who, in the name of the liberal values of the West, voluntarily submit to the political and economic goals of other states, primarily the USA or the largest states of Western Europe.

Nye predicted that soft power would eventually become an increasingly important field of activity in international relations (Nye 2004, p. 30). However, it is difficult to agree with him that the voluntary adjustment mechanisms, which are dictated by common values and ideals, will gain in importance. I previously argued (Grosse, 2019a) that the role of “power politics” has grown in recent years. In this article, I will attempt to prove that soft power instruments are also increasingly used as means of coercion and a way to achieve geopolitical goals.

## Soft power in the service of geopolitics

The term “geopolitics” appeared in the social sciences in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its interpretations draw on the two main schools of international relations: realism and liberalism. In its classical meaning that originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, geopolitics is understood as rivalry between great powers for authority and territory or for power in the geographical dimension (Flint, 2012, pp. 31, 39; Ó Tuathail, 2006, p. 1; Cowen and Smith, 2009, p. 23). This interpretation is advocated within the school of realism in international relations. An important assumption of this school is the belief in the existence of “objective” geopolitical interests, which can also be defined as the “raison d’état” of a given state and result from the external structural and geographical factors that are present in the international arena. From the perspective of realism, internal determinants can only be considered relevant in the context of creating the potential of a given state (e.g. economic potential), but not, for example, in shaping “subjective” interpretations regarding geopolitical interests. Realists are aware of the role played by soft power instruments but treat

them as secondary or complementary to the most important geopolitical potentials. Edward Carr (1964, p. 108) recognises that, alongside military and economic power, there is a third category, which is the power of opinion. Hans Morgenthau claimed (1948, p. 129) that the quality of government and diplomacy, as well as the morale of a given nation, constitute an important source of power.

In the liberal approach, internal determinants (including the dominant political ideas) and deliberations on the interpretation of the strategic situation are of great importance for the formation of interests. The final assessment of geopolitical interests is therefore not objective and is not so much a derivative of external determinants as the result of pressure exerted by the most influential economic and social interests or the outcome of public debate on the foreign policy of a given state. The liberal approach to geopolitics is related to a way of “seeing” the world (Flint, 2012, p. 33), i.e. the dominant political ideology or the political paradigm present in a given community. This way of “seeing” the world focuses on “grand strategy” and the mechanisms of its construction in domestic politics. Such an approach emphasises the role of soft power – primarily the leading ideas and narratives – both in shaping geopolitical assumptions and in their subsequent implementation in foreign policy. In the liberal assumptions of geopolitics, cultural phenomena and the related spheres of discourse, ideology, and diplomacy become not only the leading tools in international relations but can also pose a certain constraint for decision-makers. This means that relationships based on similar values and ideas may be favoured, while actors who deviate from these standards may be perceived as potential enemies. Thus, within the liberal approach, differences in interests that may be economic or geopolitical, for example, seem to be less important to politicians in their assessment of the international situation than ideological conflicts.

In my opinion, the practice in international relations is getting ever closer to the way in which the realistic model perceives soft power. Many actors attempt to use soft means of exerting influence in foreign policy, but this is increasingly done through coercion and conditionality in order to secure the greatest possible (but not always symmetrical) advantages in relations with other states. Narratives and values can be used instrumentally for geopolitical purposes: for example, they can be employed to justify one’s actions in response to national and

international public opinion, or to weaken a rival by denigrating its policies in relation to specific values.

## Discussion of the term – selected examples

The dissemination of ideas, values, and norms in international relations is an example of the use of soft power. The European Union is considered a “normative power” because it influenced other states on a normative level, including disseminating its own regulatory solutions (Whitman, 2011). The transfer of standards to the international environment may result from their attractiveness, at which point the imitation of such solutions would be voluntary; however, it may be asymmetrically beneficial for the “international law-giver” and thus burdened with conditions or other means of enforcing their application. It seems that this type of phenomenon is becoming increasingly common (Hill, 2015, p. 144).

This is exemplified by the functioning of the “normative power”, i.e. the EU. The accession process of new EU members consisted in the forced transfer to candidates of European norms and values, including the entire body of EU law, essentially without the possibility of negotiation (except for the introduction of transitional periods needed to adopt these norms in national law). A similar situation occurs when a state leaves the EU, or at least it would seem to, based on the experience of Brexit. The rest of the community tried to impose conditions for leaving the EU on the United Kingdom that would primarily benefit the members of the Union. One of these was Brussels’ desire for London to adopt the largest possible scope of European law and grant the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) the right to resolve disputes in this matter (Grosse, 2018, 2019c). The main argument of European negotiators was to maintain fair competition rules on both sides of the English Channel (referred to as a level playing field), but the intention was primarily for the EU to gain an advantage over the British by being able to set these standards and the right to settle potential disputes (von der Burchard, 2020). This would give Brussels tremendous regulatory power that could be used to obtain unilateral benefits for EU economic entities and citizens. On a geopolitical level, the result would be to increase the economic potential of the largest EU states whilst also making the

United Kingdom dependent on Brussels in economic and regulatory terms.

Another example of EU regulatory actions was their attempts – intensified after the Euro zone crisis – to thoroughly rebuild the internal market. The aim was to protect this market from the largest non-European competitors, primarily American and Chinese companies. Other regulatory changes concerned increasing the competitiveness of Western European companies and reducing the competitiveness of states from the eastern part of the EU. The aim was to improve economic growth in the western part of the continent and thus support the geopolitical position of its two largest member states, i.e. Germany and France (Grosse, 2020).

An example of coercive action in relation to European values was the pressure exerted on Poland, Hungary, and other Central European states to respect the rule of law. According to politicians mainly from the Western European states, respecting these values had to be imposed by force, either with the use of pressure from the CJEU or with the threat of suspending or even withdrawing EU funds for such states. Attempts to enforce European values have clearly shown that they are not attractive enough to be complied with voluntarily. The soft power of the Union and thus its ability to seduce turned out to be too weak for even EU members. Underlying the dispute over the rule of law were serious differences of interests and other contradictions between the leading states of Western Europe and the Central European states. The dispute over the rule of law was instrumentally used in geopolitical rivalry within the EU, primarily over the hierarchy of power between individual states and over the future directions of European integration.

It seems that soft power at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was increasingly questioned and undermined by numerous opponents. This was the case with Washington's criticism of China for violating the human rights of the ethnic and religious Uighur minority, for example. This was intended to reduce the authority of the PRC in international relations and thus make it difficult for Beijing to expand its economic and geopolitical influence. However, for many years American soft power has been the object of criticism from Western European states, primarily France and Germany. America has repeatedly been accused of violating its own liberal values on the international forum. The first culmination of

accusations of hypocrisy in the policy of this superpower was the war in Iraq (after 2003); the second was the presidency of Donald Trump (after 2017).

The EU itself has also been attacked for applying double standards to both its own members and its external partners. In 2016, the Visegrad Group countries were widely criticised in the western part of the EU for rejecting the mechanisms of forced refugee relocation and for proposing the closure of the EU's external borders. Yet, in 2020, the three presidents of the EU institutions travelled to Greece to support its defence of the state's border against the influx of illegal immigrants and refugees from Turkey and tacitly accepted the decision of the Greek authorities to suspend the asylum application procedure (which violated United Nations law) (Stamouli, 2020). The European Commission shied away from investigating the existence of secret prisons for immigrants in Greece that were revealed by the press, despite the fact that a few years earlier such prisons had been investigated and criticised in Hungary (Nielsen, 2020).

The European Union faced a dramatic choice: remain faithful to its professed values and thus authenticate its soft power, or defend European integration and the security of its member states. Most European voters opposed excessive immigration. Thus, the "open door" policy (the so-called *Willkommenskultur*, proposed by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2015) undermined support for integration and politically destabilised almost all member states. Moreover, the pressure of migration became a geopolitical weapon. The Austrian Chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, accused Turkey of using migrants to blackmail the EU on geopolitical issues in 2020, in return expecting support in the Syrian conflict with Russia. According to Kurz, immigrants became weapons used to attack Greece and the entire EU (PAP, 2020). The refugees crisis ceased to be treated as a human rights issue in Europe and instead became a serious challenge in terms of geopolitics and internal policy.

Furthermore, the soft power of the European Union came under enormous pressure due to behind-the-scenes efforts undertaken by the Russian Federation and the PRC, which supported radical and populist forces within the Union. In this way, destructive actions became an increasingly widespread and seemingly easier form of soft power than positive politics, which disseminates its own values, norms, and ideas.

The geopolitical opponents of the West (mainly Russia and China) were particularly critical of liberal values, such as standards of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Both these states were moderately successful in promoting their own cultural values and political models as alternatives to those of the West. Previously, they had been the propagators of communist ideology, which was expected to undermine the soft power of the West significantly. However, the attractiveness of these ideas waned, and attempts that were undertaken by these states to return to their own cultural roots resulted in a loss of universality, thus making them unattractive to other nations. Therefore, both states focused on negating Western normative models in order to weaken the West and its unity and legitimacy as a global leader.

A certain exception was the activities of the PRC, which initiated its large-scale geoeconomic investments under the banner of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013. Their goal was to expand Beijing's economic and geopolitical influence beyond its immediate neighbourhood, reaching into Southern and Central Europe, among other regions. Soft power instruments played an important role in this initiative, especially the narrative of peace and cooperation, international harmony, openness to other states, trust and dialogue, mutual learning, and multilateral benefits (Winter, 2020). Chinese authorities tried to relate their message to the values of their own civilisation and thus build a model of globalisation that was an alternative to the one promoted by the USA. It was an attempt to contrast their own cultural model with the model that had been promoted by the West – a model that, in principle, was intended to promote liberal values but in fact led to the dependence of partners and the use of their resources. This narrative was immediately criticised by Washington. American officials exposed the PRC's approach, pointing out that Chinese investments lead not only to the exploitation of the resources of the states participating in the initiative but also to their indebtedness and de facto economic and geopolitical dependence on the Middle Kingdom (Politi and Sevastopulo, 2019). It is also worth noting that the soft power exercised by the PRC had all the characteristics of the “constructivist method” (Grosse, 2014/2015): it created a new geopolitical reality, legitimised it in relation to the set of desired values and, finally, aimed to hide the potential costs and dysfunctions of the promoted investments.

The narrative that accompanied Chinese foreign investment was an exception. In the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the positive face of soft power was mainly represented by the broadly understood Western world, primarily the USA, the EU, and its member states. Nevertheless, there were problems with the use of soft power by these actors that resulted from the crisis of the liberal geopolitical order and liberal values. The various divisions between the Western states were of great importance here. In this way, the geopolitical order, in which the USA and its closest allies played a dominant role, was eroded. Economic crises were another problem that most acutely affected the USA and the EU and compromised the neo-liberal doctrine of the economy, which is dominant in this part of the world. Additionally, they were unable to develop an effective mutual response to China's growing geoeconomic advantage. Attempts by the liberal West to apply protectionist solutions violated its own economic canons and were not primarily directed against its greatest geopolitical rival, i.e. the PRC; instead, they largely contributed to the deepening of the transatlantic divide. The problem for most Western powers was the increasingly apparent hypocrisy and the application of double standards in domestic and foreign relations. Nye believed (2004, p. 14) that this undermined their ability to use soft power and, especially, to promote their own values and regulations in the international arena. What posed an additional problem for the EU was the fact that reliance on soft power was intended to become the main instrument in its external policy, which was supposed to hide the shortcomings of other geopolitical potentials, especially military power and adequate fiscal and decision-making capacity at the EU level. This approach has failed, as is largely evidenced by the willingness of European leaders to make the European Commission, with its new members under the leadership of Ursula von der Leyen taking office in 2019, a more geopolitically oriented body which would use instruments other than soft power in its external policy (Subotić, 2019).

The Union's eastern policy, more specifically the Eastern Partnership, is an example that demonstrates the problem the Union has with its own soft power, which has been relatively unattractive on the one hand and insufficiently backed by other power resources on the other. This policy is based on EU financial aid, which aims to promote European legal standards and liberal values on the Union's eastern border. However, this

policy is considered minimalist and ineffective, primarily because the EU funds involved are relatively modest. Additionally, Brussels is unwilling to offer the members of the Eastern Partnership what could be the greatest incentive to encourage them to adopt EU standards, i.e. the prospect of membership in the EU (Barburska, 2019; Piskorska, 2017). Moreover, the Eastern Partnership faces a hostile reception from Moscow, which considers it an expansion of the EU into the area of Russia's exclusive influence. The Russian Federation aggressively responded to this EU initiative: it resorted to both soft instruments (by denouncing the EU's policy and winning over the elites in Eastern Europe to its side) and hard instruments (in the form of military interventions in the states such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia). In this way, Russia further weakened the effectiveness of the EU's soft power.

The European Union found itself trapped in its own narrative of "normative power". It limited its own actions to the catalogue of soft power instruments but did so in a conservative manner in order not to irritate Russia, among others. Additionally, the pacifism that is widespread among Western European societies and the "security umbrella" that is stretched over Europe by the US limited any ambitions to build "hard" measures in external policy. According to researchers, Europe's choice of soft power was dictated by economic factors (Hill, 2015, p. 145) because it is much cheaper than military measures. In this way, the costs of defending the Old Continent could be largely transferred to the USA, and the funds saved could be used on developing a welfare system. The problem, however, arose when Western Europe decided to strive for strategic autonomy from Washington and NATO. Depriving itself of support from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the Union must build its security and international influence on its soft power instruments, which have turned out to be relatively weak.

## Conclusions

Military power, wealth, a highly developed economy, and artistic culture inspire awe and fascination and encourage their voluntary emulation, which is commonly referred to as soft power. Nevertheless, when unsupported by other dimensions of power, soft power does not lead



to effective politics. It is neither very attractive nor does it encourage imitation by other actors in international relations. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, international rivalry intensified and soft power became an area of fierce competition between the great powers, in which the most common strategy was to negate a rival's soft power. At the same time, states attempted to convince others to adopt their own values, ideas, and political goals, with varying levels of success. Soft power was thus used to legitimise a state's own policies and gain authority in the international arena. It remained a very important area of geopolitical influence, i.e. of the implementation of foreign policy strategies. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the soft power of the Western superpowers (the US, the EU, and its largest member states) was in trouble, primarily as a result of the crisis of the Western geopolitical order and the liberal values on which this order was based. An element of this crisis was also the fact that the instruments of soft power used by these actors were increasingly imposed on their partners, which further reduced the attractiveness of this "soft" policy.

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# Geopolitics, economics and economies

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The links between geopolitics and economics arise as a result of competition for limited resources. This article discusses how the geopolitical context of this competition entered economic discourse.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** In the late Middle Ages, when Europe followed a path of rapid development, the economy became a key and game-changing resource in the rivalry between states. The history of economic development in the age of capitalism is outlined in the article with reference to geopolitical issues; the article also presents the history of Poland's economic development in recent centuries.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** Evaluated through the prism of geopolitics, the key actors in economies are states. The article describes the role of states in the context of geoeconomic competition, in which the potential for development has been a major resource for several hundred years.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** In recent centuries, geopolitics has had a huge impact on the economic development of Poland. Building political and economic links, with the West in particular, has been beneficial to Poland, while breaking these links (e.g. in the interwar period) has resulted in the loss of markets and developmental potential.

**Keywords:** the economy, economics, geopolitics



## Definition of the term

Economics is the science of managing limited resources; it is in competing for these resources that economics and geopolitics coincide. The factors of production (such as labour, capital, and land), which are necessary for the manufacture and supply of goods and services, are the starting point in economic analyses and the subject of geopolitical considerations. Economics adopts a cautious approach to geographic determinism and often sees it in terms of competitive and comparative advantages. Within (new) economic geography, which is developing as a branch of economic studies, attention is paid to location, in particular in relation to the centres of global economy, and a substantial number of empirical studies in economics take this spatial dimension into account. However, none of these fields of science are normative in character.

Economics deals with development and therefore, to some extent, with the building of economic potential as a natural way to create political advantage (cf. Sandmo, 2011). The tools of economic analysis enable analysis of the determinants investigated by geopolitics: the relationships between states, their strategies, their sources of strength, and the causes of weakness within these mutual relations. In the tradition of European economic thought and economic policy theory, the economic sources of a state's power appeared as a topic of interest very early on. The systematic building of a state's power in order to gain advantage over its neighbours underlies the first modern system of political economy, i.e. mercantilism.

Beginning with Jean Bodin, mercantilist theoreticians emphasised the crucial role of industrial development in building a state's power and the necessity to maintain a trade surplus in order to maximise gold resources. In order to do this, in the 18th century protectionist politics were advocated to protect industry, which in turn attracted artisans and supported the import of unprocessed goods and the export of processed goods. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this model of economic policy was criticised by Adam Smith, the founder of modern academic economics. He believed that English protectionism benefited the empire at the expense of the impoverishment of its citizens. Along with his pupil David Ricardo, Smith laid the foundations for the theory of international trade that challenged mercantilist ideas: trade between countries was

supposed to lead to specialisation based on available comparative advantage and was in effect a non-zero-sum game (in game theory terms). This benefited all parties of the exchange. Further development of neoclassical economics and the theory of international trade that emphasised the multilateral benefits of *laisse faire* and of lowering trade barriers can be seen as concepts that challenged the determinism of geopolitical thinking. Early theories of trade (such as Ricardo's theory) were based on rigorous but often unrealistic assumptions. The progressive development of theories weakened some of these assumptions and broadened the understanding of the benefits of trade and specialisation, including the role of the factors of production, such as land and capital, in the process of specialisation. A relative abundance of capital should result in specialisation in capital-intensive production, while a relative abundance of labour should result in specialisation in labour-intensive production. Contemporary theoretical developments have allowed the issue of specialisation and the benefits of exchange to become even more nuanced.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, recognition of the importance of mercantilist concepts featured at certain points and served as a recurring reference point in debates on national security and deliberations on economic relations, sources of power, and the economic position of states. In periods of slowdowns and recessions, the concept of saving one's relative economic potential at the expense of others (a beggar-thy-neighbour policy) gained significance. This policy was based on the use of mercantilist instruments, including the protection of one's industry through tariff and non-tariff barriers, and the improvement of its international competitiveness using exchange rate policy.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new, unorthodox trends in economic theory were gaining importance alongside classical economics, which was also still developing. These more unorthodox trends questioned the mercantilist approach to international trade and reconsidered the relationships between a state's economic strength and national security. The historical schools, especially the German historical school, played an important role in economics. Its founder, Friedrich List, advocated a shift from the perspective of individual interests towards the interests of a nation. A state should care for the development of the nation's power using economic instruments (customs duties, public investments, transport



infrastructure) even if this was contrary to the interests and goals of the individual. Therefore, List advocated a return to mercantilism.

Conclusions of a geopolitical nature can also be derived from Karl Marx's historiosophical concept. In his view, the history of the development of capitalist relations is the history of domination within societies but also the domination of the West over the rest of the world. The tools of this domination are the market and trade, specifically the way trade is conducted. The new capitalist methods of organising production, which irreversibly disturbed old economic relations, created the conditions for European imperialism, understood as domination of the West over the periphery. In this view, the development of capitalism becomes equated with the geopolitical objectives of the Western European empires. This idea was later further developed by Immanuel Wallerstein, among others, and Marxist and socialist concepts underpinned world-systems theory, dependency theory, and the structuralist approach to economics. These concepts take into account differing aspects of political interests that are variously defined within economic policy; above all, they attempt to explain the structure of economic relations in a world that is divided into centres and peripheries (between which Wallerstein later placed semi-periphery countries, such as Poland). Centres are areas of dynamic development that are the result of economic, political, and civilisational influences, while the development of peripheries is dependent on the centres (dependent development). This model of development allows the centre to maintain the stable structure of the world economy by its participation in it and in the international division of labour; however, this model makes it practically impossible for peripheries to bridge the gap. This is because the rules for the functioning of the world economy are set by the centre, which controls the flow of the factors of production, including labour and capital. Import substitution industrialisation, which is a concept of development based on excluding oneself from the world economy and bridging the gap while remaining in autarky, allows a state to compete with the leaders of the global economy on equal terms. Introduced in South America in the post-war period, this strategy ended in failure and brought about several years of economic crises in various countries on the continent.

Unorthodox approaches to geopolitics and economics that originated from the tradition of Wallerstein's world-economy studies use the term

“geopolitical economics”. The key point here is to look to the past and analyse the links between European colonialism and imperialism and the development of capitalism.

## Geoeconomics

The foundations of contemporary attempts to apply economic policy instruments in the globalised world while taking into account geopolitics were laid by Edward Luttwak, among others. He proposed the concept of “geoeconomics”, which he used to describe the world as an arena in which the rivalry between states-systems is played out. The rules of this rivalry are determined by “objective” economic mechanisms and “subjective” regulations that have developed because of cooperation between states. The objective economic mechanisms that set the boundaries of economic rivalry are described by economic theory (Blackwill and Harris, 2016). States compete under these conditions; economic instruments become the new weapons or “the equivalent of firepower, the development of state-subsidised products becomes the equivalent of the invention of new weapons, and state-supported penetration of foreign markets replaces military bases and garrisons located outside a state’s borders and a state’s diplomatic efforts” (Luttwak, 1998).

Blackwill and Harris (2016) called geoeconomics “war by other means” and indicated that this term describes the use of economic tools to realise national interests. Their proper use allows geopolitical objectives to become a reality and vice versa: external economic policy can influence the achievement of geopolitical objectives.

Strategies of economic policy which can be assigned to the category of geoeconomics are distinguished from geopolitics by the nature of competition. While politics (especially war) is a zero-sum game, the economy is a positive-sum game: everyone stands to gain from the processes of development and globalisation. The flow of capital, goods, services, and labour increasingly determine the power of states. In the near future, geoeconomics may be used to determine the outcome of geopolitical rivalries; what distinguishes geoeconomics from traditional economic thinking is its recognition of the role of the state. Luttwak (1990) wrote that the key actors in geoeconomics are those states which pursue their

objectives by using the traditional tools of international politics (including war) and the tools of economic policy.

The structure of relations between states today is determined by the categories of development/underdevelopment and centre/periphery. A state's power is its political and military power, but in the world of global capitalism this is increasingly defined by its economic relations. Developed states have an economic advantage, which generally means that they are the states at the centre. It is impossible to assess how stable this structure is.

## Geopolitics and the history of capitalism

Karl Marx identified the links between the development of European capitalism and the civilisational, global, and geopolitical success of the West. Later, further links between the development of institutions, the dynamics of innovation (technological, organisational, military, and political), and the scale of the success of European civilisation were described by researchers of the economic history of the world (North and Tomas, 1973; Morris, 2010). When Europe embarked on a path of rapid development at the end of the Middle Ages, the economy became the key game-changing resource in the rivalry between states (whereas geographical location and the size of the population had previously been more important). In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the civilisational and political careers of Spain and Portugal, which were located on the edge of Europe, were linked to their becoming maritime colonial empires, which briefly made them Europe's largest economies. The success of the United Provinces of the northern Netherlands can be attributed primarily to the formation of a modern capitalist economy. Their relatively advantageous location is not sufficient to explain this phenomenon, but it played a key role in the success of the Netherlands, i.e. its position in the world economy that it obtained through the development of trade, banking, and export-oriented manufacturing. In particular, its location in the centre of Europe was crucial as it guaranteed its proximity to markets and access to the sea in an area that was the object of marked rivalry between France and Germany. Thus, the Netherlands obtained privileges from each rival, although this was a risky strategy at times.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Netherlands competed with Britain, and the building of Britain's imperial position required protectionist politics accompanied by regulatory support for its own enterprises. The economic resources generated by the Industrial Revolution proved crucial to achieving the status of a hegemonic power. Like the Netherlands (in earlier times) and the US (later on), after achieving the status of being the global technological leader and financial centre of the world, Great Britain became an advocate of free trade and promoted this in its politics. The state of balance in which British dominance was sustained by bilateral free trade agreements and the primacy of the pound as the basis of the gold-standard system in global financial markets is called *Pax Britannica*. A similar model of hegemonic politics which was particularly beneficial to the US (although no one in the US sphere of influence could be called a loser) was called *Pax Americana*. This was based on peace and free trade in much of the post-World War II world and resulted from US politics and the activities of the global economic organisations that sustained it. The periods of *Pax Britannica* and *Pax Americana* were times of rapid global economic growth and relative political stability. Nevertheless, the English policy of promoting free trade in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the American policy of building a global economy after World War II can be interpreted from the positions of unorthodox trends in economics, as subordinated to the interests of Britain and the USA (Lubbe, 1994; O'Rourke and Williamson, 1999).

Following on from Wallerstein, the successes of the great powers of the Atlantic region (especially the Netherlands, Great Britain, and the USA) that held their hegemonic position in the world with the use of economic tools can be directly linked with the development of global capitalism. In this view, global capitalism is an economic system that petrifies global economic relations by breaking up local structures of the production of goods and services and by transforming traditional producers into workers and integrating them into global production chains. In the long term, because of the breakdown of social and political structures, peripheral countries (in relation to the centre of global capitalism) are reduced to the role of subcontractors, providers of labour resources, and purchasers of capital and processed goods. The dissemination of capitalism is thus at the same time the formation of the periphery of the

global economy. The exchange between the periphery and the centre is not equal: the periphery loses or it gains less. This was the case at the time of the slave trade, when the non-European peripheries became the raw material base of the West. It is the same now, when they are subcontractors for the manufacturing sector. The West still controls the key links in most production chains (or at least it did until recently) (Wallerstein, 2011).

Neoclassical economics terminology provides a description of the tools used to maintain or violate the geopolitical *status quo* (especially trade policy tools and industrial policy tools) in conditions of constant developmental and political competition. In contrast, unorthodox approaches to economics and geopolitics lead to the conclusion that the West (or the centre of the world economy) uses structural violence to maintain the structure of the global economy and politics. One of the most important tools of this structure is the capitalist economy, in which economic competition, supported by states, becomes a new form of warfare. This is possible under the conditions of global economic competition with the use of wide-ranging instruments that can be used in the competition for economic and political hegemony (Luttwak, 1990, 1998; Blackwill and Harris 2016).

## Geopolitics and globalisation

Over the past four or five centuries, the aforementioned process of economic development has led to the formation of a global economic order, which at first encompassed the Atlantic region (Europe and the USA) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and eventually covered the whole world (Lubbe 1994). The direction of the flow of goods, services, and people changed considerably, which affected the ability of international policy actors (primarily states) to achieve their strategic (geopolitical) objectives and defend their national interests.

Globalisation is a process that involves increasing the exchange of goods and services, as a result of which international trade increasingly affects the shape and dynamics of the development of national economies and at the same time strengthens the power of economic policy tools (e.g. customs duties or tariffs). This phase of globalisation

is followed by global flows of labour (mass labour migrations, initiated by migrations to the USA), the establishment of international economic organisations (in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and transnational companies. Finally, it is complemented by the global circulation of information and international finance. The global circulation of information leads to the world “shrinking”: knowledge of what is happening on the opposite side of the globe is as easily and quickly accessible as knowledge of what is happening locally. International finance, the scale of which is beginning to outgrow the size of most national economies, weakens the power of nation-states (except for the largest ones). Thus, control over the flow of investment and information becomes a key element of geopolitical competition (O’Rourke and Williamson, 1999).

Subsequent waves of globalisation have also changed the economic map of the world and contributed to the modernisation of peripheral regions. This modernisation is a dynamic process. Until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Europe was the key area in terms of the dynamics of development, accumulated wealth, and production volume; however, its place has gradually been taken by Asia (mainly Japan, Korea, and China). The area of geopolitical rivalry shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the first sign of which was the Japanese-American War. In recent years, China has become a beneficiary of the globalisation process as it has risen to join the group of global economic powers. Thus, it can be said that the development of global capitalism, and later globalisation, has made geopolitical competition an element of geo-economic rivalry.

## Geopolitical determinants of development in Poland – from intellectual disputes to development policy<sup>1</sup>

In Poland, attempts to analyse the economic determinants of its geopolitical position appeared as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Poles became increasingly aware of Poland’s relative underdevelopment in relation to other European countries.

1 This section is based on Koryś (2018).

This awareness can be found as early as the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century in works by Stefan Garczyński and King Stanisław Leszczyński that criticised its economic system. From a perspective close to mercantilism, they pointed out that Poland's economic system impeded development and prevented the building of a strong state capable of pursuing an effective tax policy and fielding a modern army. As an example worth following, Garczyński mentioned Prussia, which was experiencing an economic boom at the time thanks to Friedrichs' policy of cameralism.

These issues were permanently revisited during debates on the reforms introduced by Stanisław August Poniatowski and during the Great Sejm. Stanisław Konarski sought ways of pursuing mercantilist policy in Poland so that the resulting growing wealth would allow Poland to rebuild its power and importance. The economic concepts formulated by Staszic and Kołłątaj, among others, led to the conclusion that the state's income should be increased to enable civilisational development (including the development of education) and the building of an army.

The outcomes of political and social inequalities were noticed, and the intellectuals in Kołłątaj's circle attributed Poland's lower birth rate in comparison to its neighbouring countries to the poor legal, social, and economic situation of peasants, which eventually resulted in the state's relative weakness. Like Konarski, the mercantilists sought to improve the balance of foreign trade, which would have had to involve the development of towns. Political determinants thus led to the formulation of economic concepts designed to rebuild Poland's strength on the international arena or merely to save its sovereignty.

The period of the Partitions of Poland changed the object of Poles' intellectual fascination with the West. Apart from England and the Netherlands, which were treated as models of civilisational progress, this map now also included Prussia (previously highly spoken of by Garczyński) and France, which were the two countries that had a direct impact on the fate of Polish territories in this period. After the Third Partition, Prussia and Austria occupied the most developed Polish lands. The fascination of Poles with the cameralist model of development, in which the state becomes the engine of industrialisation, is evident during the times of the Duchy of Warsaw as well as in the economic policy of the constitutional period of the Kingdom of Poland (the so-called Congress Kingdom). Staszic and Franciszek Ksawery Drucki-Lubecki initiated the building of

modern economic districts using state funds. In the geopolitical situation of the time, these were expected to lead to civilisational success through using the connections that had been built between Poland and Russia. The Congress Kingdom became the industrial base of the Russian Empire and a bridge connecting Russia with Europe. The goal was for economic cooperation to lead to rebuilding the relationship between Russia and the Congress Kingdom (which formally was in personal union with Russia but in fact was its protectorate) into a more equal partnership, hoping that economic development would lead to autonomy or even sovereignty for this part of the Polish lands.

The economic alliance with Russia had many critics. Dominik Krysiński, a proponent of the concept of stages of development, was convinced that the (technological and economic) development of agriculture must be preceded by the spontaneous development of industry and trade. He did not believe that skipping stages of development through state mediation would bring positive results. In the same spirit, Fryderyk Skarbek was critical of the politics advocated by Staszic and Drucki-Lubecki. He doubted the rationality of developing any industry not related to a state's needs (i.e. internal demand), but he saw more advantages than threats in excessive economic rapprochement with Russia. He believed that the prosperity of the manufacturing sector should be built spontaneously on the basis of the needs and wealth of Poland and not solely reliant on trade with Russia, as this could lead to greater dependence on the Tsardom of Russia instead of prosperity and greater independence.

Another issue that was present in the disputes of that time was the development of cities and the bourgeoisie, which some argued could counteract economic underdevelopment. Krysiński and Skarbek and later Wawrzyniec Surowiecki were the proponents of this path of civilisational development, which was based on urbanisation processes and the development of "handicrafts" and trade. Surowiecki observed that underdeveloped nations were concerned only with satisfying their basic needs, while in modern nations the pursuit of comfort and the satisfaction of new needs triggered entrepreneurship and paved the way to prosperity.

After the November Uprising, ideas for the development of Polish territories took on a regional character as the needs of the inhabitants



of Wielkopolska, the Congress Kingdom, and Galicia were different. The geopolitical dimension in Polish economic thought lost its *raison d'être* as Poland as a state no longer existed (along with any hope for its return). The disintegration of the national economy was the consequence of Poland's collapse.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it once again became important to take a broader look at Poland's development from a geopolitical perspective, especially among economists. Rosa Luxemburg, who held radical leftist views, was of the opinion that Polish territories in the 19<sup>th</sup> century began to melt slowly and organically into the partitioning states, which was especially true of the Kingdom of Poland's union with Russia. In the process of industrialisation, Poland ceased to be an independent economic organism; however, many socialists believed that an independent Poland would enable the realisation of socialist social and political commitments, including the emancipation of the proletariat and the peasantry.

National democrats emphasised the conflict between Poles and the administration of the partitioning states, which posed a threat to Polish national identity. At the same time, they also highlighted the threats that resulted from cosmopolitan capitalism in Polish territories, including the fact that the absence of a national state limited any possibility for the formation of a Polish bourgeoisie. Reymont's novel entitled "*The Promised Land*" became a manifesto of this critical view of the development of capitalism on Polish soil.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, statistical yearbooks published by Władysław Grabski, Edward Strasburger, Adam Krzyżanowski, and Kazimierz Kumaniecki, among others, were an important form of economic narratives. By defining the statistical and demographic features of the Polish nation and the expected shape of the state, this discourse, which is neutral in the technical sense that it is based solely on numbers, became at the same time a political discourse. These geopolitical barriers to the future development of Poland were also noticed by politicians, including the two great advocates of Poland's independence, Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski. Piłsudski formulated the concept of Intermarium [Międzymorze], a federation of Central and Eastern European states, while Dmowski (in his work *Germany, Russia and the Polish Question [Niemcy, Rosja a sprawa polska]*) called for the borders

of the state to be defined along ethnic lines which would help reduce ethnic conflicts but also would exclude the least developed areas from Polish territory.

Geopolitical and geoeconomic determinants of development were discussed throughout the inter-war period, but from the very beginning of the development of a reborn Poland they were extremely unfavourable. The borders were determined by a number of border conflicts with most of Poland's neighbouring countries. Under Bolshevik rule, the USSR became an autarkic country; at the same time, Germany was entering into an era of economic relations with an independent Poland with a sense of injustice. As a result, Polish-German economic relations remained cool at best and periodically entered into a state of tariff warfare.

Throughout the entire inter-war period, a number of measures were taken that aimed to link Poland economically with its Western allies, to stabilise the Polish currency, and to become a member of the gold-standard club. Władysław Grabski's reforms increased Poland's international credibility and foreign currency loans (at first used to stabilise the Polish economy and later also to finance its investments) and brought Poland into the international financial market. These loans were relatively small, but they built up Poland's creditworthiness with its Western partners, including France, Sweden, the USA, and the United Kingdom.

Large investment projects from the inter-war period also had a geopolitical dimension. Germany's economic policy in the region led to a situation in which many countries (including Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Austria) became increasingly dependent on it. Poland's strategic investment decisions, particularly in the building of Gdynia and the expansion of the railway network, made it possible to avoid such dependence. The building of Gdynia allowed sovereign trade exchange with the world which was not mediated by the port in the Free City of Gdańsk, thus reducing the uncertainty that was a significant factor that limited Poland's access to world markets. The construction of the Coal Trunk-Line connecting Gdynia with Silesia was equally important. It enabled the newly emerging port to be used for coal trade, thus bypassing Germany and reducing Poland's economic dependence on its stronger neighbour.

Investment in the Central Industrial District (the central and southern provinces) was also determined by political geography. The prevalence

of both heavy industries and an arms industry and the decision to locate investments in a relatively safe area (taking into account access to raw materials and labour force) resulted from the economic situation in Poland and the political situation in Europe, especially the growing military power of Germany.

It is worth noting that the development of Poland in the interwar period was affected by the loss of markets, both German and Russian. Prior to 1939, old trade and cooperation ties could not be rebuilt or fully replaced. Therefore, although favourable conditions that would be conducive to the rapid development of peripheral countries were generally bad at that time, and even against the background of the European periphery, Poland's economic development was poor.

Geopolitics was also one of the factors that affected the course of the Great Depression in Poland. Monetary policy was influenced by the previous experience of hyperinflation and efforts to make the zloty a gold standard, as well as by Piłsudski's conservative attitude to the economy. At the same time, the lack of devaluation contributed to the outflow of foreign capital, which was mainly German.

Geopolitical considerations in the 1930s generally failed to consider the developmental context. Concepts of political and economic rapprochement with Germany were advocated by, among others, Władysław Studnicki. Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz used Poland's location to justify the pro-German option, but Adolf Bocheński assessed Poland's position as extremely unfavourable. However, no economic proposals emerged from these geopolitical concepts.

During the Second World War, Poland sought inspiration from its Western allies for ways in which to rebuild the country. Later, the communists saw an opportunity to rebuild Poland once again as a Russian (Soviet) protectorate. For a long time after the war, Poland's place in the USSR's sphere of influence defined both the country's economic system and its international economic relations.

The idea of returning to Europe and opening up to capitalist economies emerged relatively late from both the ruling party and the opposition. Edward Gierek's policy, which was based on huge foreign loans, was a step towards such an opening, but it was not until the 1980s that a shift in the perception of the West took place. This was reflected in the growing popularity of the idea of economic liberalism, again within

the ruling party and the opposition. Among the geoeconomic proposals emerging at that time, the most interesting were those that envisaged Poland's role as an interface between the East and the West. For example, Stefan Kisielewski advocated the concept of Finlandisation (functioning simultaneously in both the Soviet and American spheres of influence) as a way out of state socialism.

The economic crisis of the Soviet bloc led to its disintegration. Geopolitical choices, including those concerning the shape of the economy, were made independently of internal Polish political dynamics to an extent. Leszek Balcerowicz's team, aided by American advisers who had a significant influence on the shape of the capitalist system emerging in Poland, laid the foundations for the emerging market economy through a series of macroeconomic reforms. Leaving the sphere of Soviet influence, Poland naturally sought rapprochement with the West. As early as 1990, the Federal Republic of Germany, which had played an important role in the Polish trade exchange since the 1980s, became Poland's first trade partner. Since the beginning of its systemic transformation, Poland's politics was directed at political and economic rapprochement with Western countries. The institutionalisation of increasingly strong relations with these countries occurred at the same time as Poland's accession to the European Union, which is an economic as much as a political community.

## Conclusions. Economic instruments in global rivalry

In the contemporary world, alongside instruments traditionally used in geopolitical rivalry, economic (mercantilist, and protectionist) – or rather geoeconomic – instruments play a huge role. They are used within both domestic (industrial policy, fiscal policy, etc.) and foreign policy, in which customs policy and exchange rate policy are of particular importance. Customs policy, which can sometimes lead to customs wars, aims to reduce the competitiveness of the products of a foreign competitor in the local market. The geopolitical effectiveness of this policy depends on both the size of the markets of participating countries and the scale of their economic links. The politics of large states (i.e. states with large economies), such as the USA or China, may play a significant role.

Exchange rate policies can worsen or improve the competitiveness of an economy in relation to other economies. In the world of floating exchange rates, a fall in the exchange rate of a currency generally means an increase in competitiveness, while an excessive fall in an exchange rate can worsen the situation of a state's citizens, especially when its domestic consumption or domestic production is dependent on imports. Changing the exchange rate or keeping it at a low level in comparison to the currencies of trading partners is sometimes the result of deliberate political efforts motivated by geopolitical factors (e.g. building a strong export-oriented industry) (Luttwak, 1998; Thirlwell, 2010).

In contemporary economic wars, unorthodox instruments are also used. For example, the American star wars programme that was implemented in the 1980s forced the USSR to intensify its expenditure on the arms race, which worsened its economic situation and became one of the catalysts of the crisis that caused the collapse of the Soviet state. In turn, oil-producing countries (as well as other energy sources) attempted to use the price of these raw materials as a geopolitical weapon. The rise of OPEC countries in the 1970s was linked to cartel pricing policies. Today, regional economic (and sometimes political) cooperation agreements are becoming increasingly important instruments of geopolitics because they allow states to increase the size of their internal markets and increase the power of the economic instruments used in the global game.

In recent centuries, geopolitics has had an enormous impact on Poland's economic development. For most of the modern era, Poland was dependent on its more powerful neighbours and European markets. Developing political and economic ties, especially with the West, brought benefits, while the breakdown of these ties (e.g. in the interwar period) resulted in the loss not only of markets but also of developmental potential. Poland's relations with Russia were more complex because Russia has virtually always been the stronger partner in the modern era. Poland (Polish territories) often remained within Russia's sphere of influence, which resulted in political dependence. The scale and form of this dependence varied at different times: the era of Stanisław August Poniatowski; the partitions of Poland; and the Polish Peoples' Republic. This had an adverse effect on Poland's developmental potential and its territories as it cut off closer links with the West.

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# Geopolitics and demography

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Demography, as the science of population, its structure, and the dynamics of its development, is inextricably linked with geopolitics. The issue of population resources has been and continues to be an important component of the economic, political, and military power of states.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** In pre-industrial economies, population resources were among the most significant resources available to states. With advances in technology and increasing variations in productivity and technological advancement, their importance has declined, but population size continues to have a significant impact on the political, military, and economic potential of states.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** Several factors must be considered when defining population resources: population size, population cohesion, human capital resources, and age. For geopolitics, the key demographic process in the coming decades will be the varying dynamics of population aging in different countries. The effect of this will be a burden on health and welfare systems, and it will be particularly strongly felt by Western powers.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Demographic policy, especially regarding the increasing fertility rate, and migration policy, which is aimed to increase workforce resources, are being hailed as a solution to growing demographic challenges. Countries that effectively implement these policies will have

a greater chance of achieving civilizational success and maintaining their geopolitical position in the coming decades.

**Keywords:** demography, migration, economy



## The significance and changes of population resources

Population resources have always played an important role in geopolitical considerations. An important factor influencing the power of a state (in addition to location, economic, and military potential) is its demographic potential, which, especially in the past, was often strongly correlated with economic, political, and military potential. Demography addresses the issue of population resources, including the size and dynamics of population growth or decline, age structure, urbanization processes, and internal and international migration. Analysis of the demographic dimension of geopolitical rivalries often provides a better understanding of their outcomes.

The pre-industrial world was characterised by the Malthusian trap, which limited the potential for population growth in a given territory. Scarce resources and productive capacity meant that most people earned/generated income (usually income “in kind”) at a level that was close to the minimum necessary for survival. A significant fraction of the population was unable to produce any surplus that would allow for wealth accumulation. Thomas Malthus, one of the first modern demographers, expressed the phenomenon of scarce resources according to the following model: population growth above a certain stable level that has already been achieved is faster than the increase in agricultural productivity, which always results in a lower standard of living and lower availability of basic resources, especially food. This is due, among other things, to the fact that (assuming unchanging technology) marginal productivity in agriculture must fall after reaching a certain level. This is because, as the population grows, more “end” producers appear who will have to use land that is of an increasingly lower quality and is farther away from where they live, etc. (Clark, 2007).

This state of affairs resulted in famines, wars, plagues, and a return of population sizes to the baseline. In the Malthusian world, population growth had to be closely linked to the expansion of agricultural land resources. The competition between states for resources and land was thus competition for the ability to feed a larger population (and thus for survival) or to increase its number. This was one of the key resources in the long-term political game.

Table 1. World population (population % share of regions in years 0–2000)

	0	200	400	600	800	1000	1200	1400	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000
North America	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,2	0,2	0,7	4,9	5,1
South America	6,4	6,6	7,2	8,0	7,9	8,2	7,7	9,3	1,6	2,0	2,0	4,0	8,5
Europe	15,6	16,1	14,2	10,3	10,9	10,9	12,9	13,1	15,6	16,3	15,1	18,2	8,4
Africa	8,1	9,0	9,9	11,5	13,7	14,1	12,1	14,8	13,1	13,3	8,6	8,5	13,3
former USSR	4,9	4,0	3,5	3,0	2,5	2,3	3,1	3,3	3,5	3,8	4,6	7,3	4,6
Middle East	7,9	8,5	8,4	8,6	8,3	6,8	4,9	4,3	3,9	3,5	2,5	2,2	3,9
Asia	56,7	55,2	56,1	58,0	56,1	57,1	58,8	54,7	62,0	60,7	66,4	54,5	55,6
Oceania	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,3	0,4

Source: Maddison Database 2010. Retrieved from: <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-database-2010> (accessed: 20 April 2020).

Table 2. World population by continent (% share) 1950–2100 (after 2020 – forecast)

	1950	2000	2020	2050	2100
Africa	9,0%	13,2%	17,2%	25,6%	39,4%
Asia	55,4%	60,9%	59,5%	54,3%	43,4%
Europe	21,7%	11,8%	9,6%	7,3%	5,8%
Latin America and the Caribbean	6,7%	8,5%	8,4%	7,8%	6,3%
North America	6,8%	5,1%	4,7%	4,4%	4,5%
Oceania	0,5%	0,5%	0,5%	0,6%	0,7%

Source: United Nations, 2019.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the importance of the Malthusian trap was reduced thanks to technical advances (including the Industrial Revolution and the later Green Revolution) that brought with them dynamic growth in the global population. At the same time, technological progress reached previously unknown levels, and the processes of mechanization, automation, and the computerisation of production reduced the importance of population size in global competition over the past 200

years and continue to do so. However, demographic challenges still play an important role in geopolitics. Population growth itself is a dynamic process and as a result, growth momentum also fluctuated, with the result that the population of Europe (and the West as a whole) grew in relation to that of other parts of the world until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Later, especially after World War II, the demographic potential of the West began to decline (Clark, 2007; Maddison, 2006). This is demonstrated by the data in Tables 1 and 2, in which the rise of the European population in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is particularly noteworthy.

After the Industrial Revolution, Western countries were the first to enter into an era of rapid urbanization, reaping both absolute and relative development benefits from this. The growth rate of GDP per capita was not only high but was also clearly higher than in other parts of the world. Later, urbanization processes spread to other areas.

Urbanization itself and the transfer of labour resources from villages to cities enable a more efficient use of labour through cross-sectoral productivity growth. This process can be spontaneous and encouraged, or it can be controlled by the state. A controlled process of rural-urban migration occurred in the USSR until the 1970s as well as in communist China in recent decades. The economic growth that accompanies this is the result of the movement of labour resources from the rural sector, which has low added value (agriculture, traditional crafts and services, etc.) to the urban sector, which is modern and has higher added value. This deceleration of economic growth in the Soviet bloc countries in the 1970s and 1980s can be explained by the exhaustion of this growth model as a result of the completion of the processes of urbanization and modernization of the economy. The success of this developmental policy led to the USSR's power in world politics, which peaked in the 1960s and 1970s, while the obstacles to the growth of a socialist economy (very limited growth potential resulting from intra-sectoral productivity growth) soon after led to stagnation, crisis, and collapse (Okólski, 2004).

## Demographic determinants of development

Two categories are used to describe the demographic determinants of economic development: demographic dividend and demographic

transition. Demographic dividend is a situation in which the share of the population who are of working age becomes relatively large. This is the result of the fading demographic boom: a decline in births translates into a declining share of the youngest age groups in the population. If, at the same time, the old population is still small, the costs of providing public services to the young and old are relatively low and the burden on the economically active population simultaneously decreases. As a result, even with constant productivity per capita, rapid economic growth can be observed that is associated with an increasing number of workers in the population. Of course, a barrier to further growth appears when, because of the earlier demographic dividend, the population begins to age. Fewer children are born, while the number of elderly people (who are no longer economically active) increases. As a result of the reduced number that is available to enter the labour force, the share of economically active people in the population decreases (Okólski and Fihel, 2012).

These changes result from transformations in the age structure of the population as a consequence of demographic transitions. The first demographic transition, which is associated with the beginning of technological and civilizational changes in the industrial era, resulted in an increase in life expectancy. In France, for example, life expectancy increased by more than 30 years in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A Frenchman born in 1900 was statistically expected to live slightly longer than 50 years, while one born 100 years later was expected to live for over 82 years. The effect of this demographic transition was a change in the state of equilibrium. Pre-industrial societies were characterised by high fertility and high mortality, which together made population growth slow. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the disturbance of this equilibrium led to a demographic explosion, first within European civilization and later in other parts of the world. This phenomenon, with its simultaneous civilizational and social changes, was accompanied by changes in attitudes, expectations, and life strategies that led to the second demographic transition, i.e. a decline in fertility. A new point of demographic equilibrium was established with low levels of mortality and low levels of fertility. This resulted in a deceleration of the population growth in Europe, and the subsequent decline in fertility created the risk of a decline in population.

## Demography and migrations

Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, developed countries have attempted to implement demographic policies that support fertility in order to address this state of affairs. At the same time, labour shortages are addressed on an ongoing basis by international migration. These migrations, which are becoming large, are driven by the continuing differences in income levels and standards of living between regions of the world. International migrations are becoming an important element of competition between countries. As a rule, the pattern is for migration from less to more developed countries and is associated with a loss of human capital in the former and an increase in the latter. As a result, they can be a factor that deepens developmental divergences and maintains the geopolitical *status quo* (Okólski and Fihel, 2012).

On the other hand, in states hit by crises or those in which there is no high demand for labour, the population outflow can, in the short term, improve their economic and social situation. This phenomenon could be observed in some Eastern European countries after the transformation of their political systems. There are also situations in which there is a sudden and unmanageable influx of immigrants, which can destabilize the economic and social situation of the destination country for a short time (Parkes, 2015).

In addition to the inflow of human capital and increased labour resources, another benefit of immigration is the rejuvenation of the population, which has been particularly important in Western countries since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, costs incurred by immigration in the contemporary world include the following: an increasing burden on the excessively large and ever-expanding institutions of the welfare state; risks to social cohesion; and (in the short term) humanitarian crises. In extreme cases, migration can also have geopolitical consequences (Parkes, 2015).

As mentioned above, civilizational transformations in recent decades are likely to lead to a diminishing role of population resources in global competition. This is associated with the growing role of computerization, the automation of production, the declining importance of labour-intensive production, changes in military technologies, and the ongoing rise of capital as the primary factor of production. The importance of

the parameters that describe population resources, i.e. the quality of human resources and the level of urbanization, is increasing. The modern economic sector is concentrated in cities, which are centres of high productivity, innovation, and production of human capital. Although urbanisation does not always support growth (as can be seen in developing countries), global mega-cities are now becoming economic centres for the global economy. The productivity of their populations affects the productivity and level of development of entire nations. Hence, some countries, such as China, are making efforts to steer the development of such cities.

The role of population resources in achieving and maintaining civilizational success cannot be overestimated. Not only the size but also the structure of the population (including age structure, geographic concentration, etc.) is important here. Age structure determines the size and specific nature of the labour force. Population aging is becoming a major challenge. Although a decline in fertility may contribute to demographic dividends in the initial period, the burden of the pension system and health care costs for the elderly will eventually increase. Population aging is a challenge faced by virtually every highly developed Western country, as well as by some developing countries such as China. At present, the only (at least partially) effective political response is to create conditions for immigration that are supplemented with, in particular, instruments that allow the selective filling of shortages in the labour market. This model of immigration policy is implemented, for example, by Australia. As a policy, it is easy in regions that are geographically isolated from areas with a high potential for migration due to their poor economic situation; it is much more difficult in states without such natural barriers (e.g. Europe) (Jackson, Howe et al., 2008).

The process of population aging brings a number of additional consequences for economic development. These include decreasing willingness to take risks (including the risk of changing jobs), decreasing mobility, and decreasing innovation, which may translate into slower economic growth.

## Conclusions

At present, demographic changes may prove one of the key factors that lead to a change in the balance of power in the world. The benefits of demographic growth and demographic dividends in Southeast Asia have been evident since World War II; first in Japan, then in Korea and Taiwan, and subsequently in other countries in this region. In the last two decades, the demographic dividend in China has been one of the primary drivers of economic growth. This has been supported, as indicated above, by rapid urbanization and industrialization that are partially financed by the state. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a similar process will spread to almost all of sub-Saharan Africa, as shown in Table 2. This raises the question of whether there will be states or other institutions in this region that will be capable of capitalising on the demographic dividend or whether it will lead to regional, continental, or even global destabilization, if only through successive waves of migration.

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# Geopolitics and resources

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** In the context of this article, geopolitics is understood as the use of resources to achieve political and economic goals.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** This section describes the distribution of energy sources and rare-earth metals worldwide in order to analyse the changes in the geopolitical role of resources.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** This section presents examples of the use of resources as policy instruments in selected countries that focus on the theoretical determinants of their efficiency. Issues of energy sources and rare-earth metals are linked to energy transition processes and to efforts to counteract climate change. This section also outlines the political and economic effects of using resources as policy instruments.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Climate change motivates countries to develop renewable energy sources, which shifts geopolitical interests from energy sources to rare-earth metals.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, oil, gas, coal, renewable energy sources (RES), climate, rare-earth metals, Russia, China, Poland, liquefied natural gas (LNG)



## Geopolitics and resources

Geopolitics covers the use of resources to achieve political and economic goals. Political goals include restricting the sovereignty of countries that import resources, whereas economic goals include weakening the dynamics of their economic growth, causing them to be economic instable, and maximising the financial benefits of one country over another. From the perspective of geopolitics, important resources are those that play a key role in the economic development of countries. Depending on the resources they possess and their level of technological development, countries that import resources differ in terms of their susceptibility to the activities of exporters. Resources can be divided into two sub-groups: energy sources, such as oil, gas, and coal (which can be replaced by other energy carriers); and rare-earth metals (which have no substitutes). Energy sources can be replaced by other energy carriers (such as using coal for the production of fuels) or by technological substitution (such as electric energy obtained from renewable sources). With the current level of technological development, the possibilities of substituting traditional energy sources are rather limited, as is evidenced by road transport, for which the use of electricity is not economically or technically feasible today.

The geopolitical use of resources is possible thanks to their uneven distribution worldwide. Some countries are rich in energy sources and rare-earth metals, while other countries are in demand for these resources and metals (importers). In the case of rare-earth elements, these countries are not their direct recipients but only consumers of the finished products. If the countries that have the resources are weak and are not politically stable (which is frequently the case), they become areas of strategic struggle and rivalry between global powers such as the USA, PRC, and Russia. Despite its huge potential for action, the European Union is not a powerful partner, although some of its member states attempt to play a role in this rivalry. In this context, countries that possess resources but lack strength become subject to geopolitics, which involves creating privileged relationships with the global powers within the area of influence in which they are located (i.e. preferential supplies to markets in these countries). The aim of this policy was the control of resource-rich (mainly oil) areas, which was a significant factor

in the division of the zones of influence after World War II and the subsequent struggle to maintain influence, e.g. in Iran, South America, and Africa.

## Distribution of energy sources and rare-earth metals worldwide

Oil reserves are not evenly distributed (Table 1). The greatest shares of reserves are in the Middle East (48.3%), South America (18.8%), and Africa (7.2%) (BP Report, 2019). The following countries have substantial reserves of oil: Canada (9.7%), United States (3.5%), Venezuela (17.5%), Russia (6.1%), Iran (9%), Iraq (8.5%), Kuwait (5.9%), Saudi Arabia (17.2%), UAE (5.7%), Libya (2.8%), and Nigeria (2.2%) (BP Report, 2019).

Table 1  
Distribution of oil reserves (in millions of barrels)

Country/year							Share in global reserves
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018
Canada	173,0	172,2	171,5	170,5	168,9	<b>167,8</b>	9,7%
Mexico	11,1	10,8	8,0	7,2	7,7	<b>7,7</b>	0,4%
US	48,5	55,0	48,0	50,0	61,2	<b>61,2</b>	3,5%
<b>Total North America</b>	<b>232,6</b>	<b>237,9</b>	<b>227,5</b>	<b>227,7</b>	<b>237,8</b>	<b>236,7</b>	<b>13,7%</b>
Argentina	2,3	2,4	2,4	2,2	2,0	<b>2,0</b>	0,1%
Brazil	15,6	16,2	13,0	12,6	12,8	<b>13,4</b>	0,8%
Colombia	2,4	2,4	2,3	2,0	1,7	<b>1,8</b>	0,1%
Ecuador	3,5	3,0	3,1	3,2	3,0	<b>2,8</b>	0,2%
Peru	1,6	1,4	1,2	1,2	1,0	<b>1,0</b>	0,1%
Trinidad & Tobago	0,8	0,8	0,7	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	♦
Venezuela	298,4	300,0	300,9	302,3	302,8	<b>303,3</b>	17,5%
Other S. & Cent. America	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	<b>0,5</b>	♦
<b>Total S. &amp; Cent. America</b>	<b>325,1</b>	<b>326,8</b>	<b>324,1</b>	<b>324,2</b>	<b>324,0</b>	<b>325,1</b>	<b>18,8%</b>
Denmark	0,7	0,6	0,5	0,4	0,4	<b>0,4</b>	♦
Italy	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,5	0,6	<b>0,6</b>	♦
Norway	7,0	6,5	8,0	7,6	7,9	<b>8,6</b>	0,5%
Romania	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6	<b>0,6</b>	♦

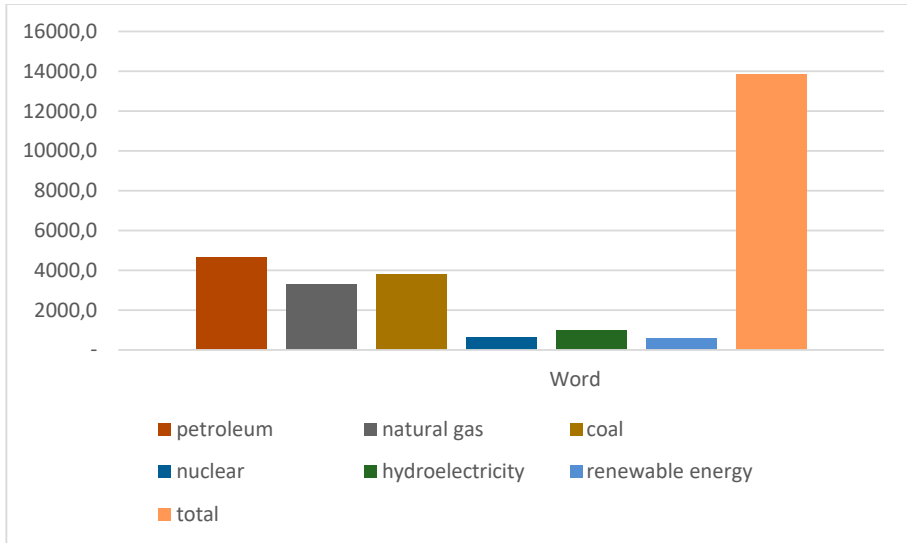
United Kingdom	3,0	2,8	2,5	2,3	2,5	<b>2,5</b>	0,1%
Other Europe	1,8	1,7	1,7	1,7	1,6	<b>1,6</b>	0,1%
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>13,7</b>	<b>12,9</b>	<b>13,9</b>	<b>13,2</b>	<b>13,7</b>	<b>14,3</b>	<b>0,8%</b>
Azerbaijan	7,0	7,0	7,0	7,0	7,0	<b>7,0</b>	0,4%
Kazakhstan	30,0	30,0	30,0	30,0	30,0	<b>30,0</b>	1,7%
Russian Federation	105,0	103,2	102,4	106,2	106,3	<b>106,2</b>	6,1%
Turkmenistan	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6	<b>0,6</b>	♦
USSR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	n/a
Uzbekistan	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6	<b>0,6</b>	♦
Other CIS	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	♦
<b>Total CIS</b>	<b>143,5</b>	<b>141,6</b>	<b>140,8</b>	<b>144,6</b>	<b>144,7</b>	<b>144,7</b>	<b>8,4%</b>
Iran	157,8	157,5	158,4	157,2	155,6	<b>155,6</b>	9,0%
Iraq	144,2	143,1	142,5	148,8	147,2	<b>147,2</b>	8,5%
Kuwait	101,5	101,5	101,5	101,5	101,5	<b>101,5</b>	5,9%
Oman	5,0	5,2	5,3	5,4	5,4	<b>5,4</b>	0,3%
Qatar	25,1	25,7	25,2	25,2	25,2	<b>25,2</b>	1,5%
Saudi Arabia	265,8	266,6	266,5	266,2	296,0	<b>297,7</b>	17,2%
Syria	2,5	2,5	2,5	2,5	2,5	<b>2,5</b>	0,1%
United Arab Emirates	97,8	97,8	97,8	97,8	97,8	<b>97,8</b>	5,7%
Yemen	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,0	<b>3,0</b>	0,2%
Other Middle East	0,3	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	<b>0,2</b>	♦
<b>Total Middle East</b>	<b>802,9</b>	<b>803,1</b>	<b>802,9</b>	<b>807,7</b>	<b>834,3</b>	<b>836,1</b>	<b>48,3%</b>
Algeria	12,2	12,2	12,2	12,2	12,2	<b>12,2</b>	0,7%
Angola	9,0	8,4	9,5	9,5	8,4	<b>8,4</b>	0,5%
Chad	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	<b>1,5</b>	0,1%
Republic of Congo	1,6	1,6	1,6	1,6	1,6	<b>1,6</b>	0,1%
Egypt	3,9	3,7	3,5	3,4	3,3	<b>3,3</b>	0,2%
Equatorial Guinea	1,7	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	<b>1,1</b>	0,1%
Gabon	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,0	<b>2,0</b>	0,1%
Libya	48,4	48,4	48,4	48,4	48,4	<b>48,4</b>	2,8%
Nigeria	37,1	37,4	37,1	37,5	37,5	<b>37,5</b>	2,2%
South Sudan	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,5	<b>3,5</b>	0,2%
Sudan	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	<b>1,5</b>	0,1%
Tunisia	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4	<b>0,4</b>	♦
Other Africa	3,7	3,8	4,0	4,0	3,9	<b>3,9</b>	0,2%
<b>Total Africa</b>	<b>126,4</b>	<b>125,5</b>	<b>126,3</b>	<b>126,5</b>	<b>125,3</b>	<b>125,3</b>	<b>7,2%</b>
Australia	4,0	4,0	4,0	4,0	4,0	<b>4,0</b>	0,2%
Brunei	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	<b>1,1</b>	0,1%
China	24,7	25,2	25,6	25,7	25,9	<b>25,9</b>	1,5%
India	5,7	5,7	4,8	4,7	4,5	<b>4,5</b>	0,3%
Indonesia	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,3	3,2	<b>3,2</b>	0,2%

Malaysia	4,5	3,8	3,6	3,0	3,0	<b>3,0</b>	0,2%
Thailand	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,3	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	♦
Vietnam	4,4	4,4	4,4	4,4	4,4	<b>4,4</b>	0,3%
Other Asia Pacific	1,3	1,2	1,3	1,2	1,2	<b>1,2</b>	0,1%
<b>Total Asia Pacific</b>	<b>49,8</b>	<b>49,5</b>	<b>48,8</b>	<b>47,7</b>	<b>47,7</b>	<b>47,6</b>	<b>2,8%</b>
<b>Total World</b>	<b>1694,1</b>	<b>1697,2</b>	<b>1684,3</b>	<b>1691,6</b>	<b>1727,5</b>	<b>1729,7</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
of which: OECD	249,2	253,7	244,3	243,8	254,4	<b>254,0</b>	14,7%
Non-OECD	1444,9	1443,5	1440,0	1447,8	1473,1	<b>1475,8</b>	85,3%
OPEC	1206,0	1206,3	1207,7	1214,4	1240,2	<b>1242,2</b>	71,8%
Non-OPEC	488,1	490,9	476,6	477,2	487,3	<b>487,5</b>	28,2%
European Union	5,8	5,6	5,1	4,7	4,9	<b>4,8</b>	0,3%
Canadian Oil Sands: Total	167,1	166,2	165,3	164,4	163,4	<b>162,3</b>	9,4%
of which: Under active development	25,2	23,6	23,9	23,0	22,0	<b>20,9</b>	1,2%
Venezuela: Orinoco Belt	258,3	258,7	259,5	261,3	260,9	<b>261,4</b>	15,1%

Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

Non-OECD countries (OECD countries have the most-developed economies), have only 14.7% of oil reserves, while those that are members of OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) have 71.8% (BP Report, 2019). OPEC decisions regarding extraction levels affect the price of oil; because oil is the basic source of energy worldwide, these decisions also affect the dynamics of the growth of GDP globally (Figure 1).

Figure 1  
Global consumption of energy in oil equivalent in 2018 (Mtoe).



Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

The distribution of natural gas reserves worldwide is uneven and partially coincides with global oil reserves (Table 2).

Table 2  
Distribution of natural gas reserves in billion square metres

Country/year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Share in global resources
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018
Canada	1,9	1,9	2,1	2,0	2,0	<b>1,9</b>	0,9%
Mexico	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	0,1%
US	9,2	10,0	8,3	8,7	11,9	<b>11,9</b>	6,0%
<b>Total North America</b>	<b>11,4</b>	<b>12,2</b>	<b>10,7</b>	<b>10,9</b>	<b>14,1</b>	<b>13,9</b>	<b>7,1%</b>
Argentina	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	0,2%
Bolivia	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	0,1%
Brazil	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,4	<b>0,4</b>	0,2%
Colombia	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	0,1%
Peru	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4	<b>0,4</b>	0,2%

Trinidad & Tobago	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	0,2%
Venezuela	6,2	6,2	6,3	6,4	6,3	<b>6,3</b>	3,2%
Other S. & Cent. America	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	♦
<b>Total S. &amp; Cent. America</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>8,3</b>	<b>8,3</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>4,2%</b>
Denmark	^	^	^	^	^	^	♦
Germany	0,1	^	^	^	^	^	♦
Italy	0,1	0,1	^	^	^	^	♦
Netherlands	0,8	0,7	0,7	0,7	0,6	<b>0,6</b>	0,3%
Norway	2,0	1,9	1,8	1,8	1,7	<b>1,6</b>	0,8%
Poland	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	♦
Romania	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	0,1%
Ukraine	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,0	<b>1,1</b>	0,6%
United Kingdom	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	0,1%
Other Europe	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	0,1%
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>4,7</b>	<b>4,4</b>	<b>4,3</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>2,0%</b>
Azerbaijan	1,0	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,3	<b>2,1</b>	1,1%
Kazakhstan	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,0	1,0	<b>1,0</b>	0,5%
Russian Federation	34,9	35,0	35,0	34,8	38,9	<b>38,9</b>	19,8%
Turkmenistan	19,5	19,5	19,5	19,5	19,5	<b>19,5</b>	9,9%
USSR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	n/a
Uzbekistan	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,2	<b>1,2</b>	0,6%
Other CIS	^	^	^	^	^	^	♦
<b>Total CIS</b>	<b>57,8</b>	<b>58,2</b>	<b>58,1</b>	<b>57,9</b>	<b>62,0</b>	<b>62,8</b>	<b>31,9%</b>
Bahrain	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	0,1%
Iran	32,1	32,1	31,6	31,8	31,9	<b>31,9</b>	16,2%
Iraq	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,6	3,6	<b>3,6</b>	1,8%
Israel	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,5	<b>0,4</b>	0,2%
Kuwait	1,7	1,7	1,7	1,7	1,7	<b>1,7</b>	0,9%
Oman	0,7	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,7	<b>0,7</b>	0,3%
Qatar	25,5	25,4	25,1	24,9	24,7	<b>24,7</b>	12,5%
Saudi Arabia	7,8	7,9	8,0	8,0	5,7	<b>5,9</b>	3,0%
Syria	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	0,1%
United Arab Emirates	5,9	5,9	5,9	5,9	5,9	<b>5,9</b>	3,0%
Yemen	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	0,1%
Other Middle East	^	^	^	^	^	^	♦
<b>Total Middle East</b>	<b>77,7</b>	<b>77,6</b>	<b>77,0</b>	<b>77,6</b>	<b>75,3</b>	<b>75,5</b>	<b>38,4%</b>



Algeria	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,3	<b>4,3</b>	2,2%
Egypt	1,8	2,1	2,0	2,1	2,1	<b>2,1</b>	1,1%
Libya	1,4	1,4	1,4	1,4	1,4	<b>1,4</b>	0,7%
Nigeria	4,9	5,1	5,0	5,2	5,3	<b>5,3</b>	2,7%
Other Africa	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	<b>1,2</b>	0,6%
<b>Total Africa</b>	<b>13,5</b>	<b>14,0</b>	<b>13,9</b>	<b>14,3</b>	<b>14,4</b>	<b>14,4</b>	<b>7,3%</b>
Australia	2,8	2,4	2,4	2,4	2,4	<b>2,4</b>	1,2%
Bangladesh	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	0,1%
Brunei	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	0,1%
China	3,4	3,6	4,7	5,5	6,1	<b>6,1</b>	3,1%
India	1,3	1,4	1,2	1,2	1,2	<b>1,3</b>	0,7%
Indonesia	2,9	2,9	2,8	2,9	2,9	<b>2,8</b>	1,4%
Malaysia	2,7	2,7	2,7	2,4	2,4	<b>2,4</b>	1,2%
Myanmar	0,5	0,5	0,5	1,2	1,2	<b>1,2</b>	0,6%
Pakistan	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,4	<b>0,4</b>	0,2%
Papua New Guinea	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	0,1%
Thailand	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	0,1%
Vietnam	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6	<b>0,6</b>	0,3%
Other Asia Pacific	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	0,1%
<b>Total Asia Pacific</b>	<b>15,9</b>	<b>15,7</b>	<b>16,4</b>	<b>17,6</b>	<b>18,2</b>	<b>18,1</b>	<b>9,2%</b>
<b>Total World</b>	<b>189,2</b>	<b>190,4</b>	<b>188,6</b>	<b>190,7</b>	<b>196,1</b>	<b>196,9</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
of which: OECD	18,0	18,0	16,4	16,4	19,7	<b>19,4</b>	9,9%
Non-OECD	171,3	172,4	172,2	174,3	176,4	<b>177,4</b>	90,1%
European Union	1,4	1,3	1,3	1,2	1,1	<b>1,1</b>	0,6%

Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

The greatest reserves of natural gas can be found in the Middle East (38.4%), the former Soviet Union countries (31.9%), Asia Pacific (9.2%), and Africa (7.3%) (BP Report, 2019). The following countries have considerable reserves of natural gas: Russia (19.8%), United States (6%), Venezuela (3.2%), Turkmenistan (9.9%), Iran (16.2%), Qatar (12.5%), Saudi Arabia (3%), UAE (3%), Algeria (2.2%), Egypt (1.1%), Nigeria (2.7%), People's Republic of China (3.1%), Indonesia (1.4%), and Malaysia (1.2%) (BP Report, 2019). OECD countries have 9.9% of the global reserves of natural gas (BP Report, 2019).

The distribution of coal worldwide is also uneven in terms of its importance in the global economy, but here the disproportion is less (Table 3).

Table 3  
Total proved reserves of coal in million tonnes in 2018

	Anthracite and bituminous	Sub-bituminous and lignite	Total	Share of Total
Canada	4346	2236	<b>6582</b>	0,6%
Mexico	1160	51	<b>1211</b>	0,1%
US	220167	30052	<b>250219</b>	23,7%
<b>Total North America</b>	<b>225673</b>	<b>32339</b>	<b>258012</b>	<b>24,5%</b>
Brazil	1547	5049	<b>6596</b>	0,6%
Colombia	4881	–	<b>4881</b>	0,5%
Venezuela	731	–	<b>731</b>	0,1%
Other S. & Cent. America	1784	24	<b>1808</b>	0,2%
<b>Total S. &amp; Cent. America</b>	<b>8943</b>	<b>5073</b>	<b>14016</b>	<b>1,3%</b>
Bulgaria	192	2174	<b>2366</b>	0,2%
Czech Republic	110	2547	<b>2657</b>	0,3%
Germany	3	36100	<b>36103</b>	3,4%
Greece	–	2876	<b>2876</b>	0,3%
Hungary	276	2633	<b>2909</b>	0,3%
Poland	20542	5937	<b>26479</b>	2,5%
Romania	11	280	<b>291</b>	♦
Serbia	402	7112	<b>7514</b>	0,7%
Spain	868	319	<b>1187</b>	0,1%
Turkey	551	10975	<b>11526</b>	1,1%
Ukraine	32039	2336	<b>34375</b>	3,3%
United Kingdom	29	–	<b>29</b>	♦
Other Europe	1109	5172	<b>6281</b>	0,6%
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>56132</b>	<b>78461</b>	<b>134593</b>	<b>12,8%</b>
Kazakhstan	25605	–	<b>25605</b>	2,4%
Russian Federation	69634	90730	<b>160364</b>	15,2%
Uzbekistan	1375	–	<b>1375</b>	0,1%
Other CIS	1509	–	<b>1509</b>	0,1%
<b>Total CIS</b>	<b>98123</b>	<b>90730</b>	<b>188853</b>	<b>17,9%</b>
South Africa	9893	–	<b>9893</b>	0,9%
Zimbabwe	502	–	<b>502</b>	♦

Other Africa	2756	66	<b>2822</b>	0,3%
Middle East	1203	-	<b>1203</b>	0,1%
<b>Total Middle East &amp; Africa</b>	<b>14354</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>14420</b>	<b>1,4%</b>
Australia	70927	76508	<b>147435</b>	14,0%
China	130851	7968	<b>138819</b>	13,2%
India	96468	4895	<b>101363</b>	9,6%
Indonesia	26122	10878	<b>37000</b>	3,5%
Japan	340	10	<b>350</b>	♦
Mongolia	1170	1350	<b>2520</b>	0,2%
New Zealand	825	6750	<b>7575</b>	0,7%
Pakistan	207	2857	<b>3064</b>	0,3%
South Korea	326	-	<b>326</b>	♦
Thailand	-	1063	<b>1063</b>	0,1%
Vietnam	3116	244	<b>3360</b>	0,3%
Other Asia Pacific	1326	687	<b>2013</b>	0,2%
<b>Total Asia Pacific</b>	<b>331678</b>	<b>113210</b>	<b>444888</b>	<b>42,2%</b>
<b>Total World</b>	<b>734903</b>	<b>319879</b>	<b>1054782</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
of which: OECD	322234	177484	<b>499718</b>	47,4%
Non-OECD	412669	142395	<b>555064</b>	52,6%
European Union	22612	53356	<b>75968</b>	7,2%

Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

In geographic terms, the greatest reserves of coal can be found in Asia Pacific (42.2%), North America (24.5%), the former Soviet Union countries (17.9%), and the European continent (12.8%) (BP Report, 2019). The following countries also have considerable reserves of coal: USA (23.7%), Germany (3.4%), Poland (2.5%), Ukraine (3.3%), Russia (15.2%), Australia (14%), People's Republic of China (13.2%), Indonesia (3.5%), and India (9.6%) (BP Report, 2019). When it comes to the demand for energy sources, consumption does not coincide with the reserves that countries possess (Table 4).

Table 4  
Consumption of energy sources (largest consumers)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Growth rate per annum		Share 2018
							2018	2007-17	
Canada	2398	2442	2401	2448	2448	<b>2447</b>	♦	0,4%	2,5%
Mexico	2034	1960	1939	1950	1883	<b>1812</b>	-3,8%	-1,0%	1,8%
US	18961	19106	19531	19687	19958	<b>20456</b>	2,5%	-0,4%	20,5%
<b>Total North America</b>	<b>23393</b>	<b>23507</b>	<b>23871</b>	<b>24086</b>	<b>24289</b>	<b>24714</b>	1,8%	-0,3%	24,8%
Argentina	683	673	696	686	684	<b>648</b>	-5,3%	2,6%	0,6%
Brazil	3100	3210	3140	2960	3052	<b>3081</b>	0,9%	2,8%	3,1%
Chile	362	353	355	377	369	<b>379</b>	2,7%	-0,2%	0,4%
Colombia	297	316	332	345	340	<b>342</b>	0,6%	3,9%	0,3%
Ecuador	247	260	254	240	237	<b>255</b>	7,6%	2,6%	0,3%
Peru	228	225	247	259	258	<b>267</b>	3,4%	5,1%	0,3%
Trinidad & Tobago	45	41	46	48	42	<b>42</b>	-1,2%	-0,1%	♦
Venezuela	782	720	637	537	463	<b>409</b>	-11,7%	-3,2%	0,4%
Central America	372	387	419	434	436	<b>443</b>	1,7%	2,4%	0,4%
Other Caribbean	652	650	669	688	697	<b>702</b>	0,7%	-1,3%	0,7%
Other South America	194	198	206	217	219	<b>228</b>	3,9%	4,2%	0,2%
<b>Total S. &amp; Cent. America</b>	<b>6964</b>	<b>7034</b>	<b>7001</b>	<b>6792</b>	<b>6798</b>	<b>6795</b>	♦	1,7%	6,8%
Austria	262	255	256	261	265	<b>272</b>	2,5%	-0,3%	0,3%
Belgium	665	665	684	694	696	<b>703</b>	1,0%	♦	0,7%
Bulgaria	81	87	98	99	103	<b>104</b>	0,7%	-0,7%	0,1%
Croatia	64	66	68	68	73	<b>74</b>	1,6%	-2,7%	0,1%
Cyprus	46	46	47	51	53	<b>52</b>	-1,4%	-0,8%	0,1%
Czech Republic	190	202	196	182	217	<b>222</b>	2,2%	0,6%	0,2%
Denmark	158	159	161	158	158	<b>159</b>	0,4%	-1,8%	0,2%
Estonia	31	29	29	29	30	<b>30</b>	0,5%	-0,5%	♦
Finland	220	214	212	221	217	<b>229</b>	5,7%	-0,5%	0,2%
France	1661	1613	1612	1597	1608	<b>1607</b>	-0,1%	-1,7%	1,6%
Germany	2404	2344	2336	2374	2443	<b>2321</b>	-5,0%	0,3%	2,3%
Greece	303	302	313	314	324	<b>323</b>	-0,3%	-3,6%	0,3%
Hungary	142	159	168	166	177	<b>188</b>	6,5%	0,5%	0,2%
Iceland	15	16	17	19	20	<b>21</b>	1,0%	1,4%	♦
Ireland	141	140	146	153	154	<b>159</b>	3,6%	-2,3%	0,2%
Italy	1274	1204	1257	1266	1279	<b>1253</b>	-2,0%	-3,0%	1,3%
Latvia	34	34	36	37	37	<b>34</b>	-9,6%	0,5%	♦
Lithuania	53	53	57	61	64	<b>64</b>	0,9%	0,9%	0,1%
Luxembourg	58	57	56	56	59	<b>63</b>	5,7%	-0,3%	0,1%
Netherlands	898	866	834	851	829	<b>860</b>	3,8%	-2,2%	0,9%

North Macedonia	19	19	20	22	21	<b>21</b>	-1,9%	0,4%	♦
Norway	230	217	223	217	223	<b>234</b>	5,1%	0,1%	0,2%
Poland	538	538	559	606	662	<b>685</b>	3,4%	1,9%	0,7%
Portugal	241	241	246	240	246	<b>236</b>	-4,0%	-2,1%	0,2%
Romania	174	187	191	202	213	<b>211</b>	-1,0%	-0,3%	0,2%
Slovakia	75	71	77	79	89	<b>85</b>	-4,2%	1,5%	0,1%
Slovenia	51	50	49	52	52	<b>54</b>	3,6%	-0,5%	0,1%
Spain	1203	1199	1243	1288	1301	<b>1335</b>	2,7%	-2,1%	1,3%
Sweden	306	304	302	319	321	<b>308</b>	-3,8%	-1,1%	0,3%
Switzerland	249	224	227	216	222	<b>215</b>	-3,2%	-0,8%	0,2%
Turkey	757	775	912	978	1013	<b>1003</b>	-1,0%	3,8%	1,0%
Ukraine	257	221	194	205	207	<b>200</b>	-3,0%	-3,9%	0,2%
United Kingdom	1532	1536	1578	1623	1637	<b>1618</b>	-1,2%	-0,7%	1,6%
Other Europe	298	297	307	329	339	<b>332</b>	-2,2%	0,8%	0,3%
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>14631</b>	<b>14389</b>	<b>14713</b>	<b>15032</b>	<b>15351</b>	<b>15276</b>	-0,5%	-0,8%	15,3%
Azerbaijan	101	99	100	98	99	<b>98</b>	-1,0%	0,9%	0,1%
Belarus	144	164	139	137	135	<b>136</b>	1,0%	-1,9%	0,1%
Kazakhstan	260	262	295	305	317	<b>357</b>	12,4%	2,8%	0,4%
Russian Federation	3134	3298	3146	3217	3207	<b>3228</b>	0,7%	1,4%	3,2%
Turkmenistan	137	143	145	143	147	<b>151</b>	3,2%	2,8%	0,2%
USSR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a
Uzbekistan	60	57	53	49	55	<b>52</b>	-4,0%	-5,3%	0,1%
Other CIS	78	76	78	86	73	<b>76</b>	3,0%	2,7%	0,1%
<b>Total CIS</b>	<b>3914</b>	<b>4099</b>	<b>3955</b>	<b>4034</b>	<b>4033</b>	<b>4099</b>	1,6%	1,3%	4,1%
Iran	2064	1959	1804	1749	1843	<b>1879</b>	2,0%	♦	1,9%
Iraq	716	681	683	760	732	<b>777</b>	6,1%	4,1%	0,8%
Israel	223	214	226	230	247	<b>242</b>	-1,9%	-0,6%	0,2%
Kuwait	508	446	461	453	455	<b>451</b>	-0,9%	1,7%	0,5%
Oman	178	185	184	187	193	<b>192</b>	-0,3%	7,9%	0,2%
Qatar	287	294	317	341	320	<b>328</b>	2,6%	8,0%	0,3%
Saudi Arabia	3451	3764	3886	3875	3838	<b>3724</b>	-3,0%	4,8%	3,7%
United Arab Emirates	852	880	957	1023	964	<b>991</b>	2,8%	5,3%	1,0%
Other Middle East	630	631	579	553	547	<b>551</b>	0,8%	-3,5%	0,6%
<b>Total Middle East</b>	<b>8910</b>	<b>9053</b>	<b>9099</b>	<b>9172</b>	<b>9138</b>	<b>9136</b>	♦	2,7%	9,2%
Algeria	387	401	425	412	408	<b>414</b>	1,6%	3,6%	0,4%
Egypt	756	806	834	857	806	<b>760</b>	-5,7%	2,3%	0,8%
Morocco	282	272	268	275	290	<b>286</b>	-1,6%	3,2%	0,3%
South Africa	561	555	578	555	556	<b>533</b>	-4,1%	0,3%	0,5%
Eastern Africa	484	507	559	573	604	<b>623</b>	3,1%	4,8%	0,6%
Middle Africa	246	262	254	250	251	<b>257</b>	2,5%	5,9%	0,3%
Western Africa	589	555	563	605	677	<b>703</b>	3,9%	4,3%	0,7%
Other Northern Africa	347	357	318	291	309	<b>321</b>	4,2%	-1,2%	0,3%

Other Southern Africa	53	55	58	60	61	<b>62</b>	1,6%	4,0%	0,1%
<b>Total Africa</b>	<b>3705</b>	<b>3770</b>	<b>3857</b>	<b>3878</b>	3962	3959	-0,1%	2,7%	4,0%
Australia	1034	1047	1005	1038	1055	<b>1094</b>	3,7%	1,2%	1,1%
Bangladesh	108	120	127	137	153	<b>176</b>	14,8%	7,2%	0,2%
China	10750	11239	11986	12304	12840	<b>13525</b>	5,3%	5,1%	13,5%
China Hong Kong SAR	352	336	368	380	427	<b>434</b>	1,6%	2,9%	0,4%
India	3789	3914	4245	4654	4870	<b>5156</b>	5,9%	5,0%	5,2%
Indonesia	1677	1708	1571	1628	1696	<b>1785</b>	5,2%	2,5%	1,8%
Japan	4516	4303	4151	4019	3975	<b>3854</b>	-3,1%	-2,3%	3,9%
Malaysia	802	796	790	807	793	<b>814</b>	2,6%	1,2%	0,8%
New Zealand	151	154	160	163	175	<b>173</b>	-1,2%	1,3%	0,2%
Pakistan	442	458	505	566	589	<b>498</b>	-15,4%	4,4%	0,5%
Philippines	326	347	397	427	459	<b>466</b>	1,5%	4,5%	0,5%
Singapore	1225	1268	1338	1385	1419	<b>1449</b>	2,1%	4,4%	1,5%
South Korea	2464	2463	2587	2781	2811	<b>2793</b>	-0,6%	1,6%	2,8%
Sri Lanka	82	71	90	105	113	<b>112</b>	-1,3%	2,2%	0,1%
Taiwan	981	1013	1021	1046	1069	<b>1075</b>	0,5%	-0,4%	1,1%
Thailand	1299	1309	1360	1396	1444	<b>1478</b>	2,3%	3,4%	1,5%
Vietnam	398	409	445	471	498	<b>522</b>	4,9%	5,8%	0,5%
Other Asia Pacific	364	388	408	436	449	<b>461</b>	2,8%	6,0%	0,5%
<b>Total Asia Pacific</b>	<b>30759</b>	<b>31343</b>	<b>32551</b>	<b>33743</b>	<b>34835</b>	<b>35863</b>	3,0%	2,9%	35,9%
Total World	92276	93194	<b>95048</b>	<b>96737</b>	<b>98406</b>	<b>99843</b>	<b>1,5%</b>	<b>1,2%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
of which: OECD	45782	45455	46086	46688	47199	<b>47466</b>	0,6%	-0,5%	47,5%
Non-OECD	46494	47739	48961	50049	51206	<b>52377</b>	2,3%	3,2%	52,5%
European Union	12848	12663	12855	13091	13356	<b>13302</b>	-0,4%	-1,1%	13,3%

Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

In geographic terms, the greatest consumption of oil is noted in Asia Pacific (35.9%), North America (24.8%), Europe (15.3%), and the Middle East (9.2%) (BP Report, 2019). The following countries are the largest consumers of oil: United States (20.5%), Brazil (3.1%), Germany (2.3%), Italy (1.3%), United Kingdom (1.6%), Russia (9.2%), Saudi Arabia (3.7%), People's Republic of China (13.5%), India (5.2%), Indonesia (1.8%), Japan (3.9%), Singapore (1.5%), North Korea (2.8%), Taiwan (1.1%), and Thailand (1.1%) (BP Report, 2019). During the period between 2007 and 2017, the consumption of oil in the European Union decreased by 1.1% (BP, Report 2019). The consumption of natural gas worldwide is distributed in a similar way to the consumption of oil (Table 5).

Table 5  
Global consumption of natural gas in billion square meters during the period  
2013–2018

Country/yea							Growth rate per annum		Share
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018	2007- 17	2018
Canada	104,3	109,6	109,8	105,9	109,7	<b>115,7</b>	5,5%	1,9%	3,0%
Mexico	77,8	78,8	80,8	83,0	86,4	<b>89,5</b>	3,6%	4,2%	2,3%
US	707,0	722,3	743,6	749,1	739,4	<b>817,1</b>	10,5%	1,7%	21,2%
<b>Total North America</b>	<b>889,1</b>	<b>910,7</b>	<b>934,1</b>	<b>938,0</b>	<b>935,5</b>	<b>1022,3</b>	<b>9,3%</b>	<b>1,9%</b>	<b>26,6%</b>
Argentina	46,0	46,2	46,7	48,2	48,3	<b>48,7</b>	0,8%	1,2%	1,3%
Brazil	38,4	40,7	42,9	37,1	37,6	<b>35,9</b>	-4,6%	5,6%	0,9%
Chile	5,3	4,4	4,8	5,9	5,6	<b>6,4</b>	14,2%	1,2%	0,2%
Colombia	10,5	11,4	11,2	11,8	12,2	<b>13,0</b>	7,1%	5,4%	0,3%
Ecuador	0,9	0,9	0,8	0,9	0,8	<b>0,7</b>	-14,1%	4,2%	♦
Peru	5,9	6,7	7,1	7,6	6,7	<b>7,0</b>	4,4%	10,1%	0,2%
Trinidad & Tobago	17,4	17,0	17,0	15,1	15,3	<b>15,3</b>	0,3%	-0,8%	0,4%
Venezuela	32,3	34,0	37,0	37,5	38,8	<b>33,4</b>	-13,9%	0,4%	0,9%
Central America	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other Caribbean	3,6	3,7	3,7	3,8	3,5	<b>4,0</b>	16,0%	3,5%	0,1%
Other South America	3,3	3,5	3,4	3,6	3,8	<b>3,8</b>	1,5%	6,7%	0,1%
<b>Total S. &amp; Cent. America</b>	<b>163,5</b>	<b>168,5</b>	<b>174,7</b>	<b>171,6</b>	<b>172,6</b>	<b>168,4</b>	<b>-2,5%</b>	<b>2,3%</b>	<b>4,4%</b>
Austria	8,2	7,5	8,0	8,3	9,1	<b>8,7</b>	-4,2%	0,7%	0,2%
Belgium	16,5	14,5	15,8	16,2	16,4	<b>16,9</b>	2,8%	-0,7%	0,4%
Bulgaria	2,8	2,7	3,0	3,1	3,2	<b>3,0</b>	-5,9%	-0,5%	0,1%
Croatia	2,7	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,9	<b>2,8</b>	-2,8%	-0,7%	0,1%
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
Czech Republic	8,1	7,2	7,5	8,2	8,4	<b>8,0</b>	-4,7%	-0,1%	0,2%
Denmark	3,8	3,3	3,3	3,4	3,2	<b>3,1</b>	-2,9%	-3,8%	0,1%
Estonia	0,6	0,5	0,4	0,5	0,5	<b>0,5</b>	2,4%	-6,9%	♦
Finland	3,0	2,7	2,3	2,0	1,8	<b>2,0</b>	11,5%	-7,7%	0,1%
France	45,1	37,9	40,8	44,5	44,8	<b>42,7</b>	-4,6%	♦	1,1%
Germany	85,0	73,9	77,0	84,9	89,7	<b>88,3</b>	-1,6%	0,1%	2,3%
Greece	3,7	2,8	3,1	4,0	4,8	<b>4,7</b>	-1,8%	2,2%	0,1%
Hungary	9,1	8,1	8,7	9,3	9,9	<b>9,6</b>	-3,3%	-2,2%	0,2%
Iceland	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ireland	4,5	4,3	4,4	4,9	5,0	<b>5,2</b>	3,8%	0,1%	0,1%
Italy	66,7	59,0	64,3	67,5	71,6	<b>69,2</b>	-3,3%	-1,3%	1,8%
Latvia	1,4	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,2	<b>1,4</b>	14,6%	-2,9%	♦
Lithuania	2,5	2,4	2,4	2,1	2,2	<b>2,2</b>	0,4%	-4,0%	0,1%
Luxembourg	1,0	1,0	0,9	0,8	0,8	<b>0,8</b>	-1,4%	-4,9%	♦

Netherlands	39,1	34,5	34,1	35,2	36,1	<b>35,7</b>	-1,1%	-0,7%	0,9%
North Macedonia	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,3	<b>0,2</b>	-7,5%	10,2%	♦
Norway	4,0	4,3	4,5	4,4	4,6	<b>4,5</b>	-2,2%	0,9%	0,1%
Poland	17,4	17,0	17,1	18,3	19,2	<b>19,7</b>	2,9%	2,9%	0,5%
Portugal	4,3	4,1	4,8	5,1	6,3	<b>5,9</b>	-7,6%	3,7%	0,2%
Romania	11,4	11,0	10,4	10,5	11,2	<b>10,9</b>	-2,8%	-2,8%	0,3%
Slovakia	5,6	4,4	4,5	4,5	4,8	<b>4,7</b>	-3,3%	-2,1%	0,1%
Slovenia	0,8	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	<b>0,9</b>	-1,1%	-2,1%	♦
Spain	30,3	27,5	28,5	29,1	31,7	<b>31,5</b>	-0,8%	-1,5%	0,8%
Sweden	1,1	0,9	0,9	1,0	0,8	<b>0,8</b>	2,4%	-2,6%	♦
Switzerland	3,2	2,8	3,0	3,1	3,1	<b>3,0</b>	-5,0%	1,3%	0,1%
Turkey	44,0	46,6	46,0	44,5	51,6	<b>47,3</b>	-8,3%	4,3%	1,2%
Ukraine	47,7	40,3	32,0	31,4	30,2	<b>30,6</b>	1,3%	-7,5%	0,8%
United Kingdom	76,3	70,1	72,0	81,2	78,8	<b>78,9</b>	0,1%	-1,9%	2,0%
Other Europe	4,2	4,1	4,5	4,6	5,3	<b>5,3</b>	-0,1%	2,2%	0,1%
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>554,4</b>	<b>500,0</b>	<b>508,8</b>	<b>537,6</b>	<b>560,4</b>	549,0	-2,1%	-1,0%	14,3%
Azerbaijan	9,4	9,9	11,1	10,9	10,6	<b>10,8</b>	1,9%	1,9%	0,3%
Belarus	19,3	19,1	17,9	17,8	18,2	<b>19,3</b>	6,1%	-0,7%	0,5%
Kazakhstan	13,6	15,0	15,3	15,8	15,9	<b>19,4</b>	22,4%	4,1%	0,5%
Russian Federation	424,9	422,2	408,7	420,6	431,1	<b>454,5</b>	5,4%	0,1%	11,8%
Turkmenistan	19,3	20,0	25,4	24,1	25,3	<b>28,4</b>	12,0%	8,5%	0,7%
USSR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a
Uzbekistan	46,2	48,5	46,3	43,3	43,1	<b>42,6</b>	-1,2%	-0,8%	1,1%
Other CIS	4,8	5,3	5,2	5,1	5,1	<b>5,7</b>	13,2%	-1,5%	0,1%
<b>Total CIS</b>	<b>537,3</b>	<b>539,9</b>	<b>530,0</b>	<b>537,7</b>	<b>549,3</b>	<b>580,8</b>	<b>5,7%</b>	<b>0,3%</b>	<b>15,1%</b>
Iran	153,8	173,4	184,0	196,3	209,9	<b>225,6</b>	7,4%	5,9%	5,9%
Iraq	7,1	7,5	7,3	9,9	12,7	<b>17,0</b>	33,9%	10,9%	0,4%
Israel	6,6	7,2	8,1	9,2	9,9	<b>10,5</b>	6,4%	14,2%	0,3%
Kuwait	17,8	17,9	20,3	21,1	21,0	<b>21,8</b>	3,6%	7,0%	0,6%
Oman	21,7	21,3	23,0	22,8	23,3	<b>24,9</b>	6,9%	6,7%	0,6%
Qatar	35,6	38,6	42,5	40,4	43,1	<b>41,9</b>	-2,8%	8,4%	1,1%
Saudi Arabia	95,0	97,3	99,2	105,3	109,3	<b>112,1</b>	2,6%	4,4%	2,9%
United Arab Emirates	64,7	63,4	71,5	72,7	74,4	<b>76,6</b>	2,9%	4,5%	2,0%
Other Middle East	21,0	20,9	22,4	23,0	23,4	<b>22,7</b>	-2,9%	1,8%	0,6%
<b>Total Middle East</b>	<b>423,3</b>	<b>447,5</b>	<b>478,3</b>	<b>500,9</b>	<b>527,0</b>	<b>553,1</b>	<b>4,9%</b>	<b>5,6%</b>	<b>14,4%</b>
Algeria	32,1	36,1	37,9	38,6	38,9	<b>42,7</b>	9,9%	5,2%	1,1%
Egypt	49,5	46,2	46,0	49,4	55,9	<b>59,6</b>	6,5%	4,2%	1,5%
Morocco	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	<b>1,0</b>	-9,6%	6,7%	♦
South Africa	4,1	4,3	4,3	4,5	4,4	<b>4,3</b>	-2,2%	1,6%	0,1%
Eastern Africa	1,1	1,3	1,6	2,0	2,0	<b>2,2</b>	7,5%	13,2%	0,1%
Middle Africa	3,7	3,6	3,5	4,4	4,5	<b>4,4</b>	-1,6%	5,1%	0,1%
Western Africa	12,7	16,0	23,9	24,6	23,0	<b>24,4</b>	6,2%	6,3%	0,6%



Other Northern Africa	12,3	11,3	9,7	10,3	10,9	<b>11,4</b>	4,3%	0,6%	0,3%
Other Southern Africa	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	♦
<b>Total Africa</b>	<b>116,6</b>	<b>119,9</b>	<b>128,1</b>	<b>135,0</b>	<b>140,8</b>	<b>150,0</b>	<b>6,6%</b>	<b>4,5%</b>	<b>3,9%</b>
Australia	37,2	40,1	42,1	41,7	41,2	<b>41,4</b>	0,4%	3,6%	1,1%
Bangladesh	22,0	23,0	25,9	26,5	26,7	<b>28,4</b>	6,4%	5,7%	0,7%
China	171,9	188,4	194,7	209,4	240,4	<b>283,0</b>	17,7%	13,0%	7,4%
China Hong Kong SAR	2,5	2,4	3,0	3,1	3,1	<b>3,0</b>	-3,2%	1,9%	0,1%
India	49,0	48,5	47,8	50,8	53,7	<b>58,1</b>	8,1%	3,3%	1,5%
Indonesia	41,4	41,5	41,0	39,1	38,5	<b>39,0</b>	1,1%	1,1%	1,0%
Japan	123,5	124,8	118,7	116,4	117,0	<b>115,7</b>	-1,1%	2,1%	3,0%
Malaysia	44,6	44,7	43,9	42,4	41,8	<b>41,3</b>	-1,2%	0,3%	1,1%
New Zealand	4,7	5,2	4,8	4,8	5,0	<b>4,3</b>	-12,9%	1,7%	0,1%
Pakistan	35,6	35,0	36,5	38,7	40,7	<b>43,6</b>	7,0%	1,9%	1,1%
Philippines	3,4	3,5	3,3	3,8	3,8	<b>4,1</b>	8,3%	0,7%	0,1%
Singapore	10,0	10,4	11,6	11,9	12,3	<b>12,3</b>	♦	4,2%	0,3%
South Korea	55,0	50,0	45,6	47,6	49,8	<b>55,9</b>	12,4%	3,2%	1,5%
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
Taiwan	17,9	18,9	20,2	21,0	23,2	<b>23,7</b>	1,8%	7,1%	0,6%
Thailand	48,9	49,9	51,0	50,6	50,1	<b>49,9</b>	-0,3%	3,6%	1,3%
Vietnam	9,4	9,9	10,3	10,2	9,5	<b>9,6</b>	1,3%	3,4%	0,3%
Other Asia Pacific	8,6	10,1	12,0	11,4	11,4	<b>12,0</b>	5,3%	5,9%	0,3%
<b>Total Asia Pacific</b>	<b>685,5</b>	<b>706,2</b>	<b>712,5</b>	<b>729,3</b>	<b>768,3</b>	<b>825,3</b>	<b>7,4%</b>	<b>5,0%</b>	<b>21,4%</b>
<b>Total World</b>	<b>3369,8</b>	<b>3392,6</b>	<b>3466,5</b>	<b>3550,2</b>	<b>3654,0</b>	<b>3848,9</b>	<b>5,3%</b>	<b>2,2%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
of which: OECD	1604,4	1579,3	1612,2	1646,8	1669,2	<b>1750,6</b>	4,9%	1,3%	45,5%
Non-OECD	1765,4	1813,3	1854,2	1903,4	1984,8	<b>2098,3</b>	5,7%	3,1%	54,5%
European Union	451,2	401,7	418,7	449,3	465,7	<b>458,5</b>	-1,6%	-0,8%	11,9%

Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

In geographic terms, the greatest consumption of gas is in North America (26.6%), Asia Pacific (21.4%), Europe (14.3%), the former Soviet Union countries (15.1%), and the Middle East (14.4%) (BP Report, 2019). The following countries have the greatest share in the global consumption of gas: Canada (3%), USA (21.2%), Mexico (2.3%), France (1.1%), Germany (2.3%), Italy (1.8%), Turkey (1.2%), United Kingdom (2%), Russia (11.8%), Uzbekistan (1.1%), Iran (5.9%), Qatar (1.1%), Saudi Arabia (2.9%), UAE (2.0%), Algeria (1.1%), Egypt (1.5%), People's Republic of China (7.4%), Japan (3%), Malaysia (1.1%), Pakistan (1.1%), South Korea (1.5%), and Thailand (1.3%) (BP Report, 2019).

Table 6  
Global consumption of coal in million tonnes of oil equivalent during the period  
2013–2018 (Mtoe)

Country/year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Growth rate per annum		Share 2018
							2018	2007- 17	
Canada	20,8	19,6	19,9	18,7	18,6	<b>14,4</b>	-22,5%	-4,8%	0,4%
Mexico	12,7	12,7	12,7	12,4	15,2	<b>11,9</b>	-21,7%	3,0%	0,3%
US	431,8	430,9	372,2	340,6	331,3	<b>317,0</b>	-4,3%	-4,9%	8,4%
<b>Total North America</b>	<b>465,4</b>	<b>463,2</b>	<b>404,8</b>	<b>371,7</b>	<b>365,1</b>	<b>343,3</b>	-6,0%	-4,6%	9,1%
Argentina	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,0	1,1	<b>1,2</b>	13,0%	-1,4%	♦
Brazil	16,5	17,5	17,6	15,9	16,6	<b>15,9</b>	-4,0%	2,0%	0,4%
Chile	7,5	7,6	7,3	7,4	7,7	<b>7,7</b>	-0,4%	6,6%	0,2%
Colombia	5,0	5,3	5,0	6,3	5,2	<b>5,9</b>	13,4%	4,4%	0,2%
Ecuador	-	-	-	-	-	-	♦	♦	♦
Peru	0,9	0,9	0,8	1,0	0,6	<b>0,9</b>	61,8%	-5,6%	♦
Trinidad & Tobago	-	-	-	-	-	-	♦	♦	♦
Venezuela	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	-9,9%	-2,1%	♦
Central America	1,1	1,1	1,3	1,5	1,5	<b>2,2</b>	49,7%	12,4%	0,1%
Other Caribbean	2,1	2,4	2,2	2,2	2,0	<b>2,1</b>	1,8%	-0,5%	0,1%
Other South America	^	^	^	^	^	^	-0,4%	1,8%	♦
<b>Total S. &amp; Cent. America</b>	<b>34,6</b>	<b>36,4</b>	<b>35,8</b>	<b>35,5</b>	34,8	36,0	3,7%	2,9%	1,0%
Austria	3,3	3,0	3,2	3,0	3,1	<b>2,9</b>	-8,4%	-2,1%	0,1%
Belgium	3,4	3,3	3,4	3,2	3,1	<b>3,3</b>	4,9%	-3,9%	0,1%
Bulgaria	5,9	6,4	6,6	5,7	6,1	<b>5,5</b>	-10,1%	-2,6%	0,1%
Croatia	0,7	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,4	<b>0,4</b>	-8,6%	-5,5%	♦
Cyprus	^	^	^	^	^	^	345,8%	-19,9%	♦
Czech Republic	16,9	16,4	16,3	16,4	15,6	<b>15,7</b>	1,0%	-2,8%	0,4%
Denmark	3,2	2,6	1,7	2,1	1,6	<b>1,6</b>	2,0%	-10,3%	♦
Estonia	4,2	4,2	3,8	3,9	4,3	<b>4,5</b>	6,6%	1,9%	0,1%
Finland	5,0	4,5	3,8	4,4	4,0	<b>4,3</b>	6,7%	-5,4%	0,1%
France	11,6	8,6	8,4	8,2	9,3	<b>8,4</b>	-9,6%	-3,2%	0,2%
Germany	82,8	79,6	78,7	76,5	71,5	<b>66,4</b>	-7,2%	-1,9%	1,8%
Greece	7,0	6,7	5,6	4,4	4,8	<b>4,7</b>	-2,8%	-6,0%	0,1%
Hungary	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,2	2,2	<b>2,2</b>	-2,4%	-3,3%	0,1%
Iceland	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	♦	0,4%	♦
Ireland	2,0	2,0	2,2	2,1	1,8	<b>1,4</b>	-19,8%	-2,6%	♦
Italy	13,5	13,2	12,3	11,0	9,6	<b>8,9</b>	-7,7%	-5,1%	0,2%
Latvia	0,1	0,1	^	^	^	<b>0,1</b>	38,9%	-9,4%	♦
Lithuania	0,3	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	7,5%	-2,3%	♦

Luxembourg	^	0,1	^	0,1	^	^	-8,3%	-5,3%	♦
Netherlands	8,2	9,1	11,0	10,2	9,1	<b>8,2</b>	-10,5%	0,8%	0,2%
North Macedonia	1,2	1,1	1,0	0,9	1,0	<b>1,0</b>	0,4%	-4,1%	♦
Norway	0,8	0,9	0,8	0,8	0,8	<b>0,8</b>	3,3%	1,8%	♦
Poland	53,4	49,4	48,7	49,5	49,8	<b>50,5</b>	1,5%	-1,2%	1,3%
Portugal	2,6	2,7	3,3	2,8	3,2	<b>2,7</b>	-16,1%	1,2%	0,1%
Romania	5,9	5,8	6,0	5,4	5,4	<b>5,3</b>	-1,2%	-5,8%	0,1%
Slovakia	3,4	3,4	3,2	3,2	3,3	<b>3,5</b>	4,1%	-1,6%	0,1%
Slovenia	1,3	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	<b>1,1</b>	-1,5%	-3,2%	♦
Spain	11,4	11,6	13,7	10,5	13,4	<b>11,1</b>	-17,3%	-3,9%	0,3%
Sweden	2,2	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,0	<b>2,0</b>	-0,3%	-3,5%	0,1%
Switzerland	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	♦	-4,5%	♦
Turkey	31,6	36,1	34,7	38,5	39,5	<b>42,3</b>	7,2%	3,0%	1,1%
Ukraine	41,6	35,6	27,3	32,5	25,7	<b>26,2</b>	2,0%	-4,3%	0,7%
United Kingdom	37,0	29,8	23,1	11,1	9,1	<b>7,6</b>	-16,6%	-13,4%	0,2%
Other Europe	14,6	12,0	13,7	14,3	14,2	<b>14,2</b>	0,1%	1,2%	0,4%
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>377,6</b>	<b>354,5</b>	<b>339,2</b>	<b>326,8</b>	<b>315,5</b>	<b>307,1</b>	<b>-2,7%</b>	<b>-2,6%</b>	<b>8,1%</b>
Azerbaijan	^	^	^	^	^	^	♦	-13,0%	♦
Belarus	0,8	0,8	0,7	0,8	0,8	<b>1,0</b>	13,7%	1,9%	♦
Kazakhstan	37,5	37,0	34,2	33,9	36,4	<b>40,8</b>	12,2%	1,6%	1,1%
Russian Federation	90,5	87,6	92,1	89,3	83,9	<b>88,0</b>	4,9%	-1,1%	2,3%
Turkmenistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	♦	♦	♦
USSR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a
Uzbekistan	1,1	1,2	1,1	2,7	3,5	<b>3,1</b>	-11,1%	13,5%	0,1%
Other CIS	1,4	1,7	1,8	1,6	1,8	<b>2,0</b>	10,6%	8,4%	0,1%
<b>Total CIS</b>	<b>131,4</b>	<b>128,3</b>	130,0	128,3	126,4	134,9	6,7%	-0,1%	3,6%
Iran	1,4	1,6	1,6	1,5	1,4	<b>1,5</b>	4,3%	-0,9%	♦
Iraq	-	-	-	-	-	-	♦	♦	♦
Israel	7,1	6,6	6,5	5,5	5,0	<b>4,7</b>	-6,5%	-4,6%	0,1%
Kuwait	0,3	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	♦	81,9%	♦
Oman	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	♦	35,8%	♦
Qatar	-	-	-	-	-	-	♦	♦	♦
Saudi Arabia	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	<b>0,1</b>	♦	6,5%	♦
United Arab Emirates	1,8	2,0	1,7	1,8	1,0	<b>1,1</b>	4,8%	22,2%	♦
Other Middle East	0,5	0,6	0,4	0,4	0,4	<b>0,4</b>	♦	11,2%	♦
<b>Total Middle East</b>	<b>11,2</b>	11,2	10,5	9,7	8,2	7,9	-2,7%	-1,9%	0,2%
Algeria	0,2	0,2	0,1	^	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	♦	-13,3%	♦
Egypt	0,4	0,4	1,1	1,7	1,6	<b>2,8</b>	68,7%	7,9%	0,1%
Morocco	3,0	4,0	4,4	4,3	4,5	<b>5,4</b>	22,4%	3,3%	0,1%
South Africa	88,4	89,5	85,2	86,9	84,3	<b>86,0</b>	2,0%	0,1%	2,3%
Eastern Africa	3,8	5,9	4,9	3,8	4,4	<b>4,5</b>	1,7%	6,2%	0,1%
Middle Africa	^	^	^	^	^	^	♦	-25,2%	♦

Western Africa	0,3	0,5	0,5	0,9	1,0	<b>1,1</b>	5,3%	18,2%	♦
Other Northern Africa	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	♦
Other Southern Africa	1,2	1,4	1,4	1,4	1,6	<b>1,5</b>	-7,0%	4,9%	♦
<b>Total Africa</b>	<b>97,2</b>	<b>101,9</b>	<b>97,7</b>	<b>99,1</b>	<b>97,6</b>	<b>101,4</b>	<b>3,9%</b>	<b>0,6%</b>	<b>2,7%</b>
Australia	45,4	45,0	46,5	46,5	45,1	<b>44,3</b>	-1,8%	-2,1%	1,2%
Bangladesh	1,0	0,9	2,3	1,7	1,9	<b>2,1</b>	12,1%	11,9%	0,1%
China	1969,1	1954,5	1914,0	1889,1	1890,4	<b>1906,7</b>	0,9%	1,8%	50,5%
China Hong Kong SAR	7,8	8,1	6,7	6,7	6,3	<b>6,3</b>	♦	-1,7%	0,2%
India	352,8	387,5	395,3	400,4	415,9	<b>452,2</b>	8,7%	5,7%	12,0%
Indonesia	57,0	45,1	51,2	53,4	57,2	<b>61,6</b>	7,7%	4,7%	1,6%
Japan	121,2	119,1	119,3	118,8	119,9	<b>117,5</b>	-2,1%	0,2%	3,1%
Malaysia	15,1	15,4	17,4	18,9	19,3	<b>21,1</b>	9,4%	8,1%	0,6%
New Zealand	1,6	1,4	1,4	1,2	1,2	<b>1,3</b>	1,3%	-3,0%	♦
Pakistan	3,2	4,7	4,7	5,3	7,1	<b>11,6</b>	63,3%	2,7%	0,3%
Philippines	10,0	10,6	11,6	13,1	15,5	<b>16,3</b>	5,2%	11,1%	0,4%
Singapore	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,9	<b>0,9</b>	1,6%	60,1%	♦
South Korea	81,5	84,4	85,4	81,5	86,2	<b>88,2</b>	2,4%	3,7%	2,3%
Sri Lanka	0,5	0,9	1,2	1,3	1,4	<b>1,2</b>	-14,3%	41,5%	♦
Taiwan	38,6	39,0	37,8	38,6	39,4	<b>39,3</b>	-0,3%	0,2%	1,0%
Thailand	16,2	17,9	17,5	17,7	18,3	<b>18,5</b>	1,0%	2,8%	0,5%
Vietnam	17,2	20,7	26,1	28,1	27,9	<b>34,3</b>	22,9%	16,3%	0,9%
Other Asia Pacific	11,4	12,9	12,2	16,1	16,9	<b>18,0</b>	7,0%	-1,0%	0,5%
<b>Total Asia Pacific</b>	<b>2749,7</b>	<b>2768,6</b>	<b>2751,0</b>	<b>2738,9</b>	<b>2770,8</b>	<b>2841,3</b>	<b>2,5%</b>	<b>2,3%</b>	<b>75,3%</b>
<b>Total World</b>	<b>3867,0</b>	<b>3864,2</b>	<b>3769,0</b>	<b>3710,0</b>	<b>3718,4</b>	<b>3772,1</b>	<b>1,4%</b>	<b>0,7%</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
of which: OECD	1037,1	1020,1	954,9	900,0	892,9	<b>861,3</b>	-3,5%	-2,7%	22,8%
Non-OECD	2829,9	2844,1	2814,0	2810,1	2825,6	<b>2910,8</b>	3,0%	2,2%	77,2%
European Union #	287,6	268,6	261,4	239,7	234,2	<b>222,4</b>	-5,1%	-3,3%	5,9%

Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

In geographic terms, the greatest quantities of coal are consumed in Asia Pacific (75.3%), North America (9.1%), and Europe (8.1%) (BP Report 2019). The following countries are characterised by the greatest consumption of coal: USA (8.4%), Russia (2.3%), People's Republic of China (50.5%), India (12%), Japan (3.1%), and South Korea (2.3%) (BP Report, 2019). One country in particular has very high consumption (the People's Republic of China).

As far as rare-earth metals are concerned, their distribution and extraction are even more densely concentrated in several countries than is the case with energy sources (Table 7).

Table 7  
Extraction and reserves of rare-earth elements

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Growth rate per annum		Share	Reserves		R/P ratio
							2018	2007-17	2018	At end of 2018	Share	
Australia	1,3	6,2	11,9	13,9	17,3	<b>18,6</b>	7,5%	n/a	11,1%	3400	2,9%	183
Brazil	0,3	-	0,9	2,2	1,7	<b>1,0</b>	-41,2%	10,2%	0,6%	22000	18,8%	22000
China	93,8	105,0	105,0	105,0	105,0	<b>120,0</b>	14,3%	-1,3%	72,0%	44000	37,7%	367
India	0,3	1,7	1,0	1,5	1,5	<b>1,8</b>	20,0%	45,6%	1,1%	6900	5,9%	3833
Malaysia	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,3	0,2	<b>0,2</b>	11,1%	-7,2%	0,1%	30	0,0%	150
Russian Federation	1,4	2,1	2,3	3,1	2,7	<b>2,7</b>	♦	♦	1,6%	17019	14,6%	6303
Thailand	0,1	1,9	0,8	1,6	1,3	<b>1,0</b>	-23,1%	n/a	0,6%	n/a	n/a	n/a
US	5,5	5,4	5,9	-	-	<b>15,0</b>	n/a	n/a	9,0%	1400	1,2%	93
Rest of World <sup>2</sup>	0,1	-	0,3	0,2	0,3	<b>6,4</b>	2460,0%	n/a	3,8%	22000	18,8%	3438
Total World	103,0	122,6	128,3	127,8	129,9	166,7	28,3%	0,5%	100,0%	116749	100,0%	701

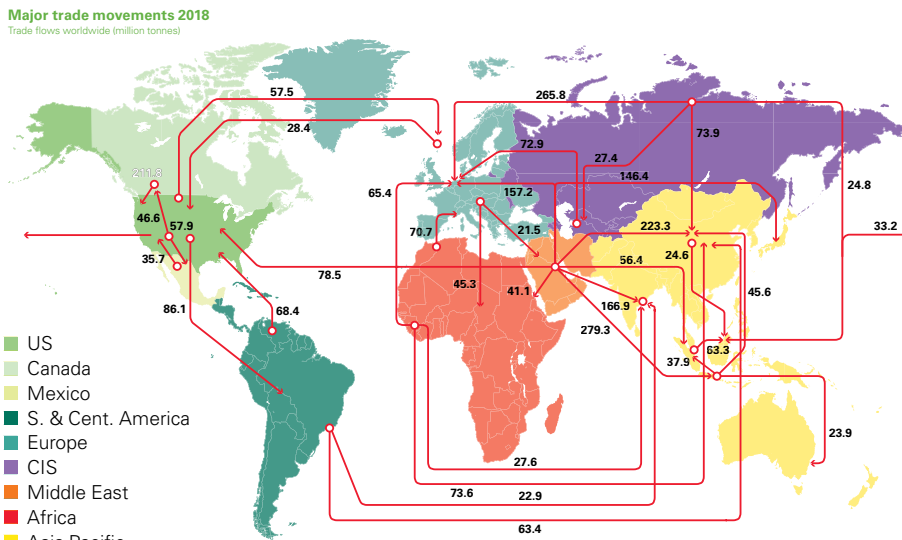
Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

China has the greatest share in the extraction of rare-earth metals (72%), followed by Australia (11.1%) and the USA (9.0%) (BP Report, 2019). When it comes to the distribution of these resources, the People's Republic of China has 37.7%, Brazil 18.8%, Russia 14.6%, India 5.9%, and the USA only 1.2% (BP Report, 2019). Other countries have resources at the level of 18.8%, which accounts for 3.8% of global extraction.

The uneven distribution among countries of resources makes it possible to use them to achieve geopolitical goals. The situation is particularly striking in the case of rare-earth metals, which have no substitutes; the concentration of the extraction and reserves of rare-earth metals in just a few countries has led to a situation in which it is not possible to create a competitive market, which results in the politicisation of this resource. In the case of oil, this led to an oligopoly in which OPEC countries, which control 75% of oil production, are able to compromise in order to control the market, despite differences of opinion on the levels of extraction. This is not the case with gas and coal. Differences in the geographic distribution of the centres of supply and demand for resources make

transport infrastructure a geopolitical issue. Controlling transmission by controlling sea routes or land/sea infrastructure of oil and gas pipelines becomes equally as important as ensuring the uninterrupted supply of resources. With 44% of oil going through the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca to reach China, these straits are areas of particular strategic importance for China (Map 1).

Map 1  
Global transport of oil in 2018



Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

When it comes to transport, recent changes have improved gas transportation due to the development of LNG technology, which has changed the gas market from regional to global and has freed countries from dependence on the infrastructure of gas transmission pipelines that transport resources from only one supplier.

## Examples of the use of resources to achieve political goals

Only the strongest countries are able to harness resources to achieve their political goals. By designating certain areas of land or sea as strategic,

they seek to retain their influence in these areas through resources. The aim is to control the source of the resources in other countries in order to control the direction of the export of these resources, which in turn will control the price of these resources. This involves exerting political pressure (regarding contracts) or economic pressure (based on basic macroeconomic indicators). The impact on an economy of the availability and prices of energy sources and the macroeconomic indicators of countries that import them means the economic situation of these countries depends on the policy of the energy-exporting countries. Not all countries that have resources use them to achieve their geopolitical goals. The Russian Federation, which played a dominant role in the supply of oil and gas to Poland in the past, and in the last decade supplied approximately 30% of these resources to the entire European Union, used resources to pursue its own political and economic interests (Książopolski, 2011b). Its position affected the rate of economic growth in Poland and the competitiveness of the Polish economy. In the last decade, the Polish chemical industry generated almost 10% of Poland's GDP (Książopolski, 2018). The effect of the burden on the economy from the import of oil is evident in the increase in the costs of this import from USD 8.3 billion in 2005 to USD 19.2 billion in 2008 and the increased imbalance of Poland's current account from -2.8% to -6.6% of the GDP in 2008; in quantitative terms, from USD -7.2 billion to USD -34.2 billion.

In 2012, inflation in Poland was directly influenced by the high costs of imported oil and gas. As a result of a negotiated agreement with Russia to reduce the prices of natural gas and oil, Poland faced lower expenditures on these imported resources, decreasing from a record level of USD 19 billion in 2008 to USD 14 billion in 2012 (International Monetary Fund, 2013). In Russia's dealings with Poland, Russia charged considerably higher prices than those offered to buyers in the countries of the "old" European Union. At the beginning of 2016, the price of gas was higher for Lithuania than for the Japanese market, despite the fact that Japan purchased more expensive LNG. Russia's resistance to the introduction of liberalisation packages to the gas market (which separates companies that export gas from operators of transmission networks) was a manifestation of its efforts to retain its privileged position in the market. These packages were supposed to increase competition

in the market and to counteract blockades in transmission and in access to the market.

Historically, there are many examples of the use of resources for geopolitical purposes. The most famous was the Arab states' reduction in the extraction and supply of oil to the United States, Western Europe, and Japan that occurred in response to the arms supplies sent to Israel during the Yom Kippur War (Księżopolski, 2011a). Following these decisions, the price of oil quadrupled between 1973 and 1974, resulting in increased export revenues for exporting countries and a severe increase in international debt. This increased expenditure on oil led to a significant deterioration in the current account balance of the countries involved (in 1974, the deficit for importing countries reached USD 31.9 billion). This oil shock was followed by a slowdown in the rate of economic growth (which in 1975 fell to -0.9% in the industrialised countries). There were also fluctuations and rises in interest rates due to the inflationary impulse in developed countries (Księżopolski, 2011a). This can be "treated as an example of an economic action affecting the entire financial system that hit not only selected Western countries" as "greater losses resulting from these restrictions were suffered by underdeveloped countries" (ibid.). The actions of oil exporters at that time resulted in a drastic deterioration in the development opportunities of all countries. The aim of the actions of the Arab states was to weaken support for Israel, but this goal was never achieved.

A second example of the use of energy sources to achieve geopolitical goals was the actions of the Russian Federation in its relations with Ukraine. Due to a lack of infrastructure in Ukraine, it is unable to import gas from anywhere other than Russia, a position Russia exploited in the 1990s, when Ukraine declared its independence. For many years, with varying degrees of intensity, Russia withheld gas supplies and dictated gas prices, obtaining significant concessions from Ukraine, such as the lease of the port of Sevastopol, which resulted in the subsequent secession of Crimea from Ukraine and its incorporation into Russia. Until the construction of Nord Stream I, Ukraine's only bargaining card in its dealings with Russia was the fact that the only route for the transmission of gas to European countries was through its territory. The strongest European countries, in particular Germany, were engaged in mitigating the policy of Russian domination. The construction of a direct link between Russia



and Germany changed the relationship between Russia and the countries of Central/Eastern Europe from interdependence to dependence, as the transportation of gas could now bypass them. Poland responded to this with the construction of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście, followed by the construction of the Baltic Pipe and the expansion of transmission infrastructure. The Russian objectives for using gas in their dealings with Ukraine included:

- obtaining the highest possible price for gas, which would lead to further destabilisation of the economic situation in Ukraine;
- strengthening Ukrainian economic dependence on the Russian gas sector by selling gas directly to its biggest customers;
- bringing about the collapse of the Ukrainian Naftohaz in order to take over its assets and make it easier to do business in this sector;
- discrediting Ukraine as a credible player in the international arena in terms of its ability to safely transport gas to Europe (80% of gas exports from Russia go through Ukraine) (Książkowski, 2011b).

Russia's success in these efforts can be evidenced by the fact that Nord Stream I bypassed Ukraine, and the construction of Nord Stream II made European countries less determined to act in defence of Ukraine's interests. In addition, Russia is expanding its abilities to export gas and oil to other markets, thus moving away from its dependence on the European Union, which until recently was its largest market. On the one hand, Russia has freed itself from the pressure of the European countries that have supported Ukraine by building a direct transmission infrastructure with the strongest European Union state, i.e. Germany; on the other hand, it has secured markets for its gas in other parts of the world. The power Russia holds in its ability to limit or stop gas imports weakens the pressure European countries are able to apply to it. Some of these initiatives took place later than the military action that was taken against Ukraine (such as the building of the Power of Siberia gas pipeline), which reveals Russia's miscalculation regarding the response of the West to its aggression against Ukraine. According to Asian researchers, "the Russian-European gas transportation system reflects the geopolitics of energy cooperation. Studying the impact of the geopolitics of the conflict in Ukraine on the plans regarding gas infrastructure in Russia and Europe facilitates understanding the trends

and directions of Russia's activities in gas cooperation" (Ma, Pei, Yi, Liu, & Zhang, 2019). Ukraine became the aim of Russia's aggression due to its lack of adequate actions in the energy infrastructure sector as well as its political actions; this led to the secession of part of Ukraine's territory (Crimea and possibly Donbas). The prelude to this was the use of resources to weaken Ukraine's position, which took the form of economic warfare, which involved:

- offering higher prices;
- seeking privileges on the market;
- taking over key infrastructure elements or companies in the fuel and energy sector;
- introducing long-term and unequal trade agreements;
- taking over the raw materials market and the electricity market (Księżopolski, 2011a).

Norway can serve as a positive example of an exporter of energy sources as it has based its policy on the market and the possibility of achieving satisfactory prices and trading volumes (Księżopolski, 2017).

One method of geopolitical exploitation of energy sources is through activities involving the takeover of energy companies. The PRC has taken advantage of the replacement of traditional energy sources by renewable energy sources and has taken over electricity transmission and distribution assets, which can be viewed as a foothold for its future expansion on the electricity market. Such activities are pursued by the State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC), controlled by the Chinese government. This company is present in, for example, Australia (41% of ElectraNet in 2012), Brazil (51% of Eletrobras), Portugal (25% of SGCC in 2012), and the Philippines (40% of NGCP in 2008). In all of these countries, SGCC is focused on acquiring power grid infrastructure and distribution (Księżopolski, 2011a). In Europe, China is capitalising on the results of the 2008 crisis and the budgetary problems of weaker countries in order to seize strategic beachheads for its future expansion (<http://www.energetyka24.com/nowy-jedwabny-szlak-chinska-strategia-przejmowania-infrastruktury>). In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Union and individual states adopted regulations that restrict the possibility of such actions. Russia wanted to take over the strategically important Lotos SA Group in Poland, which by virtue of access to the Northern Port could provide a strong foothold for expansion into the

Polish market, significantly reducing PKN Orlen's margins. Companies that have capital ties with Russia have applied for licenses for shale gas extraction to block such investments (Książopolski, 2013a). Russia has also taken measures to take over large gas consumers, such as the Azoty Group (the Azoty Chemical Plant in Police near Świnoujście consumes about 1 billion square meters of gas per year). The use of LNG would enable synergy between the terminal and the chemical plants. If Russia took over Grupa Azoty, there would be no such synergy and the gas imported to the gas port could be Russian gas, which contradicts the logic of the investment made to diversify gas suppliers (Książopolski, 2011b). At that time, Grupa Azoty consumed 17–18% of all gas in Poland and the sector generated 7% of Poland's GDP.

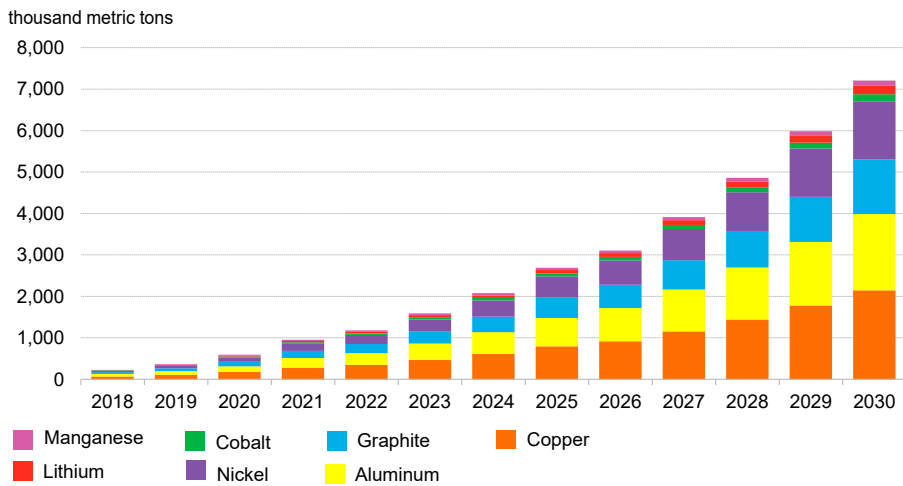
Summing up, geopolitical actions can have a negative impact on economic security and development (e.g. by blocking imports of a raw material or an energy carrier). The possibility of this impact exists "if there are no substitutes for this commodity in the country and they cannot be produced or supplied in a short time, and its lack will be felt by the whole economy; moreover, the condition of rigid demand for a given commodity should be met" (Książopolski, 2011a). Direct political actions are important, as is economic pressure that results in a higher level of inflation, which makes it impossible to reduce interest rates and to stimulate consumption and investment by directly affecting GDP dynamics. The current account deficit and the level of exchange rates affect the financial stability of the state, resulting in higher interest rates that are necessary to finance public debt.

## The use of rare-earth metals for geopolitical purposes

Rare-earth metals have both civilian (in the manufacture of computers, cameras, televisions, smart phones) and military applications. Lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, aluminium, and copper are necessary for the production of energy storage devices based on lithium-ion batteries. The most important metal is cobalt, about 10 kg of which is required for the production of an electric car (*The Annals of the University of Oradea*, 2019). DERA analysis indicates that cobalt consumption will increase

by 26% by 2026, of which 55% will be allocated for battery production. A Bloomberg analysis indicates that consumption of rare-earth metals such as copper and aluminium will increase from 1 million metric tonnes in 2018 to 7 million metric tonnes in 2030 (*Electric Vehicle Outlook*, 2018).

Figure 2  
Metals and materials demand from lithium-ion battery packs in passenger EVs



Source: *Electric Vehicle Outlook 2018*, Bloomberg New Energy Finance. Note: Copper includes copper current collectors and pack wiring. Aluminium includes aluminium current collectors, cell and pack materials and aluminium in cathode active materials.

Climate change is forcing countries to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which results in the process of energy transition. One of the measures used to reduce these emissions is to increase the share of renewable energy sources in the energy mix. On the one hand, the share of renewables in the energy system is increased; on the other hand, traditional energy sources have been replaced by electricity. The latter trend is visible in automotive transport, including passenger cars. Opportunities to increase the share of RES in the energy system require either energy storage or balancing the system through energy storage in the form of hydropower or pumped storage facilities. In view of climate change, the issue of access to rare-earth metals is a prerequisite for energy transition through increasing the share of renewable energy sources.

Rare-earth metals are crucial in the production of armaments as they are used in the building of missile guidance systems, aircraft propulsion systems, rockets, mine detectors, IFF devices, communication satellites, radars, optical devices, and lasers (Grasso, 2018). “The lack of guaranteed uninterrupted access to oil slowed Germany during the end of World War II, and rare-earth metals may play a similar role in a future conflict with China” (Butler, 2014). The importance of rare-earth metals as an object of political contestation translates into greater power gained in international relations. These issues have been and continue to be raised in many governmental analyses in the United States and the European Union, as well as in scientific studies (Bogner, 2012).

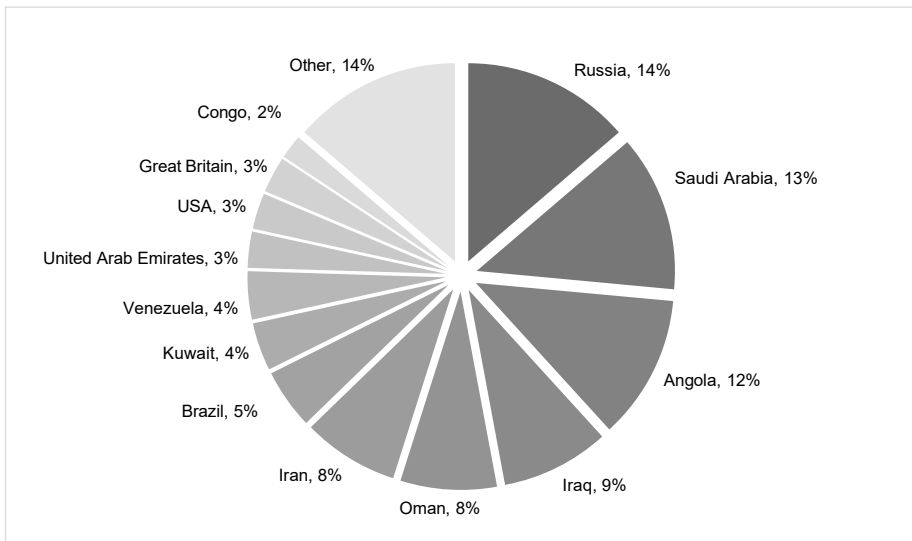
In 2010, the Chinese authorities reduced the export of rare-earth metals by 40% but remained the world market leader (with 90% of exploitation). This caused great concern in other countries and in the business world. The entire high-tech sector is estimated to be worth \$1 trillion, and as one journalist aptly put it: “Without several cents worth of neodymium, your \$100 computer won’t work. Without several dozen cents worth of dysprosium, your \$25,000 Toyota Prius won’t work” (Ramzy, 2013). The PRC’s actions triggered a response by the WTO. In 2012, the United States, the European Union, and Japan began discussions with the PRC on the reduction of export quotas. According to the WTO, the purpose of introducing quotas was not to protect the environment but to achieve industrial goals (Smith, 2014; Jebe, Mayer and Lee, 2013).

According to American analysts, “by reducing exports, the PRC also affects US smart weapons production” (Sanders, 2012), thus China uses rare-earth metals to directly achieve one of its geopolitical goals, i.e. the weakening of the US military potential. Some analysts believe that it is possible to apply an embargo on the export of rare-earth metals in a situation in which the US will be militarily engaged and will need increased use of these raw materials (*Apogee Consulting*, 2010). This leads to a situation in which arms companies are at the mercy of the PRC (*BBC News*, 2012). Experts observe that, in September 2010, China *de facto* imposed an embargo on the export of these raw materials to Japan (Sanders, 2012). This fits in with what Deng Xiaoping said in 1986, i.e. that rare-earth raw materials should be used to achieve an advantage (*ibid*).

## Measures to counteract the use of sources for geopolitical purposes

The policies of countries that are dependent on energy sources can be divided into short-term actions and long-term actions. Short-term actions consist in diversifying supplies, investing in infrastructure, creating reserves, searching for own deposits, and developing crisis response procedures. Diversification of supplies should lead to a situation in which a state is not dependent on a single supplier, i.e. it can satisfy its energy demands from another source. This prevents the use of energy sources for geopolitical purposes, but the possession of appropriate infrastructure is a necessary condition. An ideal diversification of supply can be seen in the case of oil in the PRC (Figure 3).

Figure 3  
Directions of the import of oil into China in 2018



Source: BP Report, 2019 (accessed on 20.04.2020).

Diversification is also provided by the development of RES (Książopolski, Pronińska and Sulowska, 2013). A country's exploitation of its own deposits is sometimes impossible due to geographical or

economic factors, but it is possible to conduct exploration and prepare for extraction with a view to using them in a crisis situation (data in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4). The storage of energy resources allows time to search for alternatives. Reserves of crude oil, the key fuel in the world today, are stored for only around 90 days due to the high cost of storage.

Technological changes are long-term measures (Książopolski, Pronińska and Sulowska, 2013). These are changes that improve energy efficiency and reduce the use of traditional energy sources (Książopolski, 2013b) or rare-earth materials and which build a circular economy. One option is to create interdependencies (e.g. Nord Stream I and II) that build direct relationships between a supplier and a customer and thus can politically guarantee continuity of supply and prices if a customer possesses the infrastructure to import from another direction. Ambrish Dhaka observed that Nord Stream I and II “are a joint venture aimed to ensure long-term supply and establish long-term cooperation” (Dhaka, 2009).

## Conclusions

The uneven distribution of resources, their limited reserves, and the demand for them translates into a situation in which states with imperial ambitions use energy sources to achieve their political goals. The fundamental problem here is the desire to maximise political and economic benefits rather than think in terms of the common good, love for one’s neighbour, and solidarity between all people. Climate change, and consequently the need to develop RES (Książopolski, 2016), shifts the focus of geopolitical interest from energy sources to rare-earth metals. In the future, this may block global energy transition (in which the costs will be borne by the poorest) as well as create centres of wealth that are even more concentrated in just a few countries.

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# Geopolitics and technology

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The article discusses the theoretical issues that are related to the relationship between technology and geopolitics.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** Key geopolitical concepts have evolved to include technology as a factor in overcoming the impact of physical determinants, such as terrain.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** Along with geographical conditions, technology is a key element in geopolitical considerations. The article discusses the importance of specific technologies and presents the theoretical determinants of the interactions between technological and geographical determinism.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Including technological factors in geopolitical reasoning facilitates the tracking of changes in the international environment. This is particularly evident in the context of the development of information and communication technologies that has been observed since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, technology, technological determinism, geographical determinism



## Definition of the term

At the beginning of this section, the following terms will be discussed as they are used in further considerations: technics and technology, civil and military technologies, disruptive technologies, offensive and defensive technologies, physiopolitics, geopolitics, geographical and technological determinism.

The PWN Dictionary of Polish Language [Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN] states that technics is a field of human activity that is based on knowledge (on a scientific basis); this activity aims to produce things or cause phenomena that do not occur in nature, and it transform the products of nature. Technology, in turn, is a branch of technics that deals with developing and implementing the most advantageous (in given circumstances) processes for the production and processing of raw materials, semi-finished products, and end products.

Three observations should be added to the above definitions. First, technologies (especially after 1945) were conventionally divided into two areas: civil technologies – developed by civilian entities who were not interested in their military application; and military technologies – developed by state and private entities (that meet the needs of the armed forces and are usually financed from the state budget). Many technologies that were developed within the military sector eventually found application in the civilian sphere (e.g. microprocessors, the internet, GPS systems). Second, processes related to the production and digital processing of information are now one of the key elements of value creation in the economy. Third, technology consists of many elements in terms of the physical artifacts and the people who operate them. Today, this division is becoming increasingly blurred as many of the technologies that are developed by the private sector find military application in weapons systems. In addition, so-called disruptive technologies (for example, the steam and combustion engine, electricity, and the internet) are gaining in importance as their implementation leads to fundamental changes in the way companies, entire sectors of the economy, and even countries operate (Christensen, 2000, pp. xviii–xix).

In terms of their focus on either attack or defence, military technologies are specified as being either offensive or defensive (cf. Lynn-Jones. 1995; van Evera, 1998). Nowadays, this division is blurred (as

a given weapon system can be assigned to both categories), but it facilitates understanding the differences in the behaviour of armed forces and states. An illustration of a defensive weapon system is the fortifications that formed the Maginot Line, which was supposed to protect France against a direct land attack by Germany in the years before the outbreak of World War II. An example of an offensive system is nuclear weapons, against which there is no fully effective defence system. Therefore, their destructive power also has defensive value: the threat of a retaliatory nuclear attack has meant that none of the states with nuclear weapons in their arsenal has used them in combat conditions since World War II.

The geographical factor, which is understood as a structural constant that influences the behaviour of political actors at both the micro and macro level, plays a crucial role in geopolitical considerations. For this reason, geopolitical reasoning is sometimes accused of determinism, i.e. of “attributing to factors absolute – timeless and unchangeable – characteristics that result from the shape and character of space” (Moczulski, 2009, p. 16). Critics of geographical determinism, however, often fail to notice that the technological factor plays an equally important role in geopolitical considerations. The presence of this factor allows analysts to take into account the process of change in their geopolitical analyses. The constraints posed by terrain and the meanings assigned to different geographical areas change, and this is precisely because of the emergence and adaptation of new technological solutions. This is clearly visible in the case of communication technologies, the implementation of which increased the range of instruments at the disposal of politicians, militaries, and societies. The fundamental role played by technology is also evident in the attribution of meaning and value to specific places as a result of the emergence of new technologies. Geographical nihilism is the opposite of geographical determinism and can be defined as underestimating or disregarding the importance of the geographical environment, which is often accompanied by a conviction that technology plays a decisive role.

It is of vital interest to states that access to the natural resources that are used in industry is guaranteed. In this context, technology is closely linked to geopolitics, as technological changes give or alter the importance of different areas and the raw materials that are found there. Examples include coal in the age of steam engines, oil in the age of

internal combustion engines, and copper used in the production of electrical wires (although the production of fiber optics has since reduced the importance of copper). Today, rare-earth metals (such as scandium and lanthanides) are used in the production of components for most ICT devices, including smartphones and personal computers. Throughout history, a certain regularity can be observed: the importance of one type of mineral (and where it occurs) is replaced by another as a direct consequence of changes of a technological nature (including new mining possibilities).

In the mid-1990s, Jean Carlo made the apt observation that

in addition to the factors of classical geography – earth, sea, air – modern geopolitics must take into account a fourth element, namely fire, which is related to technology; this changes the meaning of the first three and directly affects the outcome of any action (Carlo, 2003, p. 135).

Thus, it can be assumed that all major geopolitical or geostrategic theorists had to create their own concepts based on the potential offered by the technological solutions available at the time. However, too much faith in the causal power of technical solutions can lead to an extreme position of technological determinism, i.e. to a view that the economic and political development of a state is determined by the technical solutions that are available to it. An example of this interpretation of the development of technology can be found in Karl Marx's views: he linked the emergence of feudalism and of capitalism to the use of the windmill and the spread of the steam engine, respectively (Jørgensen, 2018, p. 249).

## Historical analysis of the term

Technology has always been present in geopolitical concepts, mainly as an element that enters into interaction with the environment and as a factor for overcoming the impact of physical constraints, such as those posed by terrain. The term “new technology” is used in this article to denote technology that has emerged and been implemented in a given historical period. The founding fathers of modern geopolitics (and geostrategy) linked their concepts to different elements and to the

technologies that allowed them to be conquered. Following the development of various technical solutions, geopolitical considerations first included the earth (land) and water, and then air. In addition to these classical elements, modern geopolitical rivalry between states takes place within four domains: more states have begun to pursue their own interests in outer space; since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, rivalry has also moved into cyberspace (Clarke and Knake, 2019) and into the information and electromagnetic domains; in the not-too-distant future, it will move beyond circumterrestrial space (Dolman, 2002).

The direction of the interactions between humans and nature (the material world) can serve to demarcate the two metaphases of the development of geopolitical thought. The first of these covers the period from antiquity to the Enlightenment. Daniel H. Deudney (2007, pp. 17–19) termed the views formulated at that time as “physiopolitics”, by which he understood that the relationship between the natural environment and humans was unidirectional and that geographical space determined the political behaviour of communities. Beatrice Heuser (2010, pp. 39–40) observed that between 750 B.C. and 1500 A.D. there was no radical change in warfare that was caused by the emergence of new technology. No sustained advances in warfare technology occurred until the 19<sup>th</sup> century (although occasionally forgotten inventions resurfaced, such as the crossbow and so-called Greek fire). It was not until the industrial revolutions, which resulted in sharp rises in population growth, that fundamental changes were made to the way in which warfare was conducted, thus creating conditions in which technology would play a major role.

The second period spanned the time from the Enlightenment to the modern day (Deudney, 2007, pp. 17–19) and yielded views that were labelled as geopolitical. These views differed from earlier theories in the way they described the relationship between the material world and humans: the one-way dependence running from nature to humans was replaced by a two-way interdependence. This was due to the influence of technologies, as these changes (especially in transport, communication, and explosives) meant simultaneous changes in the material context that shaped the actions of political actors. New technologies exerted a fundamental impact on the geopolitical concepts that were formulated by various authors. In Europe in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century,



a process began that Torbjørn L. Knutsen (1992, p. 131) described as the emergence of an inseparable connection between science, technology, and the economic conditions of a given state (and thus its national security). This process has become a permanent fixture in the history of the world. Unlike earlier “arms races”, which were short-lived, after 1850 a self-sustaining and reinforcing arms spiral was set in motion that became a source of rivalry between industrialised countries. World War II is treated as the point after which the technological factor – once only marginally taken into account in general military considerations – came to the fore. This was the culmination of a process that had been evolving since antiquity, in which the focus on tactics gradually gave way (from about the 17<sup>th</sup> century) to strategic (Wyszczelski, 2009, pp. 535–536) and geostrategic issues.

Halford John Mackinder, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and Alexander de Seversky were the founders of modern geopolitical reflection and they based their concepts on the potential of the technical systems that were in existence in their time. From the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, geopolitical thought was characterised with reference to the elements that make up the nature of the world, especially water and land. Carl Schmitt (1997, pp. 5–9, and *passim*) noted that geopolitical thinkers had much more than just the two elements of land and sea in mind: they actually described the competing great powers and the ways in which these powers interpreted space. Schmitt vividly presented this as the struggle between the Behemoth (the land powers) and the Leviathan (the sea power). In his opinion, the second spatial revolution took place as a result of the conquest of these two elements (which was made possible thanks to the steam engine), which was followed by the third element, air (this revolution was made possible thanks to electricity, radio, and aviation) (Schmitt, 1997, pp. 56–57).

In 1904, Mackinder warned the British public against the land power of Russia; he emphasised the need to establish causal relationships that link geography and world history, as reflected in the political decisions of states which have reached their present sizes with the advent of steam engines and the telegraph (Mackinder, 1887, p. 157). Or Rosenboim (2015, p. 358) aptly observed that this was a vision of land powers as opposed to sea powers, which were technologically and industrially more advanced. Mackinder (1942, pp. 189–191) emphasised that the

invention of the steam engine (and the building of the Suez Canal) initially gave the maritime powers an advantage; however, as technology developed, the Heartland's position began to strengthen. Due to the transcontinental railroads, the landmasses were no longer disadvantaged by being poorly connected and were better able to compete with the trade conducted by sea powers, most notably Britain. Mackinder had in mind the threat posed by the growing potential of continental Russia, which due to the development of railroads would be able to move both goods and armed forces quickly within its vast territory.

The geopolitician A.T. Mahan, whose views influenced real international politics, attributed key importance to the maritime dimension of state power. In his opinion, the factors that influence a state's maritime power include its geographical location, terrain, size of territory, size of population, character of population and way of governance (Mahan, 2013, pp. 31–32). Although he did not mention the technological factor, he accounted for its impact on the tactics of warfare. Distinguishing between tactics and strategy, he considered the former to be directed toward timeless and unchanging regularities in the way politics is conducted:

Tactics, the instrument of which is man-made weapons, undergoes changes due to progress. From time to time, the theory of tactics must be changed or demolished, but the old foundations of strategy remain intact (Mahan, 2013, p. 70).

In other words, as a way of conducting warfare utilising the technical means available at the time, tactics are much more susceptible to the influence of technology than strategy is (see Gray, 1999, pp. 173–174). However, this view cannot be considered absolutely true as Mahan (an advocate of, among other things, a large number of smaller vessels) did not in his concepts take into account the scale of changes brought about by technological progress (e.g. the appearance of ever-larger and more advanced battleships). Thus, his assumption of the immutability of strategy was undermined and eventually rejected by reformers of the US Navy (Krakowczyk, 2014, pp. 33, 271–273). The conquest of air (the third element) as a domain of international competition destabilised the theoretical constructs erected based on land and water.

The concepts developed by de Seversky are another example that illustrates the technological factor that is present in geopolitical

considerations. This author strongly criticised the idea of gaining power based on naval forces, as he believed that the realities of war had been transformed with the advent of aviation (Seversky, 1942) and its development in the era of atomic weapons (Seversky, 1952). He argued that in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the USA had the potential to become an air power in the same way that Britain had been a naval power in a bygone era. Moreover, the location of the USA as neighbouring the Soviet Union (via the Arctic) meant that the role of strategic aviation and long-range missiles (once they were in use) in national security became difficult to overestimate and even more important than having dominance at sea.

The centrality of technology (and the artifacts created as a result) was emphasised by Harold Sprout. In his opinion, any geopolitical reasoning must take into account the geographic distribution of technology (Sprout, 1963, pp. 192–193). That is, it must include estimates and predictions regarding the instruments and means at the disposal of the actors being analysed. Deudney correctly observed that the geopolitical concepts of the Heartland and the Rimland are contingent on the existence of specific physical technological systems (railroads and oceangoing vessels, respectively):

The oceangoing vessel and the railroad interacting with geography create the clusters of power potential and military viability that the geopoliticians labelled the Heartland and the Rimland (Deudney, 2007, p. 80).

The changes brought about by the impact of technology laid the foundations for these concepts, but the very same factors (through different artifacts) undermined them. Desmond Ball (1985, pp. 172–174, 193) pointed out that Mahan and Mackinder paid little attention to the development of technologies that enabled them to develop their concepts, therefore their views were static. Mackinder's and Mahan's concepts were respectively challenged by the advent of aircraft and submarines. New technologies often enforce a revision of earlier concepts and thus make the lessons of the past lose their value; for example, the advent of nuclear marine propulsion meant that the need for numerous naval bases was negated. Nevertheless, technological development is the most serious factor that changes but does not invalidate geopolitical concepts.

## Discussion of the term

Researchers often repeat that – depending on its level of development – technology has enough power to shape and at the same time distinguish phases of human development. Alvin Eugen Toffler (cf. Bell, 1999 [1973]) noted that at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the world entered the third phase of development; he called this the third wave, and it was shaped by information and communication technologies. In this view, technology determines the ways in which societies function. The first wave was associated with the emergence of sedentary lifestyles and the spread of agriculture about 10,000 years ago. The second wave, which began about 300 years ago, was initiated by the advent of printing and the steam engine (Toffler, 2006, pp. 23, 32). Each phase in the development of human civilization differed from the previous one not only in terms of the technical solutions available for civilian socio-economic development, but also in terms of the technology used to achieve military objectives. The most developed countries, which are advanced in adapting to the third wave, also conduct warfare that is linked to these transformations and whose key feature has been to base the operation and creation of armed forces on technological supremacy. According to Alvin Toffler and Heidi Toffler, the first Gulf War was the first major war in which the armed forces of Iraq, which was a state totally “immersed” in the second wave, were smashed by the coalition armed forces led by the US, which was then a well-advanced state in terms of adopting the third wave (Toffler and Toffler, 2006, pp. 55–64). These researchers noted that – even in the distant future – geopolitical issues would not be rendered irrelevant or obsolete by the development of modern technologies. To this end, they paraphrase Mackinder’s maxim on the importance of Central and Eastern Europe in the global competition for world hegemony and relate it to the competition for domination of the Solar System:

Who rules circumterrestrial space commands Planet Earth; who rules the Moon commands circumterrestrial space; who rules L4 and L5 commands the Earth-Moon system (Toffler and Toffler, 2006, pp. 102–103).

L4 and L5 are libration points (equidistant points of gravitational attraction between the Earth and the Moon), which means that they are a convenient space for bases used in space conquest.

Other researchers, Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, who share a far-reaching optimism associated with the development of information technology, concluded that space, which is the central value in geopolitical concepts, “is no longer in geography – it is in electronics (...)” (2008, s. 126). According to them, politics is decreasingly about physical space and increasingly about technological systems that enable control over the speed of transfer (including information) and, through speed, also time (in the Greek language, time was called *χρόνος*, *chrónos*). “There is a movement from geo- to chronopolitics: the distribution of territory becomes the distribution of time. The distribution of territory is outmoded, minimal” (Virilio and Lotringer, 2008, p. 126). This process is visible in the growing role of both naval powers and outer space, as these are the domains in which physical movement is least restricted. Pharaohs, ancient Romans and the Greeks were “geodesists”, or geopoliticians, while modern rulers have to compete for time instead of for space. The key role of time depends on technological progress, which contributes to the process of deterritorialisation. This process will culminate in a state in which every place (on earth) becomes equally important (Virilio and Lotringer, 2008, pp. 87, 151, 175).

Political communities developing in a given area form centres of power and have a certain potential (power) which consists of many elements (including technological potential). The power of a state has many dimensions in terms of the material resources that are at its disposal if only it has the ability to mobilise these resources and the will and determination to achieve its goals (a review of various powermetric models can be found in Sulek, 2013). Determining potential is important for maintaining a multidimensional balance of power among internationally competing states, as “the assessment of each power individually is an essential phase of geopolitical analysis” (Moczulski, 2000, p. 392). Technology is one of the most powerful factors in the modification of the multidimensional balance of power among states. It has a direct impact on the most important aspect of a state’s existence: the ability to defend its own *raison d’état* and pursue national interests in the international arena. It should be remembered, however, that one technology is unable to change the overall power of a state (Carlo, 2003, pp. 85–86).

For the sake of their survival, states monitor various dimensions of the power of other actors on the international arena, the central place

of which is occupied by their military potential. This is directly related to the capabilities provided by the weapons systems of the armed forces of the states being monitored. The main proponent of political realism, Hans J. Morgenthau, wrote,

The fate of states and civilizations has frequently been decided by differences in warfare technology that the losing side has been unable to compensate for in other ways (2010, p. 146).

The technological factor plays a particularly important role in shaping the potential of weapons systems. The “evolutionist” approach emphasises the slow and continuous transformation of military technologies (cf. Kamiński, 2009, p. 84). If the appearance of a new type of weaponry is combined with changes in the way warfare is conducted and with transformations in the social sphere, then it is helpful to refer to the concept of a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). There are many definitions of this concept in the literature as it is a highly controversial issue (Collin and Futter, 2015). In simple terms, it can be assumed that RMA is a fundamental change from previous ways of planning and conducting warfare (e.g. the use of precision-guided munitions by the US army during the first Iraq War in 1991). RMA is also the result of changes in the way warfare is conducted (e.g. blitzkrieg) and changes of a social nature (e.g. the use of the masses of people during the French Revolution) (Schneider, 1998, p. 43). Barry Buzan observed that the speed of changes brought about by new military technologies (in qualitative as well as quantitative terms) means that new wars are no longer fought under the previous conditions, thus it is decreasingly possible to accumulate strategic knowledge (Buzan, 1987, p. 19).

The technologies used for national defence have a special status, and the technological factor itself can be assigned a special role in at least seven areas of the functioning of a state: 1) technology makes selected raw materials useful at particular times and thus worth extracting and competing for; 2) it enables the development of substitutes for raw materials that are currently in short supply; 3) certain areas that are abundant in needed raw materials become important from the point of view of state security; 4) communication technologies (such as information and transport) allow communication routes to be launched by influencing the course of routes by which transfer/transport takes place;

5) technology influences the type and intensity of human labour that is required during a war effort; 6) the technological factor determines the form, quantity, and quality of artifacts produced from the processing of raw materials during a war effort; 7) it conditions tactics and influences strategy for the use of armed forces (Turner, 1943, pp. 5–15, 12–14). Two interrelated phenomena are associated with the impact of technology on the geopolitical rivalry of states: 1) the proliferation of technologies that can affect the potential of a state (its economy and armed forces), which often leads to destabilisation of the balance of power; 2) the arms race.

The impact of a given technology on the international system depends, among other things, on the speed of its proliferation. The aforementioned military technologies, especially offensive ones, are of particular importance here as individual states differ in their ability to produce and use them. Keith Krause, who created a theoretical model of military technology proliferation, suggested that states be divided into four categories based on their ability to create weapons systems: (1) actors remaining at the basic level of technological sophistication that are capable only of using and maintaining weapons systems; (2) states capable of reproducing and copying weapons systems; (3) states with the ability to adapt and improve a given technology to their own needs; (4) states with the ability to create innovative technological solutions and produce weapons systems (Krause, 1992, pp. 18–19, 30–31). This model should be supplemented with non-state actors, including transnational corporations and companies that are engaged in the development of technologies suitable for military application. Based on their ability to adopt technology, states can be ranked accordingly: from states that lack the capacity to adopt a new technology, through states that can use a technology but cannot reproduce it or can reproduce it but cannot adapt it, to states that can adapt a technology but cannot innovatively develop it. This classification builds a hierarchical order from states that are innovators and producers, through states that adapt and export weaponry, to those that merely passively adopt technological solutions from states higher up the hierarchy.

The rapid pace of proliferation of new technologies is one of the defining features of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In his analyses of the speed of proliferation of technological innovations, Daniel W. Drezner divided technologies according to two characteristics: 1) the development of

technologies may involve high or low fixed costs that must be incurred from the very beginning of research and development; 2) technologies may be developed with a view to their being used by the public sector (mainly military use) or by the private sector (mainly civilian use) (Drezner, 2019, pp. 286–303). By combining these pairs, four categories of technological innovation can be distinguished. The first category consists of technologies that incur high fixed costs and are developed primarily by the public sector; these are called prestige technologies and are related, for example, to space exploration or nuclear technology development. The second category is made up of strategic technologies that require high fixed costs and are developed for the civilian sector (e.g. the 5G network or the aviation sector). Another category consists of public technologies, which are developed for the civilian sector with low fixed costs. These technologies would not develop without state support due to low interest from the private sector (e.g. vaccines). The last category consists of general-purpose technologies, i.e. those that do not require high fixed costs and involve significant participation of the private sector in their development. This category includes unmanned vehicle technology and artificial intelligence, and these solutions have the fastest rate of proliferation.

The proliferation of technologies that affect the position of a state can lead to an imbalance of power and contribute to the activation of the arms race process, which is a process of “a progressive, competitive peacetime increase in armaments by two states or coalitions of states resulting from conflicting purposes and mutual fears” (Huntington, 1958, p. 41). Arms races take different forms over time: they can be a long-term process (e.g. rivalry between the USA and the USSR) or a short-term process (e.g. the increase in arms spending in the Third Reich and France in the 1930s); also, they can be quantitative (e.g. the expansion of weapons systems already in place) or qualitative (e.g. when armed forces are modernised and supplemented with more modern weaponry). The link between an arms race and the possible outbreak of war seems to be strongly documented, although not every arms race necessarily leads to a hot war (Cashman, 2014, pp. 296–305). The role of technology in this process is significant, especially since states can build their defence capabilities symmetrically, i.e. by emulating a state that has gained an advantage (e.g. the nuclear arms race between the USA and the



USSR during the Cold War). Alternatively, they can build their defence capabilities asymmetrically, i.e. by trying to maximise the weaknesses of a potential adversary. The contemporary Chinese asymmetric response to a US strike group that consists of an aircraft carrier and supporting vessels is the development of cruise missile systems, the construction of artificial islands, and the expansion of its submarine fleet. As Robert Gilpin noted, technology becomes especially important in the context of geopolitical competition among the most powerful actors: “while state power is based on control of a territory, technology and how it is used have become [as history has progressed – B.S.] an increasingly important factor in military and political relations”, i.e. a factor whose role can hardly be overestimated in the context of a so-called hegemonic war, i.e. a war for world domination (Gilpin, 1998, p. 31). The mechanism of the arms race can also be observed at a regional level: for example, in the relationships between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of India. States are ready to use force to stop other states’ weapons programs that they find threatening, such as the two attacks conducted by the Israeli air force on nuclear installations in Iraq (1981) and Syria (2007). In both cases, the aim was to stop a program leading to the acquisition of nuclear weapons by states hostile to Israel.

Nuclear weapons occupy a separate place among types of weapons. As noted by Kalevi Holsti (2016, p. 55), they quickly moved from being merely military equipment for waging wars to a weapon of deterrence, which was of historic importance for the international system because it changed the rules of its functioning. These weapons and their means of delivery fundamentally altered the development of security relations between states, as the survival of a state was no longer a certainty. Henry Kissinger wrote:

A major cause of instability is the very rate of technological change. Every country lives with the nightmare that even if it puts forth its best efforts, its survival may be jeopardized by a technological breakthrough on the part of its opponent. It knows also that every invention opens up the prospect of many others (Kissinger, 1960, p. 557).

The proliferation of nuclear weapons triggered the emergence of two processes: the fear of being unprepared for a surprise attack was reinforced; moreover, as Albert Wohlstetter (1959, pp. 211–234) observed,

thanks to nuclear weapons, deterring an opponent by the ability of one's own armed forces to carry out a retaliatory strike became one of the pillars of maintaining the balance of power in the international system. Preparations to repel a surprise attack have become difficult to distinguish from the (offensive) activities preparing it, so arsenals of missiles capable of surviving a first strike have expanded. Developments in mobile platforms carrying missiles with nuclear warheads have meant that the ability to deliver a retaliatory strike has improved dramatically. This state of affairs is not immutable because the development of new technologies constantly forces policymakers to broaden their geopolitical perspective (Sempa, 2002, p. 4).

However, technology does not invalidate the importance of geography. Robert D. Kaplan observed that the success of the US military (in the 1990s, especially in Iraq) invoked such far-reaching enthusiasm regarding the capabilities of the armed forces of highly developed countries that people began to think of the battlefield as a two-dimensional surface on which armed forces – without the problems posed by the topography of terrain – were expected to move and achieve their objectives (Kaplan, 2012, pp. 22–23). It seemed that modern technology had overcome Clausewitzian “friction” (Clausewitz, 2010, pp. 45, 65–67), that the “fog of war” would soon be eliminated thanks to satellite reconnaissance, and that support for aviation and superior logistics would guarantee seamless movement around the theatre of war. However, this optimism was quickly undermined as, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the war in Afghanistan and the second war in Iraq both demonstrated that geography matters, and military operations take place in at least three dimensions. This undermining of optimistic diagnoses by the physical world was what Kaplan (2012) termed “the revenge of geography”.

## Systematic reflection

Technology is a factor that can change the interpretation of the meaning of a given space as well as modify the main components of geopolitical thinking, i.e. time and space. Successive geopolitical concepts lost their meaning or were completely invalidated, due mainly to the impact of

the technological factor. Geographic space is a structural element that is relatively unchanging and remains static over time, while other factors identified in geopolitical analyses, such as population, economics, technology, military power, and the type of government, are subject to change over time (Sempa, 2002, p. 5). However, technology is the element that strongly determines the development of the other factors. All geopolitical reasoning is conducted under the pressure of two strong, interrelated factors: geographical and technological, which in their extreme forms can take the form of determinism. Neither can individually provide a convincing explanation, but together they create a sufficiently wide intellectual space in which the immutable geographic conditions that give stability to predictions can be rendered controllably obsolete by the influence of the technological factor. In this way, geopolitical analysis can avoid the danger of ahistoricity and excessive flexibility (the creation of ad hoc explanations).

Recent technological advances are incomparable to earlier ones. However, as traditional concepts developed within geopolitics and international relations (e.g. a state's autonomy or a state's power) have been adapted to changing circumstances, they are still relevant today. In other words, the carriers of a state's power may have changed but the concept of power has not (Skolnikoff, 1993, p. 7). The complexity of international politics has increased, but the essence of politics has not fundamentally changed. There is no indication that the role played by the technological factor will diminish in the foreseeable future; on the contrary, it is becoming an increasingly crucial element in geopolitical explanations. "In contrast to earlier centuries, technology became the subject of heated debate in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and remains so today" (Heuser, 2010, p. 172).

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# The European Union as a geopolitical actor

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** In this article, the discussion of the term “geopolitics” combines two approaches: the realist approach and the liberal approach. Classical geopolitics, understood as the competition between superpowers (both European and global), is fundamental to the discussion. Geopolitical interests are related primarily to the *raison d'état* of a particular political community.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** The context for the historical analysis is provided by a description of the trends within European geopolitics after World War II, especially in the dimension of the history of European integration, including the differences between the ways in which France and Germany perceive this integration in geopolitical terms.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** As a geopolitical actor, the European Union is analysed from a domestic perspective and from the perspective of its external relationships. Within the EU, geopolitics is primarily played out among the largest states, which, on the one hand, leads to their cooperation with each other (based on the model of a concert of powers), and on the other hand this leads to periodic tensions between them. The UK's exit from the EU may be interpreted as being a consequence of such rivalry which could not be resolved within integration processes. Externally, the EU is intended as a platform for supporting the economic and political interests of its member states (primarily the largest ones). In international relations, the EU has so far been mostly interested in promoting and defending European economic interests.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** In geopolitical terms, the concepts of multipolarity and strategic autonomy played a fundamental role in the EU. Even if European actors – including EU policy-leading member states – entertained growing geopolitical ambitions, these were either closely linked to economic interests or the EU was not ready (or did not have adequate instruments) to implement them more effectively. European external policy was thus focused on the primacy of the economy, which meant that the instruments of this policy were intended to support this goal, or at least not interfere with it.

**Keywords:** European Union, geopolitics, concert of powers, multipolarity, strategic autonomy



## Definition of geopolitics

The term “geopolitics” first appeared in the social sciences in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Interpretations of the term relate to two main schools in international relations: realism and liberalism. In its classical interpretation, which dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, geopolitics is understood as rivalry between the great powers for control and territory or for control in geographical terms (Flint, 2012, pp. 31, 39; Ó Tuathail, 2006, p. 1; Cowen and Smith, 2009, p. 23). This interpretation, which is close to the realist school in international relations, focuses not on the internal determinants of each country but on the largest states that are of central importance to the formation of international order and the external determinants of rivalry between them. An important assumption of the realist school is the belief that there are “objective” geopolitical interests that can be defined as the “raison d'état” of a given state. This view is a consequence of external structural and geographical factors that exist in the international arena. From the perspective of realism, internal determinants can only be relevant in the context of building the potential of a given state, but not, for example, for the formation of “subjective” interpretations regarding geopolitical interests.

From a liberal point of view, internal determinants are of great significance for the formation of interests, including dominant political ideas, as is political deliberation regarding interpretation of the strategic situation. Therefore, the final assessment of geopolitical interests is not objective and is not solely derived from external determinants. Rather, it is the result of pressure exerted by the most influential economic and social interests, or it arises because of public debate about a given country's foreign policy. The liberal approach to geopolitics is linked to “ways of ‘seeing’ the world” (Flint, 2012, p. 33), i.e. the dominant political ideology or the political paradigm that is prevalent in a given community. This approach focuses on the grand strategy and on the mechanisms that are necessary for its construction in domestic politics. Although this strategy is shaped in relation to a particular international situation, which includes its geographical determinants (Gray and Sloan, 1999, pp. 1–11), for liberals the territorial context and international situation are not always decisive factors for the interpretation of geopolitical interests. Sometimes, the main role is played by entirely different circumstances,

e.g. social, economic, or ideological, as is the case with feminist geopolitics and alter-globalist geopolitics (Flint, 2012, pp. 33, 40). Moreover, an additional argument used by liberals is the thesis of the formation of global economic and political relations and the interdependencies that it entails, which undermine the previous importance of geography (and thus the classical understanding of geopolitics).

Liberal geopolitical analyses can be divided into several stages (Agnew, 2003, pp. 86–93). In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were focused on the rivalry (or cooperation) that existed among the major European powers that occupied a central position in the international political order of that time. Analyses conducted at that time also addressed the colonial expansion of these powers and the exploitation of peripheral areas as important sources of their strength. Hence, the main geopolitical division was the civilizational criterion that separated the European centre from the periphery. Therefore, in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when nation-states were getting stronger and nationalism was increasing, the main geopolitical divisions concerned, on the one hand, the particular European powers and, on the other, the distinction between civilized Europe and the subordinate and exploited regions of the world (Agnew, 2003, pp. 93–101). This approach culminated in the 1930s and during World War II. After World War II, the main geopolitical division was marked by ideological differences between the capitalist and democratic West and the bloc of socialist states (Agnew, 2003, pp. 102–112).

The liberal approach also revises the historical examples of classical geopolitics. This approach recognizes, for example, that the geopolitical goal of state elites in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was not only to gain an advantage in international relations but also to strengthen domestic potential and structures. This included strengthening the national economy and military resources, and also consolidating society within state structures by, for example, invoking nationalist ideology. “Nation-building”, i.e. building a stable, integrated political community within a given state, was thus of great importance for gaining geopolitical strength in the international arena. Apart from spreading nationalist ideas, these efforts included the promotion of democracy, civil rights, and social privileges (initially for soldiers, their families, and war veterans, and later for all citizens). Hence, the term “social geopolitics” highlights these processes (Cowen and Smith, 2009, pp. 22–48).

At this point, it is worth outlining the notion of critical geopolitics, which is most often associated with Marxist theory (Ó Tuathail, 2006, pp. 5–12; Ó Tuathail, 1999, pp. 107–123). This understanding of geopolitics negates the basic assumptions of classical geopolitics and realism, which is why it is sometimes termed anti-geopolitics (Flint, 2012, p. 35). Critical geopolitics is critical of, among other things, treating the largest states as the main geopolitical actors; this is because it recognizes that groups of social and economic interests that operate beyond the borders of states, most often on a global or supranational scale, are becoming increasingly influential. It also undermines the leading significance of “objective” external (structural or geographical) determinants by stressing the role of cultural and ideological factors, political discourse, and the interplay of various interests in constructing geopolitical interpretations.

The term geopolitics is used in the article as a combination of the realist approach and the liberal approach. (1) Understood in its classical interpretation as competition for a dominant position between the European and world powers, geopolitics is fundamental to my considerations. (2) I relate geopolitical interests primarily to the *raison d'état* of a particular political community. In the case of the European Union, these communities exist at the level of member states. However, such a community has not yet emerged at the European level, so there is neither European sovereignty nor a *raison d'état*. This has fundamental consequences for the understanding of geopolitical interests on the Old Continent because it explains the predominance of national interests and the deficit of geopolitical thinking on a pan-European scale. Even when French and German politicians mention European sovereignty (European Parliament, 2018; Merkel, 2018), it can be presumed that they have in mind a vision for the development of the EU (and its external policy) that coincides with French and German interests. (3) In line with the liberal approach, the term geopolitics is linked to “grand strategy” and the leading political view rather than geographical determinants.

## Historical trends in European geopolitics since World War II

The foundations of the geopolitical considerations presented in this section are laid by the historical background of the analysed phenomena. The motives and objectives that govern the creation of a given political system determine its further historical and institutional development, which is called “path dependence” and is considered one of the greatest achievements of historical institutionalism (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, 1993, pp. 179–181; Pierson, 2004, pp. 17–53). This is why the origins of the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) and the European Economic Community (1957) should be mentioned here. In both cases, economic cooperation was initiated in the form of economic regimes, of which the customs union that was established in the late 1950s was the most important. In addition to economic objectives, geopolitical considerations were equally important, if not more so. Economic interests and instruments were expected to serve geopolitical goals, including peace and political stability in Western Europe.

Sebastian Rosato, who has researched the origins of integration on the Old Continent, observes that the most important motive for the establishment of both structures was the threat from the USSR and its allies (Rosato, 2011, pp. 2–3, 42, 70, 170–175). Integration of Western European states was intended to mobilize economic resources and contribute to post-war economic development in order to build a counterbalance to Russian geopolitical power. Support from the leading Western power (the US, which soon after the war had a decisive voice in many decisions of strategic importance for Europe) was vital for the emergence of both communities. The primary motive of the US concerned geopolitics: rebuilding Western Europe and preparing it to compete with the USSR. It is worth noting that European integration at that time was rooted in the transatlantic economic regime built by the US, which was known as the Bretton Woods system (Rosato, 2011, pp. 5, 42, 47, 49).

The leading role in establishing the two aforementioned European communities was played by the two largest European countries, France and Germany. Their mutual aim was to monitor political and economic processes in the western part of the continent, including those of their neighbouring countries (made possible by political integration, which

had provided instruments for such control). The ambition of politicians from both countries was to gradually remove themselves from being under American supervision, i.e. to increase their geopolitical autonomy in transatlantic relations and to eventually elevate Western Europe to the rank of the third pole in world politics (the other two being the US and the USSR) (Rosato, 2011, pp. 60–61, 67–68, 75, 81). The combination of geopolitical and economic objectives is clearly visible when the motives of both states are analysed in detail. In the case of France, it was crucial to “bind” Germany geopolitically, i.e. to use its economic potential for post-war reconstruction in France and to implement the objectives of Paris’s foreign policy. It was at that time that the informal principle was established that “the French give direction to European integration and the Germans finance it”, which would accompany integration processes for many years (Rosato, 2011, pp. 53, 63–67, 70, 207). The French leaders were apprehensive of integration with Germany – a country that was, admittedly, in ruins but still had great potential for development. They sensed that their eastern neighbour’s more competitive economy could restore its dominance in Europe over time, including its political pre-eminence. For this reason, prior to the establishment of the European Economic Community, tough conditions were set that obliged Germany to make financial contributions, such as subsidies that were arranged for overseas French territories as well as for agriculture in France; also, a number of preferential exemptions were introduced for French economic sectors (Rosato, 2011, pp. 192–197, 207–208).

The history of European integration confirmed the fears of the French. Germany grew into an economic and political power mostly thanks to the economic regimes introduced during the integration processes. Some thinkers (Kuttner, 2013, pp. 113–120; Pettis, 2013, pp. 128–131; Nester, 2010, p. 123) argue that these regimes were disproportionately beneficial for the German economy, which systematically built its advantage over its European partners.

These historical experiences reveal France’s most important geopolitical motives, which govern its politics to this day. In European politics, the greatest challenge faced by France is Germany: first as a reminder of the painful armed conflict, and later, following unification (in 1990), as a growing power in relation to other European states. The test of strength of French policy was and is in striving to “bind” Germany through

European cooperation (Simón, 2013, pp. 403–434). At the same time, the French saw the indispensability of economic resources for rebuilding their own position in international politics, which is why they wanted to use Germany's wealth whilst also exploiting the resources of the common market and political cooperation in Europe.

German politicians, in turn, sought to use post-war cooperation in Western Europe to rebuild their country's geopolitical position in international relations (Szabo, 2014). Their cooperation with France and other European nations was supposed to legitimize Germany's rebirth and provide a guarantee that it would not use its power for imperial purposes. This policy is comparable to the "peaceful rise" tactics that Chinese authorities have successfully implemented since the 1970s. Right up to the point of reunification, Germany carefully concealed any reference to national interest, instead emphasising European interests and the need for close cooperation with other countries in the Community (Paterson, 2011, pp. 57–75). Like the French, they treated joint control over the European Coal and Steel Community as an opportunity to use industrial and external raw resources, and they treated the gradually built common market as an opportunity for the expansion of German exports and investments (Rosato, 2011, pp. 80–81). Efforts were made to shape the rules of integration in line with German institutions in order to maximize the benefits of economic exchange (Bulmer, 1997, pp. 61–72). It was expected that cooperation in Europe would not only rebuild the ruined country and improve the living standards of its inhabitants but, more importantly, it would pave the way for the reconstruction of Germany's international position (Müller, 2004, pp. 141–163).

As a realist, Rosato disagreed with neofunctionalist or liberal views regarding the motives behind the origins of European integration. For example, he rejected Andrew Moravcsik's (1998) line of reasoning by arguing that it was not bottom-up economic interests that pushed decision-makers towards integration; Rosato argued that this role was played by geopolitical considerations, and the decisions to establish the two communities sometimes provoked violent opposition from domestic economic groups. He also refuted Craig Parsons' (2003) contention that integration was accomplished by transnational elites with the aim of a gradual shift away from nation-states towards a European federation. Although Rosato agreed with the view that both communities were the

work of small political elites who made decisions without wider public consultation, he claimed that their aim was not to constrain the European states but quite the opposite: the aim was to increase their power through European instruments and, as far as possible, to bring under their control the resources of neighbouring states. The plan was not for a European federation but for a confederation that would be controlled by the largest member states (Rosato, 2011, pp. 12, 101). This is an important feature of European integration, whose basis is formed by the geopolitical and economic interests of the member states (especially the largest ones), which use integration and the successively established economic regimes for their own purposes.

Another feature of integration is the weakness of geopolitical thinking at the EU level. This is due to a deficit of adequate financial and organizational resources, competences, and political legitimacy for EU institutions, including the lack of a political community in Europe that would be a reference point for pan-European geopolitical interests. The member states are the centres of geopolitical thought in Europe. Those with the greatest influence, primarily Germany and France, have the greatest impact on the instruments of the EU.

## Internal EU geopolitics

The main actors of European geopolitics are nation-states, which compete or cooperate with each other in an attempt to shape the instruments of the EU in a way that best serves their interests. In addition, an important feature is that at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century most European decision-makers were focused primarily on domestic issues and set aside thoughts of global rivalry. Global ambitions, still present in the verbal sphere, were taking a back seat to practical activities. The consequence of this focus on internal problems was, among other things, the weakness of the EU's external policy (Grosse, 2010).

Geopolitical thinking within the EU had two main dimensions. The first concerned the cooperation and rivalry between the largest member states, i.e. France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Cooperation between these countries was somewhat reminiscent of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century "Concert of Europe": the political solutions that had been worked out

among the three of them were subsequently promoted in smaller member states. Nonetheless, the positions of France and Germany were gradually becoming increasingly dominant in the integration processes. These countries were trying to impose their geopolitical interests on other states, which caused growing unease among some UK elites. This geopolitical tension became one of the main reasons for Brexit.

To push their own policies through successfully, cooperation between Paris and Berlin (and before Berlin, Bonn) was essential. When cooperation was lacking, both capitals tried to find allies for their goals in EU institutions or in other member states. Traditional support for French diplomacy was provided by the Benelux and Southern European countries. Support for Germany was usually provided by Northern European countries, the Netherlands (and before Brexit, the UK), and Central European countries.

The second dimension of internal geopolitics in the EU was the development of economic regimes, primarily the system of economic exchange in the internal market and the monetary union. Both regimes were intended to provide the basis for growth of the geopolitical potential of the largest member states as well as to mobilize the continent's resources on a global scale. This included cooperation and rivalry with non-European powers such as the US and China. In addition, these systems aimed to shape asymmetrical relations within the EU itself, which would benefit the leaders of integration while making smaller or less politically important countries dependent on cooperation. In this way, relationships of dependency were being formed between Western and Central Europe in the internal market, as well as between Northern and Southern Europe in the Eurozone.

Discussions on European integration that had taken place before World War II often assumed that even if it included areas outside Western Europe, the centre should retain control over political decision-making. This is evidenced by the idea of a United States of Europe, which was advocated by Winston Churchill, with Western Europe at its core and Central Europe subordinated to it (Biskup, 2012, p. 119). During discussions in the 1970s on the future of European integration, this idea was returned to and interest intensified with the accession of more and more states to the Community (e.g. Spain and Portugal in 1986, and later during the eastern enlargement of 2004–2007). These discussions led



to the concept of “concentric circles” or a “two-speed Europe”. This debate gained momentum in the aftermath of the Eurozone crisis (after 2008), when the economic position of Western Europe was weakened. After the crisis, the centre’s control over other EU areas was increasingly exercised through regulatory coercion. First, the provisions of EU law were agreed between a relatively small group of Western European states, usually under the guidance of French and German leaders. Then, decisions were formally adopted throughout the EU based on majority voting, which made it possible to circumvent opposition from countries that had weaker political advantage in Brussels. Finally, the enforcement of EU regulations was ensured by the European Commission and the Court of Justice of the EU, including financial penalties if they were not implemented efficiently enough in all member states (including those that had opposed the regulations). This way of proceeding was supposed to increase the efficiency of governance in the EU but was becoming increasingly problematic from the perspective of democratic standards (Grosse, 2018). Calls for the introduction of majority voting also appeared in discussions on improving the effectiveness of the EU’s foreign policy, which aimed to facilitate the implementation of the strategic interests of, primarily, Berlin and Paris.

## External EU geopolitics

EU geopolitical thought that is directed at the world outside of its domain has several characteristics. First, the largest member states are at the centre of these deliberations and are the main actors in European politics. As this is the case, EU institutions play a complementary and auxiliary role rather than a strategic one because the objectives are determined in dialogue between their national capitals, especially Paris and Berlin. Before Brexit, London played an important role in this debate too, but its influence on geopolitical discussions in the EU has since been marginalized. Second, the aim of Berlin and Paris is to develop a multilateral order, i.e. whenever possible, to reach international decisions and agreements in a multilateral process which would emphasize the negotiating power of the EU and base external relations on legal regulations. Third, the geopolitical objective is to strive for a multipolar

international order within which the EU could rise to the role of a separate pole comparable to the position of the world's greatest powers: the US, China, and Russia. In practice, this means seeking strategic autonomy from Washington, seeking strategic rapprochement with Moscow, and seeking to develop the best possible economic relations with Beijing. Fourth, concerning their foreign policy, the tendency of European leaders is to put economic goals over geopolitical ones or to arrange geopolitical relations in such a way that they do not have negative consequences for economic exchange. The only exception to this inclination is the European leaders' geopolitical care of their particular interests within their spheres of influence, which in the case of Berlin extends to the Western Balkans together with Central and Eastern Europe, while in the case of Paris it is mainly North Africa.

Researchers observe that in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century the EU's relationship with the US weakened, both economically and geopolitically (Riddervold and Newsome, 2018, pp. 505–521). Economic issues were crucial for the EU, and its relationship with Washington was characterized by a growing number of divergences. An example of this was the assertiveness of both sides in the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which failed to be successfully negotiated during Barack Obama's presidency, with talks on the subject later being effectively halted by Donald Trump (Smith, 2018, p. 548). The dispute concerned many economic sectors, and included, among others, the aerospace industry (a long-standing legal conflict within the World Trade Organization), steel and car imports into the US, the blocking of food imports by the EU, reducing the monopolistic position of American internet companies in the internal market, and limiting the imports of armaments from the US.

The disintegration of mutual relations increasingly involved geopolitical issues (Smith, 2018, p. 539). Disintegration was sometimes the result of economic interests, as was the case with the different positions concerning the Iran issue. For the biggest EU states, which were signatories to the 2015 nuclear agreement with Tehran (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), upholding this agreement had an economic dimension because many European companies participated in economic exchange with this country. For the European side, the geopolitical factor was also important, namely the pursuit of a multipolar order,

as well as the defence of a multilateral agreement of great significance to the strategic situation in the Middle East. However, the European side proved too weak to enforce the most important objective of the agreement with Iran, which was preventing this country producing its own nuclear weapons. In 2019, Iran increasingly violated the terms of the agreement, while Europe was unable to take more decisive steps to force it to comply with the agreement (Karnitschnig, 2019). European attempts to provide economic support to Iran, including through a special financial vehicle that was supposed to enable financial transactions beyond the control of American authorities, also failed. It turned out that European businessmen did not want to violate American sanctions for fear of being deprived of access to US financial systems. All this has demonstrated that without Washington's support Paris and Berlin are unable to create a strong pole in international politics that could carry out effective policies. Going against America – at least in the case of Iran – proved completely ineffective as a policy.

Researchers argue that Europe's attempts to achieve multipolarity are often initiated and concluded by member states without the involvement of EU institutions (as was the case with the Normandy Format of 2014). Furthermore, they are relatively ineffective (Smith, 2018, p. 543). European ambitions of multipolarity relied heavily on the international order that had been established after World War II and guaranteed by the US. However, one of the most important manifestations of the European approach to multipolarity was the emphasis on strategic autonomy in defence policy, which was mostly linked with independence from Washington's influence and strategy. Europe did not follow Washington in many of the latter's geopolitical initiatives, a sign of which (apart from the Iran issue) was the policy towards Russia and NATO. Examples include the reluctance of France and Germany to expand the alliance to Georgia and Ukraine, to provide military aid to Ukraine, to increase the US presence in Central Europe (Riddervold and Rosén, 2018, p. 560), and the US dispute with China over the South China Sea (Biscop, 2019, p. 40; Riddervold and Rosén, 2018, p. 564). In all cases, the largest member states feared economic repercussions from China or Russia if they supported US policies (e.g. expansion of the Nord Stream pipeline or rejection of Chinese G5 technology). Paris and Berlin (and, consequently, Brussels) regarded the US less as a geopolitical ally and more as

an economic rival. The alliance with Washington was often perceived as a geopolitical burden that could have adverse economic repercussions (Kendall-Taylor and Rizzo, 2019). Not surprisingly, the European dream of a multipolar order was supported by both Moscow and Beijing (Lavrov, 2019; Macron, 2019). Both capitals had their own geopolitical ambitions in their rivalry with Washington, and the weakening of transatlantic ties was of considerable significance to their aspirations because it reduced the ability of the US to act.

According to researchers, Western Europe did not consider Russia a threat to security (Biscop, 2019, p. 55). Although France and Germany entered into negotiations with Russia regarding the conflict with Ukraine, the EU later imposed sanctions on Russia as a result of pressure from Washington (Riddervold and Rosén, 2018, p. 560). Western Europe was clearly giving way in geopolitical disputes with Russia, as exemplified by projects to normalise relations with its eastern neighbour that were proposed by academics and considered by policymakers (Biscop, 2019, p. 59). Moreover, researchers believe that the pursuit of strategic autonomy in defence policy will result in the need to normalize geopolitical relations with Russia (Howorth, 2018). In return, economic gain is an intended goal of improvement in mutual relations, as clearly demonstrated by the expansion of Nord Stream at a time when the EU was imposing sanctions on Moscow (Riddervold and Rosén, 2018, p. 561). Summing up, Western Europe – and thus EU institutions – does not see Russia as a rival or geopolitical threat but rather as a potential economic and (possibly) political partner.

For many years, the PRC had been treated as an important economic partner with whom cooperation was beneficial for European exporters (primarily German exporters), which is why the largest European countries responded favourably to Chinese economic initiatives, despite the fact that they caused major concern in Washington, as was the case with EU countries joining the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (as founding members). Towards the end of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the EU's approach to China began to change. The European Commission described the country as an economic competitor and systemic rival that promotes alternative models of governance (European Commission, 2019, p. 1). Germany and France, which were at the vanguard of the protectionist approach to Beijing, both tightened up surveillance of

Chinese investments at home, fearing above all for strategic technologies that are vital for the long-term competitiveness of their home economies. Influenced by these two countries, the European Commission also took a firmer stance. In 2019, it demanded reciprocity in economic relations from the PRC, including the equal treatment of European investors in the Chinese market in order to bring them in line with the functioning of its domestic companies. Particular issues that were raised included opening the market up to investment from the EU, ending the enforcement of technology transfer to local co-operators, and the subsidising of Chinese exporters by the state. The Commission also announced tighter control of Chinese investments in the internal market and the closure of access for Chinese companies to the European public procurement market if the PRC did not open its tender procedures on a reciprocal basis. The EU intended to amend WTO regulations in order to limit protectionism on the part of the PRC. Although several European states have allowed Chinese 5G technology into their market, the Commission would like to work out a common EU position on this issue in the future (European Commission, 2019). Paris, Berlin, and Brussels were also worried by infrastructure investments made within the EU as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, especially those in Greece, Portugal, Italy, and the Central European countries. It seems that toughening the EU's approach towards China was primarily due to economic rather than geopolitical considerations.

Researchers recognise that the biggest European states and the EU itself were passive in relation to the PRC at the geopolitical level (Kirchner, Christiansen, and Dorussen, 2016). These actors did not perceive Beijing as a political rival or a threat for security. At the same time, the capitals of the largest European countries feared economic repercussions if they supported the US in any disputes of a geostrategic nature. This was the case even when Beijing did not adhere to international law, which is a point of great significance in official EU rhetoric. An example of this is when China refused to respect the 2016 ruling of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on violating the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Riddervold and Rosén, 2018, pp. 565–566; Biscop, 2019, p. 51). National governments were clearly making geopolitical concessions to China whilst trying to leave sensitive issues (e.g. the PRC's observance of human rights) to EU institutions (Michalski, 2013). At the same time as the European Commission was

criticising China's politics, including its growing investments in Italy and the Western Balkans, the French government was signing €40 billion worth of economic contracts with President Xi Jinping (Rettman, 2019). The only exception to Europe's geopolitical passivity in relation to the PRC seems to be the increasing Chinese investment and political penetration in Central Europe and the Balkans, which worried the largest EU states. Characteristically, however, representatives of the European Commission were the most concerned about this expansion in Europe's "backyard". In a document prepared for the European Council summit, officials demanded greater unity among member states with regard to the "17 + 1" format, as well as respect for European norms and values in the Western Balkans. They pointed out that Beijing's ambition to develop the technological supremacy of its armed forces by 2050 is a challenge to European security (European Commission, 2019, pp. 2–4). Nevertheless, it ought to be acknowledged that European states and the EU itself saw China primarily as an economic rival and less as a geopolitical one. At the same time, member states were strongly divided on this issue (defenders of Chinese interests in the EU included Portugal, Greece, Hungary and, increasingly, Italy).

## Conclusions

As a geopolitical actor, the European Union is analysed in this article from a domestic perspective and from the perspective of its external relations. Domestic EU geopolitics has been played out primarily between the largest states; on the one hand, this leads to their cooperation (based on a concert of powers), but it also causes periodic tensions among them on the other hand. The UK's exit from the EU may be interpreted as a consequence of such rivalry which could not be resolved within integration processes. Externally, the EU is supposed to be a platform that supports the economic and political interests of its member states, primarily the largest ones. In international relations, the EU has so far mainly been interested in promoting and defending European economic interests. In geopolitical terms, the concepts of multipolarity and strategic autonomy have played a fundamental role. At times, it has been a narrative that has enabled the advancement of economic interests,

legitimized economic protectionism, or EU funding of, for example, the development and sale of European armaments. Researchers observe the limited scope of European geopolitical strategy and the weakness of its implementation (Riddervold and Rosén, 2018, p. 555). At times, economic interests have had clear priority over geopolitical interests, and decision-makers have been concerned about ensuring that geopolitical activity does not expose European business to losses. Even if European actors – including policy-leading EU member states – have entertained growing geopolitical ambitions, these have either been closely linked to economic interests or the EU has not been ready (or has not had adequate instruments) to implement them more effectively. European external policy has thus been focused on the primacy of the economy, which means that the instruments of this policy have been meant to support this goal, or at least not interfere with it.

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# The geopolitical challenges for small European states

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Small states, which today constitute the majority of subjects of international law, are characterised by their limited number of citizens and small geographical size. There is no universally accepted definition of the term, but these countries are most frequently described as having a population of up to 10 million and an area of up to 100,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were only 60 small states, whereas the present-day map of the world consists of more than 190 recognised states. The tripling of this number is the result of decolonisation, defederalisation, and regionalisation.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** Small states, with a few exceptions, are doomed to a lack of political, military, economic, and often even image-related power; they often find themselves in asymmetrical relationships with larger powers.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Small actors are becoming increasingly active on the international arena, which translates into their role as co-regulators of relations between states being strengthened. If medium-sized and large states are to have effective policies, this will depend on their ability to cooperate with small actors, which is particularly evident in the European Union and Central Europe.

**Keywords:** small states, geopolitics, foreign policy, Europe



## Definition of the term

The challenge in defining this term is posed by the two main concepts under consideration: the concept of the small state and that of geopolitics. Defining these concepts is difficult because scientists have not been able to agree on any universally accepted definitions for both terms. The lack of a single accepted definition does not in any way change the fact that small states and the challenges associated with their geopolitical location are a phenomenon that is noticeable in Europe as well as on other continents.

Deliberations on geopolitics have been the subject of numerous publications in Polish and foreign subject literature. However, there is no consensus regarding an unambiguous approach to this concept. Some researchers treat geopolitics as a determinant and argue that it is a separate interdisciplinary science that draws on the achievements of, above all, the political sciences, history, and even sociology, which imposes specific behaviours towards the surrounding world on individual international actors (mainly superpowers). Understood in this way, geopolitics as a science can serve and authorise the contemporary imperial politics of particular powers, which is a concept that characterises the works of the Russian eulogist of Eurasianism, Aleksandr Dugin (Дугин, 2011). In the Polish literature, geopolitics as a determinant is advocated by Jacek Bartosiak (2018). Geopolitics is approached differently by researchers who treat this issue in terms of a challenge related to geographical location, climatic conditions, or access to natural resources. In Poland, this position is characteristic of the works of Leszek Moczulski (2010) and Stanisław Otok (2019), while in foreign subject literature one of the most important representatives of this trend is Zbigniew Brzeziński (1997).

An equally controversial and unclear notion is that of small states. On the one hand, small subjects of international law have been inscribed into the political landscape of the world for centuries. When considering the European continent alone, it is worth noting that – until the unification of Germany and Italy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the formation of the great Romanov, Habsburg, and Ottoman empires – Europe had been an amalgam of numerous small states and principalities. The decomposition of empires after World War I, the subsequent process of decolonisation, and the disintegration of federal states after the revolutions

known as the Autumn of Nations of 1989 resulted in a rapid increase in the number of states in the world, most of which were small subjects of international law. As there is no longer any territory on Earth for the creation of new states (*terra nullius*), any new states that want to be sovereign can only achieve this by breaking up larger states (Bajda, 2018). The creation of new small states is a dynamic and topical process – in Europe alone we can mention Montenegro's or Kosovo's bids for independence. The picture gets further complicated by a long list of small political actors, known as parastates, i.e. territories that have *de facto* become independent of their former capitals and most often use the protection of the superpower that is Russia (Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia). Some Catalans and Scots have not given up the idea of gaining independence, which is the cause of constant conflicts between the centre and the peripheries. This entire situation does not make it easy for researchers to formulate a widely accepted definition of small states. Only two European academic centres are conducting specialised research in this field: the Islands & Small States Institute at the University of Malta, which has been operating since the 1990s; and the Centre for Small State Studies at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik, which was set up in 2001. The literature is scarce, as the issue of small states is eclipsed by publications that analyse the activities of great powers or the strongest international organisations. Significantly, most researchers who deal with this issue are from countries such as Austria, Denmark, Norway, or Malta. A noticeable new initiative that was launched in 2016 by the academic publisher Springer was a series entitled *The World of Small States* (edited by Petra Butler and Caroline Morris), of which seven volumes have so far been published<sup>1</sup>.

In an attempt to create a definition of small states that is based on the available literature, there are two specific elements of its structure that should be mentioned: its measurable features and its correlative features. The measurable features include the following: a small state has a small territory, a small number of inhabitants, a weak army, and low GDP. The correlative features include the importance attributed to a small state by other international actors, the role that it plays in its

1 Information about the series can be found at: <https://www.springer.com/series/15142?detailsPage=titles> (accessed on 20.01.2020).

immediate regional environment or in international organisations, and how it is perceived by its closest neighbours. As an illustration of the existing correlations, one author observed that Belgium is a small state in comparison with France but a large state when compared to Luxembourg (Bjøl, 1971). An additional element that defines small states is their position in the international arena, i.e. the distinction that is made between the role they declare, the role they realistically want to play, and how they are perceived by other actors in international relations. One author accurately noted that despite the attempts that have been made so far, small states are surprisingly poorly defined because they are not the centre of interest for theorists and researchers of international relations (Maass, 2009).

Based on the above, it seems legitimate to suggest a working definition as follows: a small European state is undoubtedly one whose population does not exceed (or only slightly exceeds) 10 million citizens; it has a territory of less than 80,000 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. up to 50% of the average for the European Union, and its authorities consider it to be a small state (Bajda, 2018).

## Historical analysis of the term

Elements of the discussion on small states and the challenges they face due to their geographical location can be found in the deliberations that took place in the late Middle Ages, especially those concerning the notion of “just war”. Polish scholars of the time made important contributions to these polemics, and two names are worth mentioning here: Paweł Włodkowic and Stanisław of Skarbimierz, who wrote that the stronger must not – by means of *faits accomplis* – force changes on those that are smaller and weaker, and any international arrangements should satisfy all parties involved so as not to create new tensions (Ehrlich, 2017). The Polish point of view was expressed in the context of the conflict with the Teutonic Order, which was related to the latter’s expansion into the territories of the still pagan Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as the territorial claims against the Polish state that had been weakened by feudal fragmentation. In Western Europe, the Renaissance initiated the first serious deliberations on the position of small states. At that time,

the map of Europe was fragmented into many independent duchies and small states, especially in what are now Italy and Germany. Europe, which was comprised of almost five hundred “more or less independent political units” (Tilly, 1975) was a challenge for Renaissance researchers. Niccolò Machiavelli, the author of *The Prince*, wrote that small states had to pursue very intelligent foreign policy in order to compensate for their weaknesses and their small territory (Machiavelli, 1967). Furthermore, Montesquieu (1997) wrote about the need to synergistically build alliances and enter into confederations or federations in order to be able to match the great monarchies.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. since the birth of modern international relations, many more systemic discussions on the role of small states and the challenges they faced due to their geopolitical location have been conducted. The history of Switzerland’s neutrality, which was finally confirmed and guaranteed by the greatest European monarchies at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, serves as an interesting illustration to demonstrate that a mere declaration of neutrality is not a sufficient act in itself: it must be accepted by the largest and most interested superpowers. Austria and Finland gained the status of neutral states as a result of a similar process. With the numerous new states that were created after the end of World War I, the map was a geopolitical challenge for Europe. This map was created on the basis of the decision of the largest and strongest international actors, where the key determinant was the right to self-determination – an idea that was proposed by the American President Woodrow Wilson. However, geopolitics left the greatest mark on small actors in international relations because of the activities of two criminal systems: communism and Nazism. These systems did not hesitate to challenge the right of small states to exist, first through the annexation of Austria, then as a result of the Munich Agreement and World War II, one of the consequences of which was the incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR.

## Discussion of the term

The main task facing small states is to deal with a long list of objective weaknesses that result from their natural limitations rather than from



their geopolitical location. These factors include their territorial limitations, which result in a lack of access to many natural resources or having only one type of resource, as is the case with Kuwait. These territorial limitations also entail having a small number of citizens, which results in, for example, constraints on economic development due to having a limited internal market or labour shortages. As a consequence of having a small population, these countries often face problems related to having weak armed forces or inefficient public administration. Demographic and territorial factors systemically result in a situation in which most small states lack political, military, and economic power; they also often lack recognition in international relations. These objective challenges may be exacerbated by a geopolitical location in the vicinity of states that are engaged in aggressive activities in the international arena (e.g. the relations between Taiwan and China or the tense relations between the Russian Federation and the Baltic States and Georgia). Further challenges are posed by the participation of small states in specialised international organisations (e.g. the European Union) or military alliances (e.g. NATO), which imposes concrete obligations on them to join processes concerning the functioning of entire organisations and not merely those that satisfy national interests.

In their analyses of the foreign policy of small states, researchers have identified the most frequently applied strategies that help these states to survive in a difficult environment. Small international actors often seek recognition of their status as a neutral state; other small states build their security policy by participating in military alliances. One specific political strategy is the adoption of a hedging attitude. Moreover, small states adopt various attitudes on the international stage and play various roles, such as offering high-quality services, helping larger players to solve minor challenges, or seeking a political niche in which they can be useful to the international community.

The aim of all these activities is to protect small states from becoming “a mere toy in the hands of the wartime powers” (as Jan Patočka (1991) described the position of Czechoslovakia during World War II and in the post-war years), or from being reduced to the role of supplicant when representatives of small nations have to wait in corridors for verdicts on their cases to be reached by the great powers of this world behind closed doors (Kundera, 1984). Small states are characterised

by their sense of permanent threat and questioning of their right to exist independently, which often stems from their historical experiences. This is especially the case of regions exposed to the active operations of various superpowers, in which competition between the most powerful capitals is fierce and small states are even more acutely deprived of political power. As a result, they find it difficult to maintain their decision-making independence in the face of external pressure, and they have virtually no ability to exert any pressure on the behaviour of others, even in their immediate environment. If a small state is not a lonely island, it most often suffers from a deficit in autonomy and influence.

The answer to these geopolitical and existential challenges lies in the primacy of international law, which is advocated by small states as an instrument that regulates relationships between states. It is also in the interest of small international actors to emphasise the key role of strong international organisations in the world order, as these organisations are guarantors of the security architecture due to their ability to mitigate the actions of the strongest capitals. Public international law and membership in organisations guarantee nominal equality for all sovereign states that are recognised by the global community. In this way, their political and, above all, military weaknesses are partially offset. Basing the security architecture on international law and organisations provides an additional defence mechanism: a system of sanctions (primarily political and economic) which can be imposed on an aggressor according to the provisions of the adopted regulations, and the bodies of international institutions that have the instruments necessary to enforce these sanctions.

Another interesting illustration of the influence of geopolitical location on the attitude of small states is the process of European integration. For many small actors, accession to the European Union offered a form of escape from a geopolitical vacuum, allowing them to rely on strong (at least in comparison to the potential of small states) community structures. Actions motivated by these premises were particularly evident in the case of the integration policy of the Baltic states, for whom accession to the EU and later to the monetary union (the eurozone) also had an important defensive dimension that was related to the threats posed by the Russian Federation (Grosse, 2012). Moreover, thanks to the fact that they joined the process of Europeanisation and integration, small states can reduce their own tasks and shift responsibility for particular

policies to the Community. Being free of the obligation to implement independent monetary policy and adopting various types of pan-European technical regulations allow small EU states to focus on other areas of governance. This might explain why, apart from the founding countries, the eurozone has only been joined by small states and the Central European states that gained independence relatively recently as a result of defederalisation (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, and Slovenia). Having a limited internal market and only a short tradition of their own currencies, their decisions to give up these currencies were easier. From the perspective of the rulers of Slovenia or Slovakia, the following aspects were more pertinent: access to cheaper loans, openness of the economy, and presenting themselves as an attractive place for foreign investors who, overnight, had ceased to fear exchange rate fluctuations. The decisions of the Baltic States to join the eurozone and their continued declarations of readiness to broaden European integration have undoubtedly been further influenced by geopolitics and the fact that they are neighbours with the Russian Federation. Nowadays, any Russian aggression against the Baltic States will simultaneously be an attack on the European monetary system, which may motivate other states within the European monetary union to take faster and more decisive action in the name of preserving the stability of the monetary system (Bajda, 2018).

Another factor that motivates small states to apply for EU membership is the possibility of gaining access to the knowledge that has accumulated in European institutions, e.g. information on social trends or technological innovations, as these states would not be able to afford to acquire it using their own limited resources. Thanks to access to this knowledge, they are afforded the opportunity to participate in global processes, such as the development of information technology, which is particularly evident in Estonia's strategy of playing the role of a small smart state.

However, there are unpassable barriers to the readiness of small states to participate in the deepening of European integration at its various levels: they must be able to maintain their independence and national identity, and they must be allowed to emphasise the value of diversity in a globalising world. This process was well captured by the Czech researcher Jan Holzer (2003):

Small nations – thanks to the fact that they are constantly searching for their own face, that they have to shape it, that they fight for their own identity – also contribute to helping our earthly globe to resist the terrible pressures of uniformity, to shine with the richness of various traditions and lifestyles, so that the uniqueness, exceptionality, and wonderfulness of man can find a home here (Holzer, 2003, p. 253).

The ever-present sense of weakness that results from the natural limitations of small states will therefore motivate their leaders to seek a friendlier geopolitical environment by forming alliances and joining international organisations in order to be able to better protect the values that are important to them and that result from their own history and identity. It is only by understanding the mechanisms at the decision-making centres of the capitals of small states that the determination of EU candidates, such as Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, will be revealed. Indeed, the Western Balkans remains the last internal European region that is not in the immediate vicinity of other global geopolitical players (unlike Ukraine or Belarus) but is not integrated with the European Union. This determination is best demonstrated by the attitudes of Serbia and North Macedonia. In the name of preserving its chances of integration with the EU, Belgrade has practically given up its attempts to reintegrate Kosovo, whose territory contains a site (the Kosovo Field) that is one of the pillars of Serbian national identity. Skopje went even further: in order to overcome the resistance of Greece, which had been blocking Macedonia's accession process, it has had to give up its country's name and rebuild its state identity almost from scratch. Greece is a particularly interesting illustration of the geopolitical role of a small state, especially when we understand how effectively Athens has used its membership of the European Union and NATO to shape the policy of these organisations in relation to, for example, North Macedonia, Cyprus, or Turkey, according to its own will and very narrowly defined Greek national interests (Bajda, 2018).

Even more important, especially concerning Polish research and Poland's foreign policy, is the geopolitical dimension and significance of the functioning of the Visegrád Group (V4) from the perspective of small Central European states. This regional alliance, which is so well known today, might not have come into existence at all simply because

of geopolitics. In the original concept, the most active participant in discussions on the new order in Central Europe was the president of Czechoslovakia, Václav Havel, who organised a large regional congress in Bratislava in June 1990. In his opening speech, he stated that Central Europe was *de facto* a region limited to the Danubian states, and he assigned to Poland the role of a Northern European state that would organise cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. This exclusion of Warsaw was justified in Havel's later statements on the political situation at that time, in which he wanted to protect small Czechoslovakia from becoming entangled in any major Polish-Soviet or Polish-German conflict. He was convinced that creating a union of small states under Italian patronage that would include Austria and Hungary would be the best solution. The subsequent formation of the Visegrád Group in February 1991 (again inspired by the Czechoslovakian president) was the result of Vienna's lack of serious interest in active politics in the region as well as the new geopolitical situation in the light of the collapsing USSR and the beginning of war in Yugoslavia. It turned out that the only capital interested in cooperation with Prague was Budapest, which hoped that it would lead to an improvement in the socio-cultural position of the Hungarian minority living in dense concentrations in the southern borderlands of Slovakia. This explains why, in this new situation, Poland's readiness to join the regional alliance was so valuable to Havel. However, the example of the Visegrád Group demonstrates how important the geopolitical situation is for small participants in international relations in other areas too. The V4 includes three small states which are smaller than Poland in terms of population size and territory. In this situation, the challenge for each state was to not be dominated by the largest partner. A method for securing the position of the smaller states was to construct the Visegrád Group, which from the very beginning was governed by the premise of being a loose structure that was not institutionalised (no secretariat, president, or budget), in which decisions would be made by means of consensus. In the later period of the V4's existence (post 2000), in order to facilitate its operations and to avoid institutionalisation, the principle of a rotating one-year presidency was introduced. This gives a very strong policy-making instrument to the country leading the Group's efforts as it can define agendas for meetings and promote its own priorities. For the small states of the Visegrád Group, acting in this

format is highly beneficial in terms of their international recognisability and the possibilities for political influence. Membership gives them an opportunity to participate regularly in meetings with European leaders in a forum narrower than the general EU forum and to hold summits with leaders of large and geographically distant countries. It would be unreasonable to expect that prime ministers of Japan or Indonesia would be interested in coming to Bratislava or Budapest if these were bilateral meetings, but they are willing to make such trips to meet leaders of four Central European states.

The Visegrád Group is of even greater importance for the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary at the European level. It is worth mentioning here that the title of the founding document that was signed in 1991 was "Declaration on cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary in striving for European integration". This title clearly indicated the main objective of the alliance, which was achieved when all four countries joined the EU in May 2004. Furthermore, on 12 May 2004, the prime ministers of the V4 states signed the Kroměříž Declaration, which dispelled any doubts and confirmed their desire to maintain this format of cooperation after their integration with the European community. This meant that these small Central European states did not have to stand alone before the powerful EU machine. In addition, in recent years the principle has been adopted that if a common position is agreed on behalf of all four countries, the V4 is represented in EU forums by the state currently holding the presidency of the Visegrád Group. Therefore, the prime minister or ministers of the Slovak Republic will be found speaking in the EU forum and representing 60 million citizens as opposed to the mere 5 million of their small state. For Warsaw's smaller partners, the value of the Visegrád Group is evident in their negative attitude to the occasionally emerging idea to enlarge the V4 by adding new members. Throughout the history of the Visegrád cooperation, voices have been heard in the media and in politicians' declarations concerning the need to expand the Visegrád format. Informal requests for admittance to the V4 have been made by Romania, Slovenia, and Lithuania. Austria's candidacy was considered on several occasions, but even in this case one of the small member states' unwillingness to accept new members ultimately prevailed. For the smaller capitals, new

members would mean sharing the prestige and exclusive membership of a well-recognised Central European alliance. This is also a possible explanation for the initially cool reception of the new Polish regional project, the Three Seas Initiative (especially in Prague and Bratislava) as it was initially perceived as competing with the V4 and as an attempt to push the Visegrád format to the sidelines of regional policy.

From the perspective of small states, the main area of activity is their immediate neighbourhood, in which, through cooperation, they try to achieve a stronger regional position for themselves in their relationships with larger international actors. Thanks to their exclusive membership of the Visegrád Group, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary are building wider recognition that may make them attractive partners for others, whilst simultaneously guaranteeing their security and the kind of geopolitical comfort they have so often lacked before.

The strategic challenge for small states that operate in an organised geopolitical environment (such as the European Union) is to find a leading theme for themselves – a specific niche in which they can specialise. Having a share in the division of European tasks is one of the guarantees of participation in decision-making processes. A good example of this is Estonia, deservedly called “the Baltic tiger”, which has formulated policies focusing on education, research, and development as part of wider European programmes. As a result, Tallinn has become an attractive partner that is ready to take on the role of testing various solutions, especially in the field of the broadly defined computerisation of public services.

The Slovak Republic is a significant example of geopolitical strategies adopted by small states. Apart from the aforementioned issue of Bratislava joining the European monetary union and creating an economy that is as open as possible, it is worth looking at Slovak foreign policy and the importance of the Western Balkans in the diplomatic activities of the Slovak government. The issue of the Balkans is present in practically every speech made by Slovak prime ministers and forms an important part of all strategic documents drafted by the ministry of foreign affairs. After Bratislava’s accession to the European Union, many Slovak diplomats, who were regarded the most qualified and knowledgeable about the region, were entrusted with important tasks on behalf of the entire community. In 2006, the former Minister

for Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Miroslav Lajčák, who is now the EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, organised and supervised Montenegro's independence referendum on behalf of the EU, and between 2007 and 2009 he was the EU's High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, only to later serve as one of the directors of the European External Action Service. Slovakia's commitment to the Western Balkans can be explained by its historical ties and cultural proximity, as well as the fact that this is a pragmatic strategy for a small country. It is worth noting that Slovakia does not border any of the Balkan states, but it has a short (97 km) border with Ukraine, the Zakarpattia Oblast, the western part of which used to be part of pre-war Czechoslovakia. Yet it is not Ukraine but the Western Balkans that has become the hallmark of Slovak diplomacy. The Ukrainian issue has a secondary priority in Slovakia's foreign policy and is largely limited to the matter of maintaining uninterrupted transit of energy sources (gas and oil) through its territory. This should be regarded as a strategic decision by Bratislava because the Ukrainian issue is too big a challenge that would entail unnecessarily joining an existing fight for influence that is being waged by the largest international actors. Slovaks do not see any chance of success in the possible handling of the Ukrainian issue: they only see the risk of becoming entangled in an international conflict beyond their capabilities. Therefore, in its relationships with its eastern neighbour, Bratislava consciously limits itself to supporting the policies of the EU and NATO and, at most, to financing humanitarian initiatives. In contrast, the Western Balkans, which is a secondary challenge for major European capitals and EU institutions, allows the Slovaks to take steps that are more active. Thanks to its involvement in the Balkan region, Bratislava can act without the unnecessary danger of finding itself at the centre of any global conflict, while fulfilling tasks on behalf of the entire European community. This strategy brings the Slovaks prestige, recognition as experts, and international recognisability (Bajda, 2018).

Small states must adopt various strategies in the international arena in order to survive in an increasingly turbulent geopolitical reality. First, they must try to build a secure environment for themselves in their immediate neighbourhood by attempting to become members of regional defence organisations and alliances. Next, they must try to find



a niche for themselves that will allow them to play the role of a positive actor in international relations by performing tasks for and on behalf of the broader coalition of states that are interested in a given issue.

## Systematic reflection

Recent political turmoil in the world, the undermining of the world order, and threats to world peace will require further numerous studies on various aspects of international relations. Against the background of recent scientific analyses, the issue of small states seems to be one of the least recognised. The need to continue research on this issue is evidenced primarily by their increasing activity and the roles to which they aspire in international relations. Of course, this does not mean that small actors will decide the fate of the world in the near future. Instead, the changing geopolitical environment and the activities of superpowers that question the principles of international law will force weaker international players to take steps to present themselves as important actors who are capable of supporting the strongest ones, or to take on auxiliary tasks that relieve superpowers of responsibility in matters of lesser importance. The latest Polish publications and the new book series that are being published by foreign academic centres only partially fill the gap in the literature.

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# Geopolitics and religion

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The article refers to various definitions of geopolitics and distinguishes between the geopolitics of religion, religious geopolitics, and the geopolitics of religions (in the plural).

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** The context for the issues discussed in the article is delineated by discussions on what religion is in general; this question is associated with definitional difficulties and affects analyses of the relationships between geopolitics and religion.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article discusses the multiple relationships that exist between religion and space, including claims of the deterritorialisation of religion. It also examines the relationships that are shaped by religion and politics, including the politicisation and instrumentalisation of religion.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The reflections presented in the article point to a paradigm shift that has occurred in Catholic geopolitics, which is related to the different geopolitical perspectives adopted by Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis.

**Keywords:** territory, religion, Catholicism, Islam, Islamophobia, instrumentalisation, *Ersatzreligion*



## Definition of the term

The word “geopolitics” is a compound noun that is formed from the noun “politics” and the prefix “geo”, which denotes that it relates to the field of geography. “Essentially, geopolitics investigates the relationships that exist between centres of power and the geographical environment” (Macala, 2015, p. 7). Politics is always linked to geography because no matter how we define it – in ethical or in pragmatic terms – it will always concern a particular community that is located within a geographical space. Thus, if we use the term geopolitics rather than politics, it means that we want to emphasise the particular significance of a space in order to, for example, identify political actors, formulate political goals, or analyse the tools that are available for the implementation of politics.

The creator of the term “geopolitics”, Rudolf Kjellén, was a Swedish politician and political scientist. As noted by Leszek Sykulski (2014), in his article *Studies on the Political Boundaries of Sweden*, published in 1899, alongside concepts such as demopolitics, ecopolitics, cratopolitics and sociopolitics, Kjellén listed geopolitics as one of the five basic categories in the study of states. Geopolitics referred to the influence of geographical conditions on the politics of a state. In his book *The State as a Living Organism*, published in 1916, Kjellén put forward a thesis concerning the unfavourable position of the Germanic nations that was later used to explain Germany’s defeat in World War I (Sykulski, 2014, pp. 12–13). When space is discussed within geopolitics today, what is meant is not only geographical space but also immaterial spaces such as cultural, religious, or virtual spaces.

There is no unambiguous definition of geopolitics in the subject literature. According to Jarosław Macała (2010), who attempts to systematise the ways of defining this concept, it is used to denote:

- *an autonomous science* that borders political geography, political science, history, international relations, economics, etc. (so-called academic geopolitics);
- *a sub-discipline of other sciences* (e.g. political geography);
- *a research paradigm* (“a method of political analysis (...) that emphasises the role played by geography in international relations”);
- *an ideology and political doctrine* (“a subjective interpretation of political, geographical, and other important factors that aims to

expand national, state, or block interests, in particular in the sense of influencing, controlling, strengthening, establishing or confirming political, economic, and military power” – Roman Kuźniar)

- *the methods of conducting politics* (applied geopolitics) (“It is not about a scientific discipline or a search for the laws that govern this discipline but about the ability to think in terms of space and the conflicts that take place in it, in order to better penetrate the mysteries of what is happening and to be able to act more effectively” – Yves Lacoste).

Sykulski observes that geopolitics often sits at the crossroads of political science, the geographical sciences, and the historical sciences:

In this sense, this field researches the relationships between states or centres of power (...) through the prism of geographical space and its [influence] on the formation of the aforementioned relationships in long-term categories (Sykulski, 2013, p. 12).

Two elements are worth highlighting here: the geopolitician takes us into the realm of *international relations* as seen through the perspective of *long duration*. For those not satisfied with this approach, there is a pragmatic definition: “geopolitics (...) is what geopoliticians do as geopoliticians” (Macala, 2010).

Among the material factors that influence the goals and interests of a state, the most frequently mentioned are the geographical location of the state, the shape of its borders, its terrain, climate, natural resources, and neighbours (ethnic, cultural, religious, etc.). Nowadays, non-material factors (such as culture and religion) also play an important role in geopolitical research, and control over space also refers to non-material space, i.e. cultural, religious, or virtual space (Macala, 2010).

Does geopolitics make sense at all from the point of view of Catholic Social Teaching? Firstly, if material factors were perceived as the only factors that completely determine politics, this approach would leave no room for the manifestation of human freedom and would thus be contrary to Christian anthropology. No significant geopoliticians represent such an extreme approach today. Secondly, if the impact of these factors were considered relevant but not decisive for the political goals of the state, this contradiction would seem to disappear. It is not surprising that, for example, the insularity of a state will influence the process of shaping

its culture, religion, and its international politics (including Brexit). The climate, the availability of drinking water, and the abundance of agricultural produce undoubtedly have an impact on a country's economy. This is also the case with natural resources, but (as in the previous case) it should be remembered here that it is important to not only possess them but also to be able to use them and protect them against a country's neighbours. In the past, colonialism was a problem; today there is talk of the risk of climate wars. The term geopolitics is rather absent in the documents of Catholic Social Teaching, whereas the geographical aspect of social, economic and political problems is present<sup>1</sup>. It is encountered occasionally in the statements of some hierarchs of the Catholic Church, in which it refers to either applied geopolitics or is used figuratively or metaphorically (Parolin, 2015; Valori, 2017).

## The geopolitics of religion

In the language of geopolitics, there are at least three different terms that are used to refer to religion: the geopolitics of religion, religious geopolitics, and the geopolitics of religions (plural) (*la géopolitique des religions*) (Macala, 2016, pp. 187–198; Chélini-Pont, Dubertrand and Zuber, 2019, pp. 15–31). The differences between these concepts are not precisely defined, but the first two differ in terms of their main research subject: the geopolitics of religion focuses on analyses of a political actor and its actions and geopolitical goals, while religious geopolitics focuses on the actions and geopolitical goals of a religious actor. The third concept, developed by the “Hérodote” school, uses the word “religions” in the plural, which suggests that it attributes significant importance to the differences between religions. It must therefore be assumed that since there is no single pattern of religion into which all the world's religions fit, the relationships between each religion and space must be analysed separately.

1 The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church reads: “The more these rights are ignored or trampled, the greater becomes the extent of violence and injustice involving entire categories of people and large geographical areas of the world, thus giving rise to *social questions*, that is, to abuses and imbalances that lead to social upheaval” (CSDC 81).

What is religion? When we use the term “religion”, we generally mean man’s reference to God or, more broadly, to the divine (*sacrum*), that is to something that transcends the world of phenomena and is “beyond”. People have different ideas about God/divinity, which means that – as is generally accepted – there is no single universal “pattern of religion” but only various historical traditions. What they all share is the division of the world into the divine (sacred) and the human (secular). This is accompanied by the conviction that it is God who first relates to man and speaks to him, and man simply answers God’s questions. In this relationship, man feels defined in who he is by one who is greater and more fundamental/elemental (Welte, 1996, p. 38).

Attempting to define the phenomenon of religion “from an atheist’s point of view”, Tim Crane sets out four essential elements of it:

Religion (...) is a systematic and practical attempt by human beings to find meaning in the world and their place in it, in terms of their relationship to something transcendent. This description has four essential elements: first, religion is systematic; second, it is practical; third, it is an attempt to find meaning; and fourth, it appeals to the transcendent (Crane, 2019, p. 16).

Man is not only a free and rational being but also one that is inherently open to Transcendence (*homo religiosus*). This opening occurs as a result of man’s experience of the contingency of human existence, of the fragility and loss of existence – both of one’s own existence and that of others close to one, as well as of the whole external world. Existential uncertainty, which is especially experienced in border situations, is a natural basis for turning to something or someone who is the ultimate reason for the existence of that which is contingent<sup>2</sup>. The second subjective reason that explains the existence of religion is the potentiality of the human person. Man feels within himself the need for constant development, for transcending his own limitations, and for striving for the infinite. On the path of personal development, his experience is that finite goods are not able to fully satisfy his desires. The search for what is absolute is inscribed in human nature (Piechowiak, 1996, p. 14). St. Augustine said, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (*Confessions*, I, 1, p. 5). Man’s interest in God

2 “I became a great enigma to myself” – St. Augustine wrote after the death of his friend (*Confessions*, IV, 4, p. 54; cf. Zdybicka, 1993, p. 167).



does not arise merely from a desire to satisfy his curiosity. This is what Max Scheler wrote:

The source from which all preoccupation with metaphysics derives is the wonder that there is something at all rather than nothing [...]. In contrast, the basis of religion is love for God and the desire for the ultimate salvation of man himself and for all things. Religion is above all a way of salvation (Scheler, 1995, p. 60).

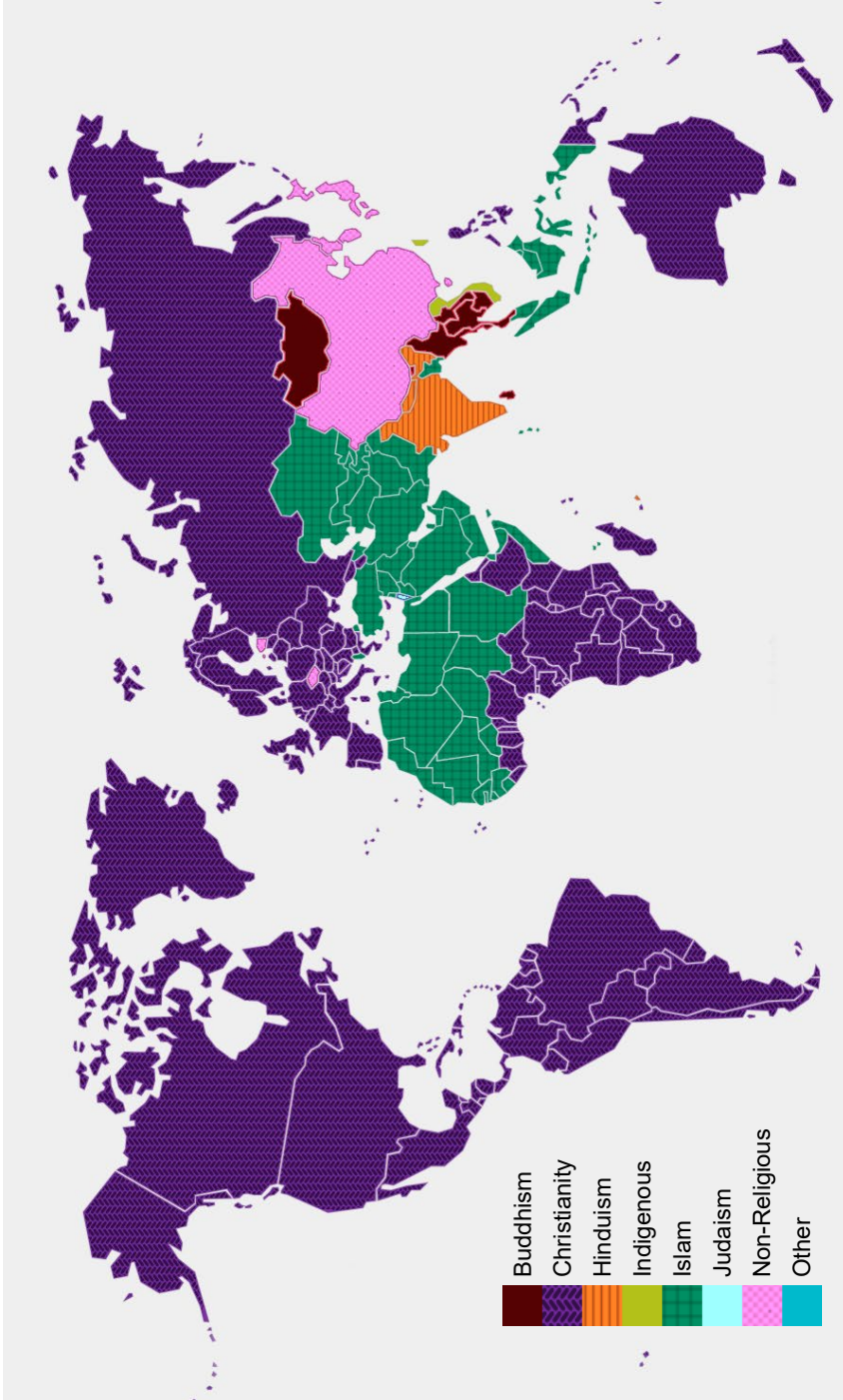
When examining the Latin etymology of the word “religion”, a certain duality can be discerned. Cicero derives the word *religio* from *relegere*, which means “to gather together again”, “to consider something anew”, “to read something again”, “to repeat”, “to run the same way”; hence *religiosi* are people who try to conscientiously observe the practices related to their gods and to repeat them over and over again (Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, 66). In this understanding, religion is primarily a set of beliefs and practices relating to the gods worshipped by a given group of people and handed down through tradition. Re-reading involves the use of reason, hence *religio* can also be seen as the opposite of *superstitio*, i.e. superstition. Early Christianity more often combined the word “religion” with *re-ligare* (“to connect again”), having in mind the connection of man with God, from whom man had separated himself (rather than with tradition), and the connection between believers themselves (Lactantius, *Institutiones Divinae*, IV, 28). Religion, therefore, is based on man’s personal relationship with God, which is realised in the community of the Church. The resurrected Christ is the only Mediator between the Father and man. At the same time, however, he destroys the wall of hostility that divides people and makes the two groups one (cf. Ephesians 2:14). There is no longer Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, (cf. Galatians 3:28). All these characteristics lose their meaning in the face of God’s adoption of man, by which he makes man his foster child. As *religio* was primarily associated with the rational search for God or the traditional worship of many gods, this word was introduced into the Christian faith relatively late (in about the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century). St Augustine, speaking of Christianity as the “true faith”, links *religio* with *eligere*, i.e. election, and with *diligere*, i.e. love (*Confessions*, 8, 12 and 10, 6). Religion thus has two dimensions – vertical and horizontal; it is fulfilled through the implementation of the two commandments of love – God and neighbour (cf. Głodek, 2014, pp. 108–111).

Does it make sense to use the same word “religion” to denote such different realities as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or animism? Can we lump together belief in a personal and a non-personal God, monotheistic and polytheistic beliefs, belief in a transcendent Being, and “inside the world” beliefs that are focused on dogmas and rituals? Implicit in this question is a difficulty that is not always realised because, regardless of our personal attitude to religious beliefs, our associations with this concept have been coined in a strictly Christian context. We unconsciously impose a biblical matrix on all religious phenomena. Georg Wilhelm Hegel, reflecting on the phenomenon of religion, concludes that Christianity is the one absolutely true religion (Hegel, 2007, vol. 2, p. 198). Commenting on this position, Remi Brague states that, according to Hegel, Christianity is the only religion that is only a religion, a “pure” religion, we could say. All other religions have within them the addition of something “foreign”, something other than religion. Something extra is added to the religious element. Judaism is religion and people or, if you prefer, religion and morality. Islam is a religion but also a political and legal project. Buddhism – if it is a religion at all – is also a sapiential doctrine (Brague, 2008, p. 40). If one takes the opposite perspective to Hegel and considers that these phenomena “with additions” are actually religions in the proper sense, one must then conclude that Christianity is not a religion or that it is a “religion for departing from religion?” (*la religion de la sortie de la religion*) (cf. Marion, 2017, pp. 74–77). It seems that those professionally engaged in geopolitics should be aware of the above definitional difficulties.

## The relationships between religion and geography (my suggestion)

The relationship between religion and space is manifold. First, historical religions arose within strictly defined geographical spaces and were generally directly linked to specific ethnic groups. Even if, given the various means of communication and transport available today, we could conceive of a religion that is able to gain a million followers who are greatly dispersed in geographical terms, this was not the case

Fig. 1. World religions



Source: PBS LearningMedia, *World Religions Map*, <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sj14-soc-religmap/world-religions-map/#.Xfzy6y16MUJ> (accessed on 20.12.2019)

with any of the historical religions. Almost every religion has its Ur and Canaan, its Mecca and Medina, its Jerusalem and its Rome.

Even today, if we look at a map of world religions, we see very clear geographical boundaries between the various religions. Generally, these boundaries do not describe religiously homogeneous communities but those with a distinct 70–90% dominance of a particular one. The processes of globalisation seem to be largely responsible for the reduction of this percentage threshold, but they do not lead to a blurring of the boundaries<sup>3</sup>. Hence, theories of the deterritorialisation of religions seem to be wrong. Rather, we see shifts in the boundaries of particular religions and their “leakiness” due to migration (in the case of Islam) and conversion (in the case of Christianity). This picture is complemented by the example of Buddhism, which is growing rapidly and is now Europe’s third religion, although less than one percent of the population are its followers.

The average observer generally has no difficulty in matching the dominant religion to a given geographical area, but a surprising exception is revealed when we are asked to assign religiously unaffiliated people to a particular place on the world map. Intuitively, we would probably look for them in the West (in Europe or North America) or in the former Soviet Union. This intuition is correct insofar as it is only in Europe and the United States that this group is increasing in number (in percentage terms), while it is decreasing globally. However, the least religious areas of the world are Asia and the Pacific.

We still place the followers of the major world religions (e.g. Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shintoism) in particular geographical areas. This also applies to universal religions such as Christianity and Islam, although to a lesser extent and with relationships that are more complicated.

When viewed from the position of Europe before the discovery of America, which identified itself as and was identified with Christianity, the world was bipartite. The frontier of Europe was, largely, simply the frontier with Islam. The barbarians lived somewhere in the northeast, but slowly their territories were absorbed into *Christianitas*. Defence

3 It is important to bear in mind the internal diversity of each of the great religions, which makes any map of world religions more complex.

Fig. 2. The majority of the global unaffiliated population lives in Asia and the Pacific

Population by region as of 2015



Source: Pew Research Center, *The Changing Global Religious Landscape*, [https://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/pf\\_17-04-05\\_projectionsupdate\\_medianage640px/](https://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/pf_17-04-05_projectionsupdate_medianage640px/) (accessed on 20.12.2019).

against the Mongols was entrusted to the countries later described as the Bulwarks of Christendom (*Antemurale Christianitatis*)<sup>4</sup>. The discovery of the New World meant encountering new religions, but this was seen as missionary territory, which was destined to be incorporated into the Christian sphere in the future. The impact of evangelising missions varied in different parts of the world. Both Americas, Australia, and sub-Saharan Africa were largely Christianised. Asia, like the Muslim lands later conquered by Europeans, proved much more resistant to Christian influence. The long-term effect of these activities is the map of civilisations that was drawn by, for example, Samuel Huntington, who believes that religion is one of the two most important determinants of civilisations.

The central elements of any culture or civilization are language and religion. If a universal civilization is emerging, there should be tendencies toward the emergence of a universal language and a universal religion (Huntington, 2007, p. 73).

4 This term actually referred to the line of defence against the Ottoman Empire.

Hence, the map of civilisations (in which the criterion adopted is more complicated) can be seen as a map showing the approximate areas that are dominated by particular religions.

Religion is related to geographical space not only because it occupies a particular place on a map but also because it assigns a certain meaning to territory. Religion marks a way of thinking about space and equips its adherents with a specifically shaped geographical imagination. As is the case with culture, the land on which a religion develops over time is marked with numerous signs of the past. Thus, we have various kinds of sacred places, sanctuaries, pilgrim routes, as well as monuments and tombs that are crowned with khachkars or macebas. Man feels “at home” when looking at the landscape described in holy books, reading the inscriptions on graves in his native language, or seeing church towers or minarets. There is “a deep bond between the spiritual and the material, between culture and territory” (John Paul II, 2005, p. 67). One might add to this the bond between territory and religion.

One of the elements of this bond is the “holy” direction in which the believer should turn during prayer, which can also find its expression in the orientation of sacred architecture (Park, 2004, p. 21). Jews turn towards Jerusalem when praying, Muslims turn towards Mecca, and Christian churches have traditionally been oriented towards the Orient, from where they await the Rising Sun coming to us from heaven (Luke 1:78).

“Being at home” is a natural human desire. No one wants to be a stranger, no one wants to be “a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth” (Genesis 4:12). The risk of becoming “a fugitive and a wanderer” is not only linked to the fact of leaving one’s native land. It may happen that someone, while remaining physically in his homeland, becomes a total cultural stranger to it. In 1990, John Paul II spoke to intellectuals in Prague:

Let us note how impoverished the beauty of this “city of a hundred towers” would be if it lacked the silhouette of the cathedral and a thousand other jewels of Christian culture. How much poorer would the spiritual, moral, and cultural life of this nation be if everything that was, is, and will be inspired by the Christian faith were excluded or forgotten! (...) If you were made deaf and blind to these values, to Christ, the Bible, and the Church, you would become foreigners in your own culture. You would lose the sensitivity and the key to understanding so many values of philosophy, literature, music, architecture, the arts, and all areas of the spirit – not only of your own national spirit but also of the whole European tradition. Above all, however, you would lose the important source of inspiration

and moral strength that is needed to solve the many burning problems of today and to shape the civilisation of tomorrow (John Paul II, 1990, p. 23).

Material signs, together with their interpretation, give religious meaning to the inhabited territory; hence, the historical phenomenon of the demolition of churches under communism or the disputes that accompany the building of minarets in Western Europe.

The connection between religion and a given territory can be so strong that people speak not only of sanctuaries, i.e. small spaces, such as Jasna Góra or Santiago de Compostela, but even of “holy lands” (Palestine, Saudi Arabia) or “canonical territories” (potentially Orthodox Russia)<sup>5</sup>. This gives rise to the belief in religiously legitimised ownership of a certain geographical space. Sometimes religious norms of behaviour apply in these religiously defined territories (e.g. no civil partnership in Israel, no public transport on the Sabbath in Jerusalem, no Christian signs at the Wailing Wall, no Bible in Saudi Arabia)<sup>6</sup>. The boundaries of these territories are changeable. Temples and monasteries that are associated with the origins of a given nation as defined by the baptism of their ruler (e.g. Serbia: Kosovo, Poland: the Gate of Dawn in Vilnius) may be lost, as nations sometimes “shift” in geographical space. In the case of universal religions, the most important sacred places may be located beyond the borders of a given community (e.g. Jerusalem, Rome, and Mount Athos). This leads to a different understanding of territory, since something that has never been “ours” in the sense of an ethnic community can, however, be considered “ours” in the sense of a religious community.

There is another spatial dimension of religion that is worth mentioning. Not only are individual regions of the world associated with a particular religion, but religious fervour is also spatially defined. It can be measured by various indicators of religious practices or by the self-declared importance of a religion in everyday life (Fig. 3). Knowing how important a given religion is helps to understand certain social and political phenomena. This is about properly grasping both the direction in which religion pushes people and understanding its actual political effectiveness.

5 Sometimes its reach is extended to include a sort of a buffer zone to provide “spiritual security” (cf. Leustean, 2016; Shapiro, 2016).

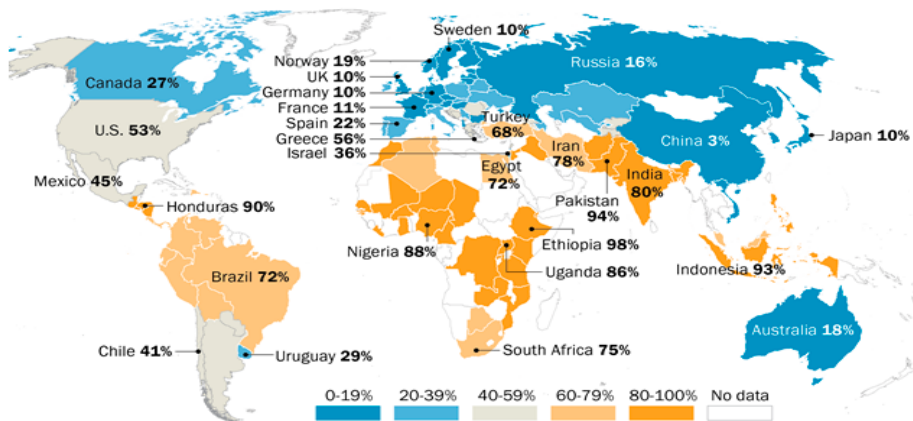
6 The ban on wearing “ostentatious religious signs” in French schools is analogous.

For example, the perception that most Western leaders held of the Arab Spring was affected by their comparing it with the events of 1989 in Central Europe. It took them several years to notice that religion in North Africa plays a much more important role in political decision-making than in Europe and to understand that different religions, in this case Christianity and Islam, have different social consequences. It is not just a matter of comparing a map of religions and a map of polygamy but also of comparing the former, for example, with the map of freedom in the world published annually by Freedom House (cf. Freedom House, 2019). Of course, the correlations here are not absolute, but they are nevertheless striking.

The geography of “religious fervour” also tells us something significant about the expected course of secularisation processes. Thus, we have strongly justified predictions about the deepening de-Christianisation of Western societies and, at the same time, equally justified predictions about the rise of Christianity and Islam in sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Pew Research Center, 2017).

Fig. 3. Religion is very important to people in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America

*% who say religion is very important in their lives*



Source: Pew Research Center, *The Changing Global Religious Landscape*, [https://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/pf\\_17-04-05\\_projectionsupdate\\_medianage640px/](https://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/pf_17-04-05_projectionsupdate_medianage640px/) (accessed on 20.12.2019).



## The relationships between religion and politics

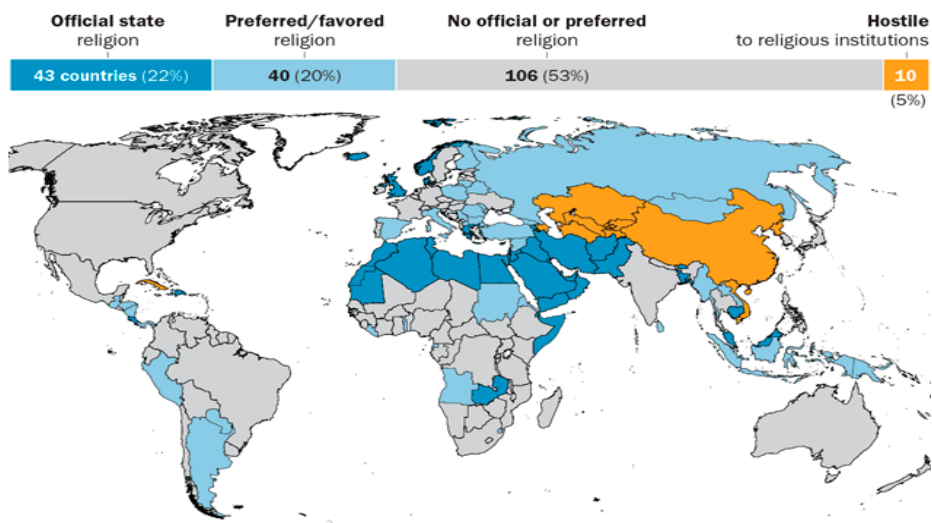
Generally, geopolitics refers to “hard” data resulting from the relationship between a power and a particular territory. Today, “soft” data, such as culture or religion, are becoming increasingly important. This is related to the conviction that geopolitics also concerns control over immaterial space. Furthermore, the role of non-state political actors is increasing; some of these have been created on the basis of religion, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross or Caritas Internationalis. In fact, this is not a new trend but simply a new version of previous patterns. The omission of the religious factor in political science (including the influence of state atheism) and thus also in geopolitics and international relations seems to have been mainly due to ideological reasons. Part of this attitude is an ideological approach to secularisation processes. Peter Berger wrote in 1968 that “by the 21<sup>st</sup> century religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture” (Zenderowski, 2014, p. 549). For nearly thirty years, Berger’s opinion was regarded as scientific. As Berger admitted himself, today we know that this is theoretically wrong, and the observed processes are actually heading in exactly the opposite direction (except in the case of Europe and the United States). The theory of spontaneous secularisation had an ideological thesis embedded into it, which provided an alibi for the secularisation policy pursued by many countries (cf. Casanova, 2005; Mazurkiewicz, 2019, pp. 11–30).

It is worth remembering here that the attitude of great religions to the institutions of the state (and vice versa) depends on the specific religion, whereas it is generally not very difficult to list those states that identify themselves with a particular religion or with the civilisational model developed on its basis. Although, according to the secularisation thesis, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there should no longer be states that identify themselves with a particular religion, in fact almost half of the world’s states define themselves by reference to religion (Fig. 4). We have official state religions (22%), preferred religions within the secular state model (20%), or intentional political hostility towards religious institutions (5%). Islam is the most frequent state religion, although it must be remembered that there are Christian (Protestant or Orthodox) states in Europe that (within the Protestant model) are generally populated by

rather secular societies. Christianity is a frequent preferred religion; it generally refers to the idea of a secular state and a separation between the state and the church (there are exceptions like Turkey, where there is a hybrid model of state-religion relationships). Hostility that is directed towards religion in general, rather than towards “foreign” religion, is most commonly found in communist countries.

Fig. 4. Four in ten countries have official state religions or preferred religions

*Among the 199 countries analyzed, a breakdown of the state's relationship with religion*



Source: Pew Research Center, *Many Countries Favor Specific Religions, Officially or Unofficially*, [https://www.pewforum.org/2017/10/03/many-countries-favor-specific-religions-officially-or-unofficially/pf\\_10-04-17\\_statereligions-00/](https://www.pewforum.org/2017/10/03/many-countries-favor-specific-religions-officially-or-unofficially/pf_10-04-17_statereligions-00/) (accessed on 21.12.2019).

Christianity deserves special attention due to the fact that within this religion there exists a strictly religious institution (the Church), which shows a certain similarity to the state in its organisational structure but is totally separate (autonomous) from it. This also means that in territories (states) where Christians are a minority, they are organised on an institutional level in the form of parishes or dioceses. In the case of the Catholic Church, there is also an international structure, i.e. the Holy See, which is a legal entity in international relations. In Islam, there is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), probably the only association of states in the world that is organised based on religious criteria.

## The politicisation and instrumentalisation of religion

At least five reasons that explain a state's interest in religion can be enumerated. Firstly, there are theocratic countries, in which politics is treated (at least in theory) as an instrument for the implementation of God's will and as support in leading citizens towards salvation. Secondly, there were and still are ideological states in the world (e.g. China or North Korea) where ideology plays the role of a "secular religion" (*Ersatzreligion*). In this situation, any real religion is competition for the "souls" of its citizens, therefore it is unacceptable to have any institutions, including religious ones, that are not subject to state control (the state's interest in religion aims to "disable" it). Third, since Plato, religion has been seen as a potential instrument in political action. Plato's point was not that religious leaders could set political goals for themselves but the opposite: he was convinced that states could not be governed without referring to religious motivation. Religion legitimises political power and, at the same time, motivates people to obedience, even though this power does not promise perfect justice. The religious man knows that this justice is administered by gods in another aeon (Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed that refusing to profess a "civil religion" deserves the death penalty; cf. Mazurkiewicz, 2018, pp. 113–134). Here, we have an attempt by a state to instrumentalise religion for political purposes, which may be done in good or bad faith, although in both cases it is an offence against religious freedom<sup>7</sup>. Fourth, a multicultural state may see religion as a source of potential social conflict, thus fearing "religious wars" between religiously diverse sectors of society. Out of a sense of responsibility for social peace, a state may want to take measures aimed to establish or maintain it. This seems to be the main reason why states are interested in Islam as the religion of the majority of immigrants in Europe today, as it raises important questions about the capacity of European societies to integrate newcomers and about the willingness of immigrants themselves to become part of Western society. Fifth, a state may see religion as one of the essential elements of the common good.

7 Virgil wrote *The Aeneid* at the request of Octavian Augustus in order to attribute divine origins to the emperor's family (*gens Julia*), i.e. to trace them back to the Trojans and the goddess Venus.

It may have an interest in people being religious but without supporting any particular religion. The slogans *God bless America* or *In God we trust* were originally addressed to the Christian God, although without a clear link to a specific Christian denomination. However, it would appear that if the religious landscape of the United States were to change considerably, extending the state's benevolence to other religions would not require changing these slogans.

In the first two cases, i.e. when a state identifies itself with a religion or an ideology, it is natural for it to assign a meaning to space through the prism of that religion or ideology. This may lead not only to attempts to eliminate a "foreign" religion from the territory of one's state but also to conquer the territory previously occupied by another religion/ideology. On the one hand, we are aware of the universalism embodied in both twentieth-century totalitarianisms, i.e. Nazism and communism, and, on the other hand, of Islamic universalism, which aims to create a single global community of followers of Islam (*ummah*) within radical movements associated with the obligation to create a new caliphate (Zenderowski, 2014, p. 555). Due to its institutional state-church dualism, Christian universalism is of a different nature.

The issue of how to approach those territories that once belonged to a particular religion but were then lost to another is particularly sensitive. These territories are sometimes perceived as territories "occupied" by another religion, which might impose an obligation on the followers of this religion to reclaim them. Gilles Kepel mentions a principle associated with radical Islam, according to which "once land is Muslim, (...) that land is always Muslim" (Kepel, 2017, p. 295). This is not just about a potential obligation to reclaim territory and rebuild, for example, the Caliphate of Cordoba, but it is about the religious nature of this obligation. The specific migration policy of migrants' countries of origin can be considered a tool for the implementation of this type of political postulate: within this policy, first the emigration process and then the "diasporisation" of the migrant community are supported (Dumont, 2018, p. 298).

In the third case, when a religion is considered an indispensable tool for political action, it is easy to instrumentalise it. Robert Spaemann draws attention to the extreme objectification of the world by the modern natural sciences and to the rationality-dominated life goals of Europeans:

The rationality of scientific and technical civilisation and functionalism have become a common form of thinking and subordinated the whole of life to itself. Even religion in this civilisation has found its ultimate justification in satisfying man's religious needs rather than in the worship of God. (...) For functionalism, nothing exists in and of itself. Everything is defined by what it is used for and can therefore be replaced by something else that performs the same function (Spaemann, 2010, p. 491).

Thus, the value of religion is recognised and it is granted the right to exist in public space if it fulfils a certain secular function assigned to it and serves to achieve certain non-religious goals. As an example of this way of thinking, Spaemann cites the statement that "Zen meditation is important because police officers trained in it are better snipers" (Spaemann, 2009, p. 133). This may be a true statement, but it remains an open question as to what relevance this has for an individual who would indulge in certain religious practices in order to be more "effective" at work. From a geopolitical perspective, a functional approach to religion assumes a state's interest in religion for as long as it fulfils the functions assigned to it by that state. However, at the same time, the state is also interested in finding other ways in which these functions could be fulfilled in non-religious ways. Religion usually performs certain useful functions (which can be political in nature), but these are auxiliary functions from its point of view and are performed incidentally.

According to Crane, religion is an important community-forming factor. Man, seen from a liberal perspective, is an individualist who enters into contractual relationships with others. However, in politics as in geopolitics, it is not individuals but communities that count. Communities that are based on the principles of benevolence and solidarity do not arise spontaneously, which usually escapes the attention of political scientists and academics. According to Philip Kitcher, this is because they themselves belong to academic communities based on these principles.

The lack of similar secular structures for other social groups disappears from their view. They fail to notice that – even from the perspective of their own political ideology – they are merely an exception. In many parts of the affluent world, however, particularly in the United States, there are no serious opportunities, outside the synagogues and churches and mosques, for fellowship with all the dimensions religious communities can provide (Kitcher, 2014, p. 120, after Crane, 2019, p. 74; cf. Cavanaugh, 2010).

Crane argues that religious beliefs and practices always involve a sense of belonging that is akin, in his opinion, to that of belonging to a national or ethnic community; this is about a sense of relations that are neither contractual nor negotiated (cf. Crane, 2019, pp. 67–69).

Religions provide members of a community with a sense of identity and belonging; they eminently contribute to the creation of a sense of community that is not based on common interests. In his analysis of the role of religion in the Balkan conflict, Radosław Zenderowski distinguishes between the process of the ethnicisation (politicisation) of religion and the process of the sacralisation of ethnos (nation). By its very nature, religion promotes the formation and strengthening of ethnic identities. From the point of view of religion, community, including national community, is generally an important value. Christianity regards the family and the nation as two natural communities. However, where the boundaries of religious and ethnic/national communities overlap, it is possible for religion to be instrumentalised for secular purposes, especially when there is open conflict between ethnic communities. Ethnic groups can usurp the exclusive ownership of saints (especially national patron saints), sacred places, or even certain elements of religious doctrine. Doctrinal secessions (heresy) or organisational secessions (schism) may take place. By becoming the property of only one ethnic community, religion undergoes deuniversalisation. Zenderowski observes that in the Balkan conflict, in an environment that had not long before been atheist and which had been governed by the very same communist political leaders, religion was instrumentally used as the foundation of a new, i.e. post-communist and post-Yugoslav, ethnic identity (Zenderowski, 2011, pp. 168–205). The opposite phenomenon is also possible, when a nation is elevated to the rank of a sacral community. It becomes a quasi-religious community with its own God-given task to fulfil in the history of the world (cf. Zenderowski, 2011, pp. 39–56). As Thomas Nipperdey puts it: “in nationalism, religion becomes secularized, and secularism becomes sacralised” (Nipperdey, 1982, p. 300, as cited in Zenderowski, 2011, p. 44).

When considering the relationship between religion and religious conflicts, Crane distinguishes four elements that are present in religion:

1. the explicitly theological content;
2. nontheological elements of religious doctrines, such as rules about how to live or worship;

3. the element of identification;
4. aspects of human psychology, society, and culture that are not essentially religious (Crane, 2019, p. 90).

According to Crane, the explicitly theological content has probably never been the cause of any so-called religious wars<sup>8</sup>. It was not the filioque clause, he observes, that influenced the war between the Serbs and the Croats in the 1990s (Crane, 2019, p. 92). Rather, it is the other three elements that are involved in this type of conflict. He treats the conflict between Shia and Sunni Muslims as religious but not theological. From this point of view, the essential factor is the element of identification and its certain psychological, social, and cultural aspects. As an example, he cites an anecdote relating to the conflict in Belfast. A man was stopped at a roadblock and asked about his religion. “When he replies that he is an atheist, he is asked, ‘Protestant or Catholic atheist?’” (Hitchens, 2014, p. 24, as cited in Crane, 2019, p. 96). According to Crane, this joke was misinterpreted by Christopher Hitchens (who originally quoted it), with the implication that doctrine played no role in the Northern Irish conflict. The religious factor was reduced to the role of a label to distinguish “us” from “them”.

Speaking of the instrumentalisation of religion, it is worth highlighting an aspect that is very popular in the West today that is best demonstrated by referring to an anecdote. It is another version of Plato’s argument. After the terrorist attack at Zaventem airport in 2016, there was a discussion in the Belgian press about possible tools for the effective integration of immigrants. One idea was to introduce a compulsory subject in Belgian schools that was originally called *les cours de rien*, which literally means “lessons about nothing”. The originator of this idea began with an assumption that schools in his country, which teach Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Islamic, and Judaic religions, as well as ethics, are not sufficiently neutral, which is the cause of the religious fundamentalism that is emerging. Hence, his idea was to introduce a new compulsory subject that would serve to educate children and young people in a worldview that transcends each of these particular viewpoints. Eventually this subject was introduced into schools, albeit under a different name.

<sup>8</sup> William Cavanaugh (2009) sees the issue of the so-called religious wars as a manifestation of the process of the formation of modern nation states. In this process, religion has never played a fundamental role.

Regarding the religious policy of the European Union and its unique character, it can be said that – despite the fact that religious lessons are taught in schools that were created for the children of European civil servants – the EU’s vision of worldview neutrality is quite close to the view of the originators of the Belgian *cours de rien*. Political realism dictates that the presence of religious communities should be taken into account as a social fact in political decisions and that effort should be made to win their goodwill or at least their cool indifference. However, this seems to be accompanied by the hope that, thanks to a long-term EU policy, religions will change and become like the Belgian *cours de rien*. Churches and religious communities are important partners in EU consultations, but the aim of drawing them into the process is to neutralise their religious message. Ultimately, EU functionaries will be given a politically useful instrument over which they will have full control (cf. Mazurkiewicz, 2019, pp. 11–37).

## Summary

Religion always develops within any geographical space that it marks (e.g. by placing religious signs, building shrines, tombs, pilgrimage routes, etc.) and with which its followers identify in a particular way. The claim that religion is rapidly deterritorialising seems exaggerated. The word “religion” is usually understood as relating to very diverse phenomena (monotheism, henotheism, polytheism, “inside the world”, and “outside the world” religions, etc.) which are united by the systematic character of practical human efforts to find meaning in life and a place in the world.

Each religion defines its relationship with the political sphere (including its geopolitical goals) differently. Apart from their explicitly religious function, religions generally perform a number of auxiliary functions (e.g. identity- and community-forming functions), which means that attempts are often made to politicise and instrumentalise them. Such attempts are made not only by politicians who are followers of a particular religion but also by those who declare themselves as agnostics or atheists.

The geopolitical paradigm of a given religion may change over time, as is the case with the Catholic Church and the pontificate of Pope Francis.



One of the ways in which geopolitics may be utilised as a tool is in the attempt to totally eliminate from public debate any discussion related to a given religion, as is the case with Islam and the term “Islamophobia”.

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# A paradigm shift in the geopolitics of religion

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The article refers to the concept of territory in the context of changes in the meaning assigned to it.

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TERM:** The author presents historical examples of changes in the geopolitics of religion that are related to politics, migration, and religion itself (including secularisation).

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The author analyses the paradigm shifts in Catholic geopolitics as a result of the different geopolitical perspectives adopted by Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The author discusses selected aspects of the geopolitics of religion in Europe, including the important role played by attitudes towards Islam and its place in public life.

**Keywords:** territory, religion, Catholicism, Islam



## Changes in the meaning attributed to territory

The perception of territory within a particular religion can change. The changeable nature of territory has many variables: territories that are considered to belong to a given religion (“a canonical territory”), the prevalent opinion within a given community of what territories should belong to it (expansive dimension), and finally, territories that are considered friendly or hostile towards a given religion.

A shared feature of the main world religions today is that we can point to their historical beginnings, that is, to a time before they existed or occupied any territory. Thus, it is possible to analyse the historical process of the expansion of the territory dominated by each religion. Conversion is the first means by which a religious community can develop and extend the territory it occupies. This takes place within the native territory, i.e. within the original ethnic community to which the founder of a new religion belongs; it extends through missionary journeys, i.e. preaching the new faith in an ethnically foreign environment. The second way of expanding a religion’s sphere of influence is through conquest, but this requires access to certain minimum political and military resources. It would seem that this should be compatible, or at least not inconsistent, with the tenets of a given religion. Nowadays, in an age of mass migration, the peaceful movement of large groups of followers of a particular religion can change the religious structure of the population living in a given territory. Another factor that leads to an increase in the number of believers of a given religion is linked to significant differences in fertility rates within religious groups living in the same territory.

As religious groups expand into new territories, they displace the religious groups that already existed there. This can be a peaceful transitional process; for example, the official transition of the Roman Empire from polytheism to Christianity can be viewed this way, at least to an extent. If territorial expansion is obtained by means of conquest, it is generally achieved through (starting with the most radical measures) the extermination of the adherents of the indigenous religion, their forced conversion, the recognition of the adherents of the indigenous religion as second-class subjects (in Islam: the *dhimmi* status), and their marginalisation, both politically and economically, e.g. by obliging them to pay

special taxes “for protection” (in Islam: the *jizya* tax) and on agricultural land (in Islam: the *kharaj* tax)<sup>1</sup>. Full “assimilation” of a new territory is a process that generally takes several centuries. However, this does not necessarily mean the total disappearance of a religious community that previously inhabited it. It would seem to be the case that in this scenario, the “resilience” of a religious group is significantly increased if the religious differences are strengthened by ethnic differences (e.g. the Copts in Egypt or the Chaldeans in Iraq). The removal of the “remnants” of a previously dominant religious community will sometimes occur when a territory experiences a reconquest (e.g. the expulsion of the Muriscos to the Maghreb in 1609, as they were perceived a threat to the Kingdom of Granada), or due to the power of radical groups (e.g. the expulsion of 30,000 monks and nuns from France between 1901 and 1904, the Armenian genocide in Turkey between 1915 and 1917, or the “religious cleansing” of the Christian and Yazidi indigenous population after the Second Iraq War)<sup>2</sup>. Sometimes indigenous religious communities disappear almost completely within a relatively short period of time (e.g. the Christian communities in North Africa after it was conquered by Islam), or sometimes over a period of several centuries of (sometimes) relative tolerance (e.g. Christians and Jews living in the Ottoman Empire)<sup>3</sup>.

A disappearing religious community leaves behind material traces in the form of temples, cemeteries, religious symbols in public spaces, and architecture. A community that gains dominance in a territory will often attempt to erase these material traces, e.g. by transforming pagan temples into Christian ones (e.g. the Pantheon in Rome), Muslim edifices into Christian ones (e.g. the mosque in Cordoba), or Christian churches into Muslim mosques (e.g. Hagia Sophia in Istanbul). New temples are frequently built on the ruins of old ones (e.g. the mosque in Cordoba on

- 1 “Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled” (*Quran*, verse (9:29)). Cf. Pagès, 2020, pp. 481–482.
- 2 The Holocaust is a somewhat different phenomenon because it took place within territories that were never dominated by the Jewish community.
- 3 In the case of Christianity, there is a clear institutional separation between the state and the church; furthermore, assigning responsibility for specific actions related to the relationship between the state and religion is problematic.



the site of a Visigoth church). The 6<sup>th</sup> century Buddha statues in Bamiyan, which were destroyed by the Afghan Taliban in 2001, can serve as an example outside Christian-Muslim rivalry. Sometimes, disputes over holy places can be secular in nature; examples include the transformation of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris into the Temple of Reason (in French: *Temple de la Raison*) during the French Revolution, the erection of the Eiffel Tower (in French: *La Tour Eiffel*) on the centenary of the Revolution to overshadow the medieval cathedral, and contemporary disputes over how to rebuild the cathedral after the 2019 fire. It is worth noting that in response to the construction of the Eiffel Tower, Sacre Cœur Basilica, which dominates the Paris skyline, was erected on the hill of Montmartre. Another example of this symbolic rivalry is the history of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, erected between 1817 and 1880 as a votive offering to save Russia from the Napoleonic invasion, which was demolished by the Soviet authorities in 1931 and then rebuilt between 1990 and 2000. An example from Poland is the history of the Orthodox Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Saxon Square [Plac Saski] in Warsaw, erected after the fall of the January Uprising as a sign of the rule of the Russian Orthodox Empire<sup>4</sup> and demolished in 1924–1926, after Poland regained its independence<sup>5</sup>.

4 In his book *Pod berłem Romanowów: sztuka rosyjska w Warszawie 1815–1915* [*Under the Romanovs' rule: Russian art in Warsaw 1815–1915*], Piotr Paszkiewicz quotes from a Russian newspaper of the time: “The erection of a Russian Orthodox temple (...) on the most prominent site in Warsaw is a necessity not only for religious purposes but also as a symbol of Russian statehood in this country, a symbol of Orthodox Russia, of which the Kingdom of Poland is an inseparable part” (Paszkiewicz, 1991, p. 115).

5 This shrine is mentioned by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński when discussing the reasons why he wanted John Paul II to celebrate a Mass in Warsaw in 1979, precisely at this place, which was then called Victory Square [Plac Zwycięstwa]: “I was brought up in Warsaw schools. I know Warsaw from before the First World War. I studied and I had friends in Warsaw. At that place, exactly where the Holy Father was standing, there was the apse of a huge tsarist Orthodox church, erected by order of the tsar as the ultimate oppression of Poland and the Church. At the Castle, the tsar said, “Poles, abandon all hope”. That is why I wanted the Holy Father to be at the Castle, and not at Belvedere. (...) No, Poles will not give up hope. For me, that Mass was a great experience, a great shock, because I was sitting on the spot where the Orthodox church had stood and I looked at the Pope, who was celebrating Mass there, where the main dome of the Orthodox church and the rites of that tsarist power had been; all that disappeared and the Pope was celebrating a Latin Mass, a Catholic Mass, right here. It was a victory, but of course a national-religious one, testifying to the union of Church and Nation and the mutual, albeit unequal

Fig 1. The Orthodox Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Saxon Square in Warsaw



Source: [https://api.culture.pl/sites/default/files/2019-12/warszawa\\_alexandro-nevsky\\_sobor\\_1910-e\\_02.jpg](https://api.culture.pl/sites/default/files/2019-12/warszawa_alexandro-nevsky_sobor_1910-e_02.jpg).

As far as material signs are concerned, it is worth mentioning pilgrimage routes such as the Way of St. James (in Spanish: *Camino de Santiago*), which leads from various places in the Old Continent to the tomb of the Apostle in Santiago de Compostela. The route, renewed as a result of a suggestion of the Council of Europe, is marked on roadside signposts with the symbol of St. James' shell. The notion of pilgrimage to places of special religious significance is not specific to Christianity but is also practiced by other religions.

necessity of these two institutions to save the situation. And this Warsaw, Holy Father, which applauded in such a way, which actually stressed every word spoken by the Holy Father, also understood it well" (John Paul II, 2019, pp. 44–45).

Figure 2. St. James' pilgrimage routes in Europe



Source: [http://peregrini.info/fotogaleria/Mapy-Drog-Jakubowych\\_12](http://peregrini.info/fotogaleria/Mapy-Drog-Jakubowych_12).

The geopolitical significance of a territory also changes as a result of conflicts that occur within religion. Thus, the perception of the territory that belonged to Christianity changed significantly as a result of, for example, the Great Schism and the Reformation. A similar observation can be applied to the Sunni-Shia Divide within Islam (although here the analogy is not as straightforward).

From the point of view of the geopolitics of religion, the issue of whether a given territory is friendly, hostile, or neutral towards a particular religion is also relevant. Of course, this does not relate to territories in the physical sense but to territories marked by a certain religious or cultural profile<sup>6</sup>. Thus, it can be said that various communities living in a given

<sup>6</sup> According to John Paul II, spiritual sovereignty rather than state sovereignty is the basis for the existence of a national community and the guarantee of its future. Even a nation deprived of statehood must exist in a specifically defined geographical space, thus the appearance of terms such as "national profile", "cultural equilibrium", and "the characteristic culture of a region". These terms refer to the concept of *Leitkultur*, which is found in German works. In his Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, on 1 January 2001, John Paul II said: "(...) one cannot underestimate the capacity of the characteristic culture of a region to

territory are – often for historical reasons – emotionally, culturally, ethically, or religiously close to a given religion. A positive attitude towards co-believers is understandable, but it seems that a favourable attitude towards a given religion can also be shared by a broader community of non-followers of this religion, which, for example, finds in this religion the historical source of its own civilisation. Thus, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism can become recognised as a person’s religion, even if one is not a follower. This translates into sharing certain civilisational patterns (e.g. monogamous or polygamous marriages), symbols, and values that are taken for granted, which means that international cooperation in defence of these values seems natural. Religious and cultural profiles can change for many reasons: as a result of the aforementioned conflicts and splits within a religion; mass migration processes (e.g. the emergence of strong Muslim communities in France or Germany); secularisation processes; cultural revolutions (e.g. the October Revolution or the events of 1968 in the West); political processes (e.g. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s coming to power in Spain), etc.<sup>7</sup> Changes in the geopolitical significance of territories may also be caused by internal re-evaluations within a given religion, which, for example, may be due to a change of leadership within a group.

produce a balanced growth, especially in the delicate early stages of life, in those who belong to that culture from birth. From this point of view, a reasonable way forward would be to ensure a certain “cultural equilibrium” in each region, by reference to the culture which has prevalently marked its development. This equilibrium, even while welcoming minorities and respecting their basic rights, would allow the continued existence and development of a particular “cultural profile”, by which I mean that basic heritage of language, traditions and values which are inextricably part of a nation’s history and its national identity” (John Paul II, 2007, p. 829).

7 Within the framework of the secularization theory, Jose Casanova makes a distinction between the secularisation theory proper and its ideological component that originates in the Enlightenment critique of religion, between the theory of the modern autonomous differentiation of secular and religious spheres and the claim that the inevitable result of the process of modern differentiation will lead to the progressive erosion and ultimate disappearance of religion. Thus, the secularisation theory consists of descriptive and normative elements. Referring to empirical data, Casanova argues that we are currently witnessing a progressive deprivatisation of religion in the world, while European-style secularisation, which is an exception, is mainly the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy that has been accompanied by violence for over two hundred years, as has happened in France, for example. European-style secularisation is thus mainly a top-down process carried out by the elites, including the political elites, who treat religion as a sign of civilisational backwardness and secularised society as synonymous with modernisation (Casanova, 2016, p. 46).

## A paradigm shift in Catholic geopolitics

Pope Francis, who comes from South America, has fundamentally changed the Vatican's perspective on geopolitics. This is not especially surprising, as previous popes also had to make geopolitical decisions. The absence of any mention of communism and colonialism in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* is striking. The world to which the Church referred in this document was only that of Western democracy. Although the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* mentioned religions other than Christianity, including Islam, they were placed within a redefined theological space rather than a geographical space. When John Paul II became Pope, he significantly changed the Vatican's perception of the world. First, he broadened the understanding of Europe by reminding us of the existence of Central and Eastern Europe, which he called Europe's "second lung". This required a complete reorientation of the Vatican's policy towards the Soviet Union and communism in general. Communism was recognised by the Polish Pope as a temporary phenomenon that should soon disappear from the map of the world, which meant that the Vatican abandoned its diplomatic efforts to achieve stability through partial agreements with the communist authorities. This idea is well reflected in John Paul II's conversation with members of the Polish Episcopal Conference, which took place on 5 June 1979 at Jasna Góra. Bishop Bronisław Dąbrowski, uttered the words: "Poggi is Kąkol's toy"<sup>8</sup> (John Paul II, 2019, p. 56).

8 From August 1973, Archbishop Luigi Poggi was the Vatican's envoy who was responsible for the restoration of relations with the socialist countries; from February 1975, he was the head of the Vatican delegation for permanent working contacts with Poland. From May 1974 to April 1980, Kazimierz Kąkol was a minister and a director of the Office for Religious Affairs. He conducted negotiations with Archbishop Poggi. He tried to restrict the activity of the Church only to the sphere of worship.

Figure 2. Kulturkampf. Bismarck and Pope Pius IX playing chess



Source: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/81/Kladderadatsch\\_1875\\_-\\_Zwischen\\_Berlin\\_und\\_Rom.png/1280px-Kladderadatsch\\_1875\\_-\\_Zwischen\\_Berlin\\_und\\_Rom.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/81/Kladderadatsch_1875_-_Zwischen_Berlin_und_Rom.png/1280px-Kladderadatsch_1875_-_Zwischen_Berlin_und_Rom.png)

The Vatican's change of attitude to communism made it urgently necessary to develop an official position regarding liberation theology, which the Soviet Union was using to attempt to assert its influence in South America. Peace in the Middle East was another important issue that needed to be addressed, as John Paul II was aware that the first victims of any war in this region would be the Christians living there (as revealed in his opposition to American intervention in Iraq). In this context, one important papal initiative was to invite the followers of various religions to a meeting in Assisi, which took place for the first time in 1986. It is also worth mentioning the visit of John Paul II to Morocco in 1985. However, following the massive crimes of communism (especially during the war in the Balkans), the Pope also reminded people that reconciliation was the most important message of the Gospel (as quoted in Górzna [ed.], 2016; Górzna, 2016). Finally, John Paul II made 104 pilgrimages to 130 countries around the world, during which time he travelled 1.7 million kilometres, which is more than three times the distance between the Earth and the Moon (cf. Jackowski, Soljan and Frost, 2009, pp. 19–47). The maps of papal travels give some idea of John Paul II's geopolitical imagination and undermine the belief that the Pope had a Eurocentric

attitude due to his appointment of mainly European cardinals (Scaglione, 2018).

Argentinian-born Pope Francis quickly broke with the “hermeneutic of continuity” in the Roman Curia (de Volder, 2019, p. 77). Hence, many commentaries on the Pope’s teaching refer to a “paradigm shift”. In his address to the staff of the Roman Curia, Pope Francis, quoting Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, directly stated, “If we want everything to remain as it is, then everything must change” (Francis, 2019).

In analysing geopolitics, it would seem that the most important changes concern the de-Europeanisation of the Catholic Church. As a result of the appointments made by Pope Francis, the percentage of cardinals from Europe in the College of Cardinals has fallen from 57% to 42%, while the percentage of those from South America has risen from 10% to 11% (Vatican Press, 2021). The Pope has introduced a new perspective regarding South America. During his apostolic journeys, he visited numerous countries on the continent, but he bypassed Argentina. He has introduced a rehabilitation of liberation theology by inviting its main representatives to colloquia in the Vatican and initiating the beatification process of one of their representatives, Archbishop Hélder Pessoa Câmara. During the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region (2019), the “ancient practices and mythical explanations” of indigenous peoples were recognised. In 2018, during the pontificate of Pope Francis, the Holy See signed a “provisional” agreement with the government of the People’s Republic of China regarding the appointment of bishops (Vatican Press, 2018), which was renewed in 2020. Cardinal Joseph Zen, Bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, strongly objected to this agreement (Zen, 2020). It is possible that as part of this agreement, the Vatican agreed to recognise bishops that had been ordained without the approval of the Holy See and to abolish the underground Church. Finally, during his pilgrimage to the United Arab Emirates, Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar signed a joint declaration on human fraternity for world peace and living together. In words considered controversial by many Catholic theologians, it says that “the pluralism and the diversity of religions (...) are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings” (Vatican Press, 2019). Other changes include rapprochement with Russia (during a meeting with Patriarch Kirill in Cuba) and a cooling of relations with the United States during the

presidency of Donald Trump. Thus, the Vatican's relationships with the two countries that are today competing for the title of the world's most important defender of Christianity have changed. In the time of John Paul II, it was clear that the United States was an ally and the Soviet Union was an adversary. Under Benedict XVI, the attitude towards the US did not change, while relations with Russia – despite Vladimir Putin's visits to the Vatican – remained cool. Under the pontificate of Francis, there seems to have been a shift in the poles, although the presidency of Joe Biden may significantly affect the Holy See's perception of the United States.

Undoubtedly, Pope Francis has introduced a new view of geopolitics within the Catholic Church. Some European bishops have declared their readiness to implement in their countries selected provisions of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon region, which means following some of the patterns of a community that has always seemed to be on the margins of the universal Church. As far as the agreement with communist China is concerned, some negative consequences for Chinese Catholics can already be seen. As part of the 'Sinicisation of religions' programme announced at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2017, one of the orders of the communist government was that translations of the holy books of Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism should be modified to fit the official Communist Party line (Wang, 2019). On 1 May 2021, the "Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel" came into force (Introvigne, 2021), which means the creation of a database of clergy authorised by the communist authorities. Registration requires, among other things, that clergymen should demonstrate that they support the socialist system and the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (Article 3) and that they will prevent illegal religious activities, oppose religious extremism, and resist foreign infiltration by means of religion (Article 6). For Catholics this means, among other things, severing all links with the underground Church and possibly also with the Vatican. The database only includes clergy from the five main religions; it excludes many other religious communities, including Judaism and those Catholics who have refused to join the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association. Any religious practices offered by unauthorised clergymen are considered a criminal offence. Supervision by the Communist authorities means, for example, that



each time the Buddhist lama is reincarnated, he must be approved by the Communist Party (Article 15). According to Article 16 of said document, Catholic bishops must be “democratically” elected by the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, i.e. appointed by the Chinese Communist Party and consecrated by the Chinese Conference of Catholic Bishops. Unlike in the 2018 agreement, no role is provided here for the Pope and the Vatican. In light of the above decisions of the Chinese government, the warnings uttered by Cardinal Joseph Zen regarding the Vatican’s agreement with the Chinese Communist Party take on new significance (Zen, 2020). Hence, the question is whether this Chinese gambit was sufficiently thought through, or whether it is not a situation in which “Poggy is the toy” of another communist government.

The effects of the agreement with Abu Dhabi are difficult to predict. Perhaps it will fundamentally change relations between Christian and Islamic parts of the world, which until now have always seen each other as adversaries. Francis’ pilgrimage to the persecuted Christians in Iraq and his meeting with the Shiite Grand Ayatollah Ali As-Sistani may be the first signs of spring. However, it is just as likely that everything will stay as it is, and Pope Francis’ successor will put Christian-Muslim relations back on their previous track.

## Is Islamophobia an element of geopolitical strategy?

In posing the above question, I do not claim that the phenomenon of Islamophobia or hostility/hatred (grounded solely in superstition) towards Muslims as a religious group does not exist. In my consideration here I am interested in whether the term ‘Islamophobia’ is used as an element of geopolitical strategy, regardless of any other functions it might have. In other words, has this term been introduced into discussions in Western societies because of a change in attitudes towards territories that were previously dominated by Christians?

There are many terms containing the root “phobia” in public discourse. As “phobia” (in Greek φόβος – fear, anxiety) is a symptom of anxiety disorders that are characterised by an unjustified, very strong, uncontrollable fear of specific situations, phenomena, or objects, the very use of this term in the context of a religious group (e.g. Islamophobia), an

ethnic group (xenophobia), or for people with specific sexual preferences (e.g. homophobia) moves this public debate into the field of psychiatry. A person suspected of acting under the influence of a phobia is thus classified as potentially mentally disordered. Moreover, according to the very definition of a phobia, a fear-inducing phenomenon is not a real threat. Thus, an object causing fear does not require any in-depth reflection, and a person succumbing to a phobia should be subjected to therapeutic treatment (Szewczuk [ed.], 1985; Korzeniewski and Pużyński [ed.], 1986). Accusing an opponent of being phobic towards a particular social phenomenon excludes him from rational debate and condemns him to silence as his fears are, by definition, irrational. Of course, psychiatrists are entitled to argue that the phenomena they describe actually do exist in reality, but the question here is the extent to which psychiatric concepts can be useful when applied to the social sciences.

The term 'Islamophobia' was probably first used by Étienne Dinet in *L'Orient vu de l'Occident* (1922). Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner (2003, pp. 27–28) argue that it was invented and applied in Iran, during the mullahs' revolution (1979), to include women who refused to wear the hijab, Muslim feminists, and liberals. However, it did not begin its political career until the 1990s, at which point its meaning completely changed. The term Islamophobia was no longer ascribed to Muslims' fear of other Muslims; instead, it was ascribed to the fear non-Muslims felt towards Muslims and Islam (cf. Allen, 2010, p. 6). It came into widespread use after the attacks of 9<sup>th</sup> September 2001. A report prepared by the Runnymede Trust entitled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for All* (1997) is generally considered the first major political text to embrace the term, and the *Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001* (2002), prepared by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, is considered the most significant political text in this context.

In describing the attitude of Europeans towards Muslims, Giovanni Sale refers directly to Islamophobia understood as an irrational attitude.

It is known that 'phobias' regarding foreigners can lead to changes in the perception of reality that are fuelled by alarming fake news. (...) Islamophobia stems from ignorance of the facts or from misperception; it is instrumentally reinforced by propaganda campaigns that are aimed to create disinformation and fuel unfounded fears among people" (Sale, 2019, pp. 26–27).

In the case of Islam, these misperceptions include the following: reducing religion to an ethnic category, perceiving Islam as an internally homogeneous phenomenon, considering religion as an identity factor, and treating Muslims as one pan-Islamic community. Sale also links the irrationality of opponents of mass Muslim immigration to ignorance regarding the economic, cultural, and social benefits resulting from such migration (Sale, 2019, p. 26). In his view, Islamophobia is a symptom of a mental disorder, the result of ignorance, or a consequence of being the victim of political manipulation.

Stefano Allievi believes that the term “Islamophobia” is most often used to describe behaviours that have nothing to do with phobias. Hostility towards followers of Islam is not the result of phobia, i.e. the result of fear: it is the consequence of a deliberate choice of one group of people to scapegoat another group of people. “Political manufacturers of Islamophobia” consciously instrumentalise fear of Islam in order to achieve their political goals (Allievi, 2010, pp. 136–137). However, Allievi also draws attention to another problem, namely the fact that attempts to impose politically correct terminology in order to describe the phenomenon of Islam in Europe make it impossible to conduct any rational debate about the real problems that are growing due to the increasing presence of this religious group in the Old Continent. Thus, the term “Islamophobia” also serves to victimise Muslims, the consequence of which is the introduction of a kind of censorship that prevents any discussion of the real problems associated with the mass presence of Muslims in the West. Allievi attempts to “free” Islam from the accusation of its “inherent” conflictogenicity and at the same time unequivocally affirms that the presence of Islam is the cause of many identity conflicts. However, in his view, the moral responsibility for these conflicts lies with the representatives of the indigenous populations (Allievi, 2019, pp. 136–137). Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission, also speaks in this vein (EU, 2019).

The term “Islamophobia” is often contested, which is due to the fact that it is an inadequate term that lacks clarity. According to Marcel Maussen, “it includes many different forms of discourse, speech, and action, which suggests that they all stem from the same ideological core, which is the ‘irrational fear (phobia) of Islam’” (as quoted in Cesari, 2006, p. 6). In Pierre Manent’s opinion, the term “Islamophobia”, which

is borrowed from the language of Islamic propaganda, is devoid of any specific meaning but has a very specific function to perform. Introducing it into public language means that any discussion devoted to Islam is targeted and censored automatically. “We are allowed to say that Muslims have too few mosques and that Christians have too many churches” (Manent, 2016, p. 74), but we are not allowed to discuss other religious topics. There is sometimes even talk of Islamophobia-phobia (Chia, 2009). Manent writes:

We thus postulate that Muslims open their mouths in society only to state legitimate complaints, and that the legitimate speech of Muslims is only an accompaniment of their legitimate complaints (Manent, 2016, p. 74).

Thus, any public debate turns into a tear-jerking argument about equality, justice, and non-discrimination.

Since Muslims are not treated as a community in this artificially orchestrated discussion, no one asks them what their vision of society is or how they, as a Muslim community, would like to change the lives of non-Muslims. The society in which they live sees itself through the prism of individual human and civil rights. Thus, it is a society without identity that understands itself as dust that has accidentally settled in this geographical place rather than in another. This is why Muslims find it difficult to articulate what type of change they expect from this society that they are now a part of (only occasionally do they ask questions as to whether there is a place in France for the burqa, female circumcision, polygamy, arranged child marriages, or honour killings; anti-immigration or even anti-Islamic movements play a marginal role; cf. Kepel, 2017, p. 93). The language of human rights does not bridge the gap between Muslims and non-Muslims. This is because

guaranteeing individual human rights would require the complete disappearance of Islam as a form of communal living. Muslims are too attached to their moral practices and their religion to be tempted by the idea of becoming “modern individuals” at the price of dissolving [into society] as Muslims (Manent, 2016, p. 81).

What does this mean for a unifying Europe? If Islam expands in a space devoid of any political form in which all expressions of communal life have – in the name of defending individual rights – been undermined, the only foreseeable outcome will be the Islamisation of

Europe, i.e. Muslims will take over responsibility for the Old Continent. As Manent (2016, pp. 83–86) argues, Islam will then become the only common point of reference in a space that would otherwise have to disintegrate or in which an anarchy of individual rights would have to prevail. Europeans may one day be confronted with the statement that outside Islam there is no salvation....for Europe. “Islamisation by negligence” will thus take place because although Muslims came to Europe in search of better living conditions rather than to convert it, Europeans have never had an opportunity to accept or deny Muslim immigration because the official interpretation of this phenomenon has led them to see it through the prism of individual rights and never as the bearer of a collective identity. According to Manent, terms such as “equality”, “secularism” or “the values of the republic” lead to the negation of all common forms of life simply because they have not been chosen by every individual or not every individual likes them. If humanity had begun its adventure by adopting such principles, no families, cities, or religious communities would ever have come into being. In this scenario, “the values of the republic” means the disposition that makes it possible to live together when nothing unites people. In other words, Manent argues that it is precisely this so-called constitutional patriotism – which is postulated as the foundation of common life in the ideal state that the European Union would one day embody – that makes it impossible for a community to live and survive in the real state that is the French Republic. According to him, the only possible political way of “modernising” the followers of Islam is a return to the old category of nations: “the French Muslims will find their place in France as long as they find their place in the French nation” (Manent, 2016, p. 108).

Europeans urgently need a representative government, but such a government is only possible at the national level, as only national governments are truly accountable to their people; a united Europe exists only as a form of cooperation and friendship between the nations of Europe (Manent, 2016, pp. 88–91). This government should “command” Muslims to free themselves from the influence of Islam coming from outside of their country of residence, i.e. from the intervention of Muslim states such as Saudi Arabia, Morocco, or Turkey, which send their imams, finance the construction of mosques, and then often also manage them. Drawing a clear line between Islam that is external to the

state and Islam that is internal to it would enable the state to be friendly towards internal Islam and to take a defensive stance towards external Islam. The problem is that a characteristic feature of Islam is its “imperial” lack of distinction between the external and the internal. However, to demand that Muslims have access to the rights and duties enjoyed by French citizens without cutting them off from external dependencies, especially Saudi Arabia, would, Manent writes, be disingenuous and meaningless. To grant Islam a kind of concession to blur the boundary between these external and internal worlds and thus to effectively “exempt” some of the citizens of one’s own state from obedience to the state authorities, would be an act of political capitulation and spiritual submission to Islam.

In Manent’s view, the Muslim community itself must choose and define its place in French society but do so keeping in mind that it seeks this place in a Christian country, or a country marked by Christianity. “They will not enter an empty space but will have to find their place in a world that is already full” (Manent, 2016, p. 109). Secularism, in this case, only defines a mode of governmental organisation, not a form of communal living. When one speaks of “filling” public space, one has in mind matters such as the official language, the choice of calendar (seven-day cycle, public holidays, and days off), state symbols, or the canon of books obligatorily read by pupils at school. To a large extent, these are elements that stem from the heritage of Christian culture, and it is therefore not a culturally indifferent space.

Muslims do not enter a cultural void. Of course, they could have moved to a country with a Muslim majority, but for some reason they chose a Christian country. To say that they did so only because they sought better material living conditions would leave them permanently on the margins of a society marked by Christianity. That is why Manent calls on French Muslims to actively seek their place in society. However, Manent points out that in order for this task to be feasible, the Catholic community must also begin to behave more actively and to re-establish itself in the public space as a religious community in France. What has changed in comparison to the “old days” is the need for Catholics to recognise that they are only a part of French society and one element of the religious landscape of France today. “Muslims can therefore enjoy their rights in the republic, but they must first find their place in the nation” by accepting their

participation in a political body that is not part of the *ummah* and therefore accepting their partial separation from the *ummah* (Manent, 2016, p. 109).

Like Gilles Kepel, Manent is acutely aware that apart from the tensions between secularists, Christians, and Muslims in France, the latter are battling amongst themselves to obtain hegemony over the expression of Islam. The fiercest fighting takes place in Muslim communities on the outskirts of metropolitan areas, where the physical elimination of “apostates” by jihadists seeking to terrorise their co-believers also takes place (Kepel, 2017, pp. 299, 302).

Kepel believes that Manent’s proposal, while interesting, mistakenly assumes that the Muslim community will transform itself spontaneously without the state’s intervention. France’s problem is the intellectual poverty of the entire political class, the direct result of which is the collapse of public education “from nursery to university”. Kepel writes,

I hope that, after reading this book, its readers will agree with me that national discussion and public policy (which are challenged in France by terror) can only be conducted when supported by the knowledge that is (although for how long?) produced in our University (Kepel, 2017, p. 303).

Hence, here we return to the question of the concept of Islamophobia and whether it is sometimes used to make this serious discussion impossible.

## Summary

The geopolitical paradigm of a given religion can change significantly over time, as exemplified by the Catholic Church under the pontificate of Pope Francis. One of the ways in which geopolitical influence may be used is in the attempt to eliminate from public discussion any topic relating to a given religion, as is the case, for example, with Islam and the concept of “Islamophobia”.

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