Turning Points of World Transformation

New Trends, Challenges and Actors

Edited by
Marina Lebedeva · Vladimir Morozov

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About This Book

The aim of the book is to study how the transformation of the political organization of the world manifests in different spheres of world politics, in particular, in world politics, regional studies, interaction of MNCs and government agencies, state responses to biogenic challenges, etc. To achieve this goal, M. Lebedeva proposed the concept of a political organization of the world, which in modern conditions is in the process of transformation. The transformation of the political organization of the world is accompanied by megatrends (globalization, integration, democratization) and the opposite trends (de-globalization disintegration, de-democratization). The proposed concept is illustrated by case studies (chapters) covering global and regional agenda. The research question is as follows—how does the proposed concept manifest itself in different areas under the influence of current megatrends. Most of the chapters of the book reveal the processes of chaotization at various levels of the political organization of the world as a result of its transformation and the influence of (mega)trends. At the same time, authors of the book draw attention to the possibility of building new ties and relations, in particular, by creating trans-regional associations or, for example, using the economic and humanitarian spheres to develop relations in the face of strong challenges faced by security issues. The research is interdisciplinary in nature. At the same time, attention is focused on the impact of world political processes in various areas. The authors of the book are specialists in the field of international relations, regional studies, history, urban

studies, and political studies. The book written by scholars from Russia, the USA, Italy, and Canada. The book is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges, trends, and actors associated with the current development of the world.

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Non-State Actors in State-Centrist Westphalian System

Introduction. Transformation of the Political Organization of the World

Marina Lebedeva

World politics, understood not only as interstate cooperation but also more broadly as the interaction of various actors (including state actors) in the international arena, is developing at a rapid pace, giving rise to new international agendas. Not so long ago, such areas as higher education, cybersecurity, and city development were not in the line of sight of researchers interested in international relations, or at least only on the periphery of their scientific focus. Today, the situation has changed dramatically. It is rather difficult to name the areas that, to one degree or another, have not become the subject of study by IR scholars. If we draw an analogy with the issue of security and such a phenomenon as the securitization of international relations, then we can say that "world politization" of various aspects of human life is taking place now. In other words, all the phenomena of the modern world are beginning to

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affect world politics. One of the most recent and striking examples is the spread of COVID-19. The new virus has forced countries to take care of their national borders again. As a result, deglobalization processes have started. The question arises as to how temporary or permanent such a direction of development is. More generally, the question concerns the predictability of world political development. In fact, the idea of suddenness and the unpredictability of the modern world was expressed in the previous century; this was perhaps formulated most aphoristically by J. Rosenau, announcing the turbulence of world politics (Rosenau, 1990).

"Turbulence" and the chaos associated with it have become even more obvious in the twenty-first century. Chaos is clearly increasing today both at the level of the elites and at the level of the academic community, which is expressed in states' (primarily the United States) non-compliance with and withdrawing from international treaties; conflicts, in particular, in such a complex region as the Middle East; migration that has had a profound impact on various regions, in particular, on Europe; the EU's sharp expansion at the beginning of the twenty-first century and then its "contracting" when Great Britain left; Russia-Western relations deteriorating; etc. It was also COVID-19 that has contributed to the chaos, prompting many researchers and leaders to declare that the world will now be different. Moreover, the chaos provoked by the crisis affects not only politics but also the global economy, which "faced a pronounced decrease in the level of cooperation when regulating international trade" (Afontsev, 2019); social processes are also impacted, in particular those associated with migration, with social protests (e.g., the yellow vest movement in France, protests in the US (Black Lives Matter), other countries where protests are undertaken under these slogans, etc.). The leaders of the largest states, in particular Merkel and Macron, express their serious concern about the growing chaos in the world and the need to form a world order.

METHODOLOGY

Few dispute the fact of a radical restructuring of modern international (interstate) relations and world politics in general. However, various explanations are given to it. Attempts to formulate hypotheses about the reasons for the cardinal transformation of world politics have been undertaken more than once by representatives of various theoretical schools. As early as the early 1970s, the neoliberal tradition pointed to the activation

of non-state actors in the international arena, which significantly weakened the Westphalian system (Keohane & Nye, 1971). The number of non-state actors in the twenty-first century has increased significantly (see, for example, Gotz, 2011), and their international activities intensified in the twenty-first century.

Furthermore, neo-Marxists emphasize the structural crisis of the world system in which two camps confront each other: "the camp of all those who wish to retain the privileges of the existing inegalitarian system, albeit in different forms—perhaps vastly different forms; and the camp of all those who would like to see the creation of a new historical system that will be significantly more democratic and more egalitarian" (Wallerstein, 2000).

It seems that researchers who proceed from different theoretical concepts reflect different aspects of the ongoing changes. It is obvious that it is impossible to give answers to all these questions, especially within the framework of one monograph. Besides, of course, it is difficult to identify all the phenomena of the changes taking place. Therefore, in this case, an attempt has been made to propose the formulation of a model of transforming the world political system and to demonstrate it on the examples taken from various areas of world politics.

Based on research conducted within the framework of various theoretical schools, as well as on the author's previous research, an assumption can be made. Megatrends have arisen in world politics, such as globalization (understood as transparency of national borders), integration, democratization, and political organization of the world; however, under the influence of new technologies and as a result of their development, each of these megatrends has its own opposite vector of development: globalization-deglobalization (or isolationism as a certain political line); integration-disintegration; democratization-the development of de-democratization processes. In general, one can see a sinusoidal political development, when, for example, the stage of the intensive development of globalization processes is replaced by a deglobalization trend. The same is true for the other two megatrends. However, the sinusoidal vector is directed toward the first of the indicated megatrends: namely, toward globalization, integration, and democratization. At the same time, the world is experiencing a recession in all three megatrends; in other words, "rollback" trends are very intense, or, as Huntington called them when considering the democratization processes, "rollback waves" (Huntington, 1991). Under the influence of megatrends and their recoil

Fig. 1.1 Three levels of the world political system (translations from top-down: state political systems, system of international (interstate) relations, Principals of Westphalian system)

waves,[1] there has been a significant transformation of the world political system, which covers three main levels:

1. The Westphalian system;
2. The system of international (interstate) relations and its parts (regional subsystems);
3. Political systems of various national states.

This can be depicted as a pyramid (Fig. 1.1), which represents the political organization of the world. The Westphalian system, with its idea

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[1] The rationale for the presence of precisely these megatrends see:[Lebedeva (2019a)]. Lebedeva M.M. Modern Megatrends of World Politics—*World Economy and International Relations* 2019. Vol. 63. No. 9. pp. 29–37. https://doi.org/10.20542/0131-2227-2019-63-9-29-37

of sovereignty, is at the base of this pyramid. On the basis of the Westphalian system, which has been developing since 1648, the national states' political systems were formed, as were their configurations, which were determined, first of all, by the relationship between the leading powers in a particular historical period. Thus, various systems of international relations took shapes: the European Concert, the interwar (Versailles-Washington) system, the bipolar system, and a number of other systems as identified by many authors.

As part of the transformation of the Westphalian political system, bodies beyond non-state actors became active at the international level, but it was the collapse of the colonial system and the entry of the former colonies into the UN that can be called an equally significant event. As a result, the Westphalian principles, the basis of which is sovereignty, have become global, like the system itself. At the same time, a number of states continue to focus on the pre-Westphalian principles (tribal and religious principles). This was also, along with the activation of non-state actors, a factor in the undermining of the Westphalian system.

The Westphalian system emerged as state-centrist and assumed establishing interstate relations from the very beginning. These relations are described both by theoretical constructions (multipolar, unipolar, bipolar systems) and by historical realities ("European Concert," interwar system, post-war system, etc.). The system of interstate relations after the collapse of the bipolar system also found itself in the process of transformation. The change in systems of international relations is not a unique event. However, despite the fact that 30 years have passed, various options for configuring the emerging and developing system of interstate relations are still being discussed. They include unipolarity headed by the United States, new bipolarity with the United States and China[2] as the poles, and multipolarity. At the same time, regional subsystems of interstate relations emerging in Asia, the Middle East, and other regions of the world are gaining a great influence on international political processes. It seems that such a long-term situation with uncertain interstate relations is largely due to the transforming Westphalian system, which is the basis of the world political system and thus largely determines two other levels. At the same time, one can observe the formation or reformatting of various regional

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[2] Interview of A. Dynkin, TASS. Head of IMEMO RAS: Confrontation between the United States and China will become the main one in the post-pandemic world. TASS. URL: https://tass.ru/interviews/8936527

subsystems of international relations in the Arctic, the Middle East, and in other regions of the world.

The political systems of many states, including the countries of Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, have been undergoing significant changes since the late twentieth century. All these have been given proper names, including the third/fourth wave of democratization, left/right turn in Latin America, the Arab Spring, etc.

The transformation of the three levels of the world political system simultaneously, which is taking place for the first time in the world history, is provoking a crisis that is fundamentally different in scale and depth to anything before and is forming a kind of "ideal storm", or synergy, when processes at each of the levels reinforce the processes of the other two levels (Lebedeva, 2016). At the same time, the boundaries between the levels are becoming more and more transparent. In addition, such a transformation is changing the international political agenda in various areas, including the security sector (International Security 2020), thus, intensifying the international activity of domestic regions (Lebedeva, 2019b), as well as strengthening the social and humanitarian component in world politics (Lebedeva, 2018; Lebedeva & Ustinova, 2020).

Results: Reflection of the Transformation of the World Political System in the Works of the Authors of the Monograph

It is obvious that the proposed model needs justifying. At the first stage, it is necessary to confine ourselves to illustrations, using examples of the research carried out by the authors of the monographs. Such a kind of visualization is not something unique, but is used to substantiate various speculative models, including those used in the analysis of the transformation of the Westphalian system, which began 50 years ago by Keohane and Nye.

Subsequently, the Westphalian system's transformation after non-state actors entered the international political sphere has been demonstrated by numerous studies (see, for example, Non-State Actors 2001; Ashgate Research 2011). The studies presented in this monograph are no exception. At the same time, there are a number of features associated with the political activities of non-state actors. Accordingly, the chapter by

V. Morozov, *Non-Governmental Organizations in the Middle East—Contributing to Peace?*, shows that there are many global and regional NGOs operating in the Middle East; it is local NGOs that are increasingly active.

The failed Arab states found themselves closely focused on in research after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as they became a source of terrorism and are also non-state actors in the Middle East region. According to Y. Kostenko's chapter *"Failed" Arab States—a Threat to Regional and International Stability*, 2011 was a new milestone in the development of political processes in the region. Mass protests led to the fact that state and semi-state structures were involved in the chaos, which contributed to the loss of statehood in a number of countries in the region and chaos in the political processes. These non-state actors "disrupt the values of the national Arab states, intending to reformat the region. They wipe away the existing boundaries and create new formations." In other words, this chapter demonstrates not only the erosion of the Westphalian system in the region, but also the direct destructive influence of a number of actors on the middle-eastern nation-states, i.e., to the third level of the world political system, according to the proposed model.

Other effects of the activities of non-state and semi-state (cities) actors are analyzed by Molchanov and Molchanov in the chapter *Smart City—Global Project of Late Capitalism*. They focus upon the smart cities that are taking over the world today. Researchers show that large transnational corporations, as well as a number of government agencies cooperating with them, are interested in developing smart cities. Molchanov and Molchanov come to the conclusion that this may lead to the risk of corporate control over public processes. In fact, state control will be replaced by the control of MNC (multinational corporations) that erodes both the Westphalian system and the political systems of nation-states. In addition, the authors write that this can lead to an "aggravation of undemocratic tendencies," i.e., de-democratization.

It is obvious that a nation-state cannot but react to the processes caused by the loosening of the world political system. There are various processes associated with attempts to "go back to the nation-state" at the national level. The chapters written by Giannotti (*Alternative für Deutschland and the Origins of the German Sonderweg)* and Shebalina and Kotok (*Theoretical Foundations and Reasons for the Growth of Euroscepticism in the EU*), both using the example of Europe, vividly demonstrate how Euroscepticism is growing, and at the same time, nationalistically oriented

parties such as Alternative für Deutschland are gaining strength. All this leads to disintegration and de-democratization.

When adapting to new conditions, the state resorts to various means in interstate relations. For example, Sevastyanov, in his chapter *Significant Improvement in Relations between Russia and Japan, and Why There Was no Breakthrough,* shows that two tracks appear in Russian-Japanese relations. The first track is being implemented within the framework of a realistic paradigm in matters of security and the ownership of the territories of the four South Kuril Islands. This track assumes opposition. At the same time, in the conditions when the processes of integration and globalization (although somewhat losing ground) still have not ceased operating, cooperation and improvement of interstate relations are taking place in the field of economics, as well as in social and humanitarian spheres.

Despite the "recoiling wave" associated with disintegration, a new phenomenon of transregional integration is being built in parallel: states of different regions form integration associations. Sergunin and Konyshev (*Theoretical Perspectives on BRICS: What Kind of an International Institution Is It?*) analyze such transregional integration through the prism of various theoretical concepts using the example of BRICS. In their opinion, it is too early to say that this is one of the ways to build interstate relations in the future. Nevertheless, this experience should be borne in mind when predicting the development of interstate relations.

Along with transregionalism, there has been an intensive formation of new interstate relations, as well as a transformation of the existing relations, in the regions. Accordingly, the Arctic today is becoming one of these new regions in which the interests of various states are intertwined. Sergunin's chapter *Russia and the Arctic Council: Towards a New Cooperative Agenda?* discusses the activities of Russia in the Arctic Council.

In turn, Kozlov's chapter *Spatial Development, Regional Policies, and Contemporary World Politics*, on the material of East Asia and the eastern regions of Russia, tells us that states are engaged in the development of their intrastate regions in response to the emerging situation in the international region. This chapter demonstrates the connection and interdependence of interstate relations and the policy of the nation-state with respect to its territories, i.e., the second and third levels in the model of the world political system.

Interstate relations turn out to be very complicated in the modern world, often making the declared goals unattainable. This is well demonstrated by Krylov in the chapter *The UN and the Middle East Settlement—Mission: Impossible*. The involvement of many actors, including states and interstate organizations, in the settlement of the conflict does not always guarantee success. In this case, the author sees problems, first of all, in US activities, then in the slow reaction of the UN structures, as well as those by other international mediators. In other words, the chapter focuses on the chaos at the interstate level in the world political system.

The problems of the interstate level of the world political system are well shown in the chapter by Korybko, Shebalina, and Morozov *The Origin, Present State, and Future of Multipolarity from a Connectivity Perspective*. Indeed, one should agree with the authors that the world "is in the midst of an ongoing global systemic transition." However, it will move not so much to be multipolar, where only states act as poles, but rather as multicentric, uniting states, civilizations, business, and non-governmental actors.

And the final item touched upon in the monograph is associated with new phenomena in world politics. These occur primarily due to globalization and clearly demonstrate that, despite the existing trends in deglobalization, the general megatrend of globalization remains in force, although it is generating new problems and new challenges, in response to which states begin by resorting to isolationism. So, in the chapter *Biopolitical Challenges of Modern World Politics*, Rykhtik and Vedunova analyze the new phenomenon of biopolitics and show that the spread of the biological threat makes states disassemble even their established political alliances. Rykhtik and Vedunova come to the conclusion that it is necessary to differentiate between biological threats and those threats that states level to each other in a pandemic, which are defined by the authors as biopolitical threats.

If Rykhtik and Vedunova focus on interstate interactions during a pandemic, then Korobkov's chapter *The COVID-19 Health Scare and its Impact on US Politics and Society* shows that the virus, as a medical problem, has had a profound impact on US domestic policy, including increasing anti-globalization and autocratic sentiments and trends in the country.

As for the book, its structure is as follows:

The Phenomena of World Politics as a Result of the Transformed World Political System.

The first part (*New Challenges and Trends in World Politics*) is devoted to new trends and challenges in world politics and includes the following chapters:

The Origin, Present State, and Future of Multipolarity from a Connectivity Perspective.

Biopolitical Challenges of Modern World Politics;

The COVID-19 Health Scare and Its Impact on US Politics and Society;

Theoretical Perspectives on BRICS: What Kind of International Institution Is It?

Smart City—Global Project of Late Capitalism.

Alternative für Deutschland and the Origins of the German Sonderweg.

Theoretical Foundations and Reasons for the Growth of Euroscepticism in EU.

The focus of the chapters of the second part (*Regional Dimensions of World Politics*) is at regional aspects. The second part includes the following chapters:

Significant Improvement in Relations between Russia and Japan, and Why There Was no Breakthrough.

Russia and the Arctic Council: Towards a New Cooperative Agenda?

Spatial Development, Regional Policies and Contemporary World Politics.

Non-Governmental Organizations in the Middle East—Contributing to Peace?

The UN and the Middle East Settlement—Mission: Impossible.

"Failed" Arab States—A Threat to Regional and International Stability.

Conclusion

The proposed model of the world political system, which includes three levels (the Westphalian system, the system of interstate relations, and the political systems of various states), can be used to consider various cases in modern global politics. It allows us to trace the transformation of the world political system: namely how, on the one hand, old ties and relations are broken, and, on the other hand, new ones are formed. This model illustrates that the "boundaries" between levels are becoming more transparent, and the transformation of one level has a strong impact on the other two levels.

The majority of chapters of this book reveal the chaos reigning at different levels of the world political system, as well as its negative influence on itself. At the same time, some authors of this monograph have drawn attention to the possibility of building new ties and relations, in particular by creating transregional associations or, for example, using the economic and humanitarian spheres to develop relations in the face of strong contradictions in the security sphere. It seems that there will be more and more such technologies for restructuring the world political system when a positive stage for the development of world politics is set.

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NGOs in the Middle East

Vladimir Morozov

Non-governmental organizations such as charities, advocacy groups, and several other civic associations in the Middle East have become agents of political, economic, and social change.

Where NGOs exist, they serve as a place where people try to unite their efforts to resolve complicated issues and address questions such as health care, job creation for the poor and marginalized, education, and rehabilitation of the disabled. They may also be aimed at respect for human rights, population and demographic issues, the environment, and civil rights. At the same time, it should be taken into consideration that in such regions as MENA interactions between NGOs and governments experience both cooperative and competitive forms (Marchetti, 2018). NGOs' activity in the Middle East is especially important due to the growing radicalization in such countries as Libya and Syria and terrorist groups claiming to determine the future of the region (Khalayla, 2019). It is

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thus important to discern what the main NGOs operating in the Middle East are as well as the purpose of their activity.

METHODOLOGY

Given a range of assumptions about non-governmental actors (NGOs in the Middle East) and their activities, a hypothesis was analyzed and finally corroborated by empirical case studies and in qualitative research. The author is inspired by, and mostly approaches the topic through, a liberal paradigm of international relations, accentuating that international organizations and non-governmental actors can contribute to shaping state preferences and policy choices, which leads, as a consequences, to mutual benefits, helping states to interact with each other in honest manner and supporting nonviolent solutions to conflicts. Still, giving particular examples of non-governmental organizations operating in the Middle East and analyzing their activity show that the way of thinking of many Arab leaders and the way of implementing their policies do not go in line with the liberal paradigm. This, in its turn, can cause tensions at a practical level.

RESULTS

How do NGOs Contribute to Society in General?

Firstly, because many of non-governmental organizations work at the grass-roots level, they can often reach those afflicted with poverty, the deprived people in a nation, so they play a significant role in social and economic development. This way, they become a part of the social safety that every country, especially those in the MENA region, needs.

Secondly, NGOs in general usually help give structure to society, establishing formal groups which people can relate to, participate in, and benefit from.

Thirdly, NGOs were originally thought as a mechanism to help develop and sustain democracy.

The research shows that in some Middle Eastern countries, NGOs are powerful enough to possibly influence foreign policy, while in others their power is minimal or nonexistent (Housseini, 2009). In those states where NGOs are exceptionally weak or are arms of the state (Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia), NGOs have little or no influence at all. On the other hand, where

NGOs are quite active, such as Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine, they have a much bigger impact.

Such weakness of some NGOs in some countries can be explained by the fact that most Arab leaders view non-governmental organizations, especially foreign ones, as neocolonial agents or supporters of the modern version of the civilizational mission that in the past led the first European colonizers to North Africa and the Levant (Khalayla, 2012). The key fear of Middle Eastern leaders is that, through NGOs, the West is not solely helping people, but rather attempts to undermine the region's ethnic and religious identity in order to maximize Westernization (DeMars & Dijkzeul, 2015). Middle Eastern leaders often claim that Western institutions are incompatible with predominantly Muslim societies.

THE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY OF REGIONAL NGOS

When looking at the activity of NGOs, it becomes obvious that they can be involved in international relations in many ways:

The most common relationship is based on the flow of funds and ideas. The donors to NGOs are usually NGOs in the rich Arab countries, which tend to give to welfare, health, and child-oriented NGOs in poorer countries. The recipient NGOs are usually those in Palestine, Jordan, and Egypt.

Some NGOs hold regional meetings from time to time to be able to share ideas and learn from each other.

A few years ago, there was an attempt to form an Arab human rights NGO that would focus on all of the Arab states (Khalayla, 2012). There are also a number of human and civil rights NGOs in the more open Arab countries. As these human rights NGOs acquire more domestic strength, it is quite possible that they will form international links across borders.

Environmental NGOs are becoming more and more active in the Middle East. Most have activities in their own individual countries, though encouraged by international, bilateral, and multilateral funders, environmental NGOs hold transnational meetings, exchanging ideas. There are 3,194 NGOs with consultative status in ECOSOC, of which 162 are from the Middle East and North Africa, most of them focusing on the issue of women rights and sustainable and social development (Housseini, 2009).

Graph 6 MENA's NGOs participation with Ecosoc by area of activities (2001-mid 2009)

Sustainable development, 18%

Social development, 9%

Status of women, 71%
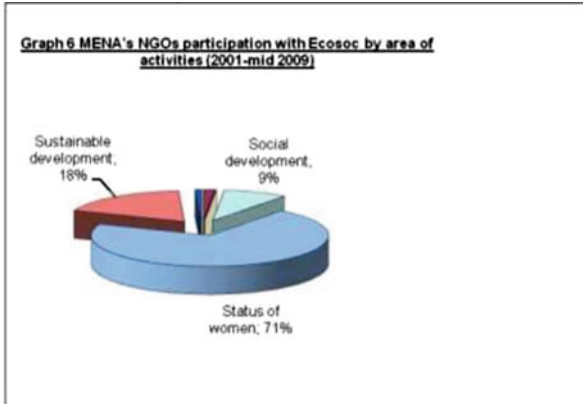
Source : ECOSOC NGO Database (July 2009)

Categories of NGOs

The author groups the main NGOs in several following categories, which, however, are interlinked:
DEVELOPMENT (cultural, recreation, sustainability);
ADVOCACY (human rights NGOs, labor, peace, security);
Democratization;
RELIGION (faith-based NGOs);
EDUCATION (capacity building, literacy);
Environment;
HEALTH (medical aid, rehabilitation of the handicapped);
PEOPLE (children, women, indigenous people, human settlements).

The Main International NGOs Operating in the Middle East

As was already mentioned before, many international non-governmental organizations are involved in solving the most crucial issues in the Middle East. Examples include: *Oxfam, World Vision, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch* (HRW), *Human Relief Foundation* (HRF), *Medical Aid for Palestinians* (MAP), *Islamic Relief Worldwide* (IRW), *Search for Common Ground, Embrace the Middle East, Asfar, French Platform of NGOs for Palestine, Norwegian Church Aid,* and the EU's

main democracy and human rights promotion program—the *European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights* (EIDHR).

It is quite clear from the names of the NGOs that they are multidirectional, defending human rights, providing medical aid, and trying to promote democracy and peace.

Some INGOs can be taken as examples in this regard. One, *Embrace the Middle East*, is a non-governmental charity that partners with local Christians and provides health, education, and development programs to those in need, regardless of faith and nationality. It supports different projects in Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria. Embrace the Middle East has provided funding to many regional NGOs such as Caritas Jerusalem, East Jerusalem YMCA, Kairos Britain, JAI Olive Tree Project, Near East Council of Churches, Palestinian Bible Society, and others. Embrace the Middle East deals with creating new schools, organizing educational programs, and developing other community development initiatives.

Another INGO—Islamic Relief—is a humanitarian and development faith-based organization. By 2021, it aims to become one of the leading global humanitarian INGOs and the leading humanitarian INGO operating in the Arab world. It focuses on responding to international appeals for assistance, as well as on mobilizing practical actions in response to humanitarian need. The organization delivers shelter in emergencies and establishing resilience within the communities it serves. Islamic Relief also attempts to influence the policies of governments on the humanitarian issues within its sphere of operations. Moreover, Islamic Relief works in partnership with different governments and international agencies.

The third example is *Asfar CIC*, an international conflict resolution NGO founded in order to provide opportunities for young people in the UK, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Balkans through different means: sport, volunteering, an e-journal, educational programs, cultural learning, and youth exchanges. Asfar also focuses on Women Economic Empowerment programs and promotes gender equality.

Asfar was founded in 2012; its aims are to provide exchange opportunities for young people who are eager to study and to support the continued study of a wide range of subjects outside of the realms of economics, politics, and international studies. Asfar was also established to support young people, especially those specializing in the region, to provide careers guidance, advice, and career opportunities.

Asfar CIC is an NGO which aims to make a difference in the society through providing more opportunities for the next generations of young people in the Middle East: through educational and cultural exchanges, and by supporting fellow NGOs, charities, and educational and voluntary organizations. The organization also hopes to break through different barriers in societies, end xenophobic tendencies through conflict resolution educational and sport programs, and also prevent child marriage and promote women rights (including the right to work).

Asfar's organizational aims are the following:

> To support young people, providing them with necessary skills;
> To develop ties with fellow NGOs;
> To encourage UK-based young people to establish contacts with young people throughout the world;
> To find an inspiration for young people to learn about different cultures;
> To establish international partnerships between the UK, Europe, and the Middle East, in order to promote inter-cultural understanding and end xenophobia and racism through a range of educational projects;
> To promote, by the use of grants, the development of Middle Eastern communities, especially disadvantaged ones.

Regional NGOs

As some of the major problems in the Middle East are concerned with human rights (advocacy) issues, asylum seekers, the Palestinian issue, women rights, and religion, the next section will look in detail at some examples of NGOs that deal with these issues.

First, it is important to name some NGOs that deal with the issue of human rights: *Arab Organization for Human Rights* (Tunisia), *The National Corporation to Advocate Right and Freedoms* (Yemen), *Access Center for Human Rights* (Lebanon), *Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights* (Yemen), Palestinian NGOs such as *Al-Haq* (Palestinian human rights organization), *Addameer* (Prisoner Support and human rights association), and many others. On the official website of the Arab NGO Directory, the World's largest listing of Civil Society Organizations operating in Arab States, there are more than 1,000 organizations of this type;

Arab Organization for Human Rights is one of the most demonstrative examples.

Arab Organization for Human Rights was established in 1983 as an international non-governmental and non-profit organization. The goal is to defend human rights in the Arab states. The organization has a consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), and cooperates with UNESCO World; moreover, it has an observer status in the Arab League and in the African Union. It has 23 member states (Arab and North African States).

By means of such activities as the Arab Dialogue Forum and training courses, and by means of campaigns for the Tunisian and Egyptian elections, *Arab Organization for Human Rights* promotes active peace-building. Its regular publications investigate cases of human rights offenses, propose interventions where needed, and suggest guidelines for implementing effective policies in Arab states.

Another important type of NGOs are **faith-based organizations**, aimed at providing social and medical services, enhancing the catholic or Presbyterian church's role in the region, and advocating peace, freedom, and justice. Some of these NGOs are: *Caritas Jerusalem, Caritas Syria, Palestinian Bible Society, East Jerusalem YMCA, Middle East Council of Churches*, and others. Many of these regional NGOs are financed by international NGOs.

Caritas Jerusalem is humanitarian organization that provides the socio-pastoral services of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. Based in Jerusalem, it operates throughout the West Bank and Gaza. It is a part of a confederation of more than 100 Caritas organizations operating all over the world. It works to promote the accessibility of social and medical services even to the poorest people, provides micro-credits, creates many care centers and jobs around the themes of health and the elderly, and provides humanitarian aid. Still, it is to be mentioned that organizations protecting women's rights or faith-based NGOs face the most challenges, as these are the issues many Arab leaders see as a prerogative which means every attempt to influence state of affairs in the sphere is perceived as interference in the internal affairs (Carapico, 2002).

Caritas Jerusalem has many different programs aimed at helping people in rural areas or people who do not have access to any kind of education to realize their potential and to give them an opportunity to find a job. One such program is dedicated to training more than 400

women to sew and to design clothes in order for them to be able to find a job.

KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation

The issue of women's rights continues to be one of the most pressing and important issues in the region. There are several leading local non-governmental organizations operating in this field and targeting gender discrimination socially and legally; the most prominent of them are: *Egyptian Center for Women's rights* (Egypt), *The Dubai Foundation for Women and Children* (The UAE), *Arab Women Organization of Jordan* (Jordan), and *The Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women* (Egypt).

KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation is a Lebanese secular, non-profit, non-governmental civil society organization aiming to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, including gender-based violence and exploitation, to raise awareness on women's issues across the country, and to promote women's and children's rights and gender equality (Clark & Michuki, 2009). The organization also helps in empowering women and changing the conventional role of a woman in Lebanese society. According to the organization's website, KAFA seeks to "create a society that is free of social, economic and legal patriarchal structures that discriminate against women" (kafa.org).

KAFA was established in 2005 by a group of multi-disciplinary professionals and human rights activists. KAFA is convinced that women's and children's rights are essential to building a free, fair, and equal society. The main spheres of work and focus areas for the organization are: "family violence, exploitation and trafficking in women, especially in migrant domestic workers and women in prostitution, and child protection, particularly from sexual abuse and family violence." It realizes its broad and substantive gender equality agenda using a range of different approaches, such as: working to empower women and children who have suffered from different types of violence and ensuring access to social, legal, and psychological support; advocating changes and shifts in public opinion and mentality; campaigning for law reform and the adoption of new policies focusing on women's rights; lobbying; the publication of reports on the state of women's and children's rights in Lebanon; carrying out research and specialized training; working with men and boys to end violence against women; capacity building and community support.

The organization has run several campaigns against women and child discrimination. On February 1, 2018, KAFA launched a media campaign "Think about it, think about her," aiming to build an effective dialogue with Lebanese employers of migrant domestic workers. The media campaign was backed by the Lebanese Ministry of Labor and tells about three common scenarios of relationships between migrant domestic workers and their employers: withholding of the worker's passport and other documents, non-payment of her salary, and putting strict limitations on her freedom of movement (Clark & Michuki, 2009). Ultimately, KAFA demands that employers help end these injustices by changing the sponsorship system, the daily practices of employers, and their general attitudes to the migrant workers, as well as providing protection to domestic workers in the law. KAFA also has run a successful campaign against the practice of child marriage. The film had more than 100 million views on various platforms and was covered by local and international news outlets like The Huffington Post, Daily Mail, Vanity Fair, and many others. As a result, the United Nations commended the work of the organization and included the campaign in their own program as part of their fight against child marriage.

KAFA has a special program dedicated to fighting violence against children, with a focus on gender-based violence and sexual abuse. The Child Protection Program at KAFA aims to put an end to violence and discrimination against one of the most vulnerable social groups—children and youth. To achieve this goal, the Program works closely with children, adolescents, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, and service providers. The CPP is focused on preventive and protective measures and creating safe environments for children who suffered abuse, while ensuring a child participatory approach in all cases and situations. Among their main approaches and strategies are: raising societal awareness by conducting research and campaigns; creating specialized informational and educational materials for various groups; strengthening local communities and service providers; advocating for better legislation and the development of child-friendly policies and strategies; and offering legal, social, and psychological support to children and adolescents victims of gender-based violence, family violence, and sexual abuse through two service-providing centers: the Adolescent-Friendly Space in Bekaa, and the Listening and Counseling Center in Beirutb (An-Na'im, 2000).

Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO)

The issue of refugees and internally displaced peoples is high on the agenda for many Middle Eastern countries. In Syria alone, millions are being displaced internally and hundreds of thousands are leaving their country to become refugees in foreign lands. This refugee situation is unparalleled since the end of the Second World War. Along with international non-governmental organizations operating in the Middle East, such as Save the Children, Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, or Human Rights Watch, there are several local non-governmental organizations working to improve the fate and living conditions of refugees and internally displaced in the region: for example, *Association for the Defense of the Rights of Internally Displaced (ADRID), BADIL - Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights* (both based in Jordan), *DenizFeneri,* and *IHHHumanitarian Relief Foundation* (both based in Turkey).

The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization for Relief & Development (JHCO) was established in 1990 under Royal guidance as an organization providing multi-functional assistance and humanitarian aid. Today, JHCO provides direct humanitarian aid to affected communities in more than thirty-four countries across the world during and/or after conflict and natural disasters.

The organization helps people "who are suffering from the consequences of conflict, natural disasters, poverty and under development regardless of their religion, origin, or creed" (en.jhco.org.jo). It is a non-governmental, non-profit organization which is sanctioned to manage funds from different donors, provide relevant support for transporting humanitarian aid to affected regions all over the world, and coordinate and manage humanitarian response efforts. JHCO seeks to further improve its partnerships and to work in close coordination with local, regional, and international organizations to deliver aid more efficiently.

As Syria continues to face a protracted conflict, millions of Syrian refugees fled to neighboring countries (mainly Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt). The Jordanian and Syrian people have always enjoyed strong ties, strengthened by historical familial and tribal links. As a result, and from the start of the Syrian crisis, the local communities—particularly those living close to the border with Syria—have accepted and provided care for refugees seeking a safe haven in Jordan. Jordan is one of the countries most affected by the Syrian crisis, with the second highest share of

refugees compared to its population in the world, 89 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants. As a result of the onset of the Syrian crisis, JHCO has mainly focused on helping Syrian refugees hosted in Jordan and has contributed substantially to the early relief efforts.

JHCO and Jordanian civil society organizations have started providing direct assistance to Syrian communities through informal fundraising led by local communities and community-based organizations. To organize the process of fundraising and the distribution of supplies to vulnerable Syrian families, the Government of Jordan appointed JHCO as a co-coordinating umbrella for the relevant NGOs active in the country.

JHCO, with the support of UN agencies, has managed to build a database of Syrian families not registered with UNHCR. This coordination tool prevents duplication and provides a transparent mechanism for collecting and distributing aid. The same process is followed with respect to non-monetary donations, which are stored in JHCO warehouses and then released to an NGO for distribution in the presence of a JHCO representative. JHCO ensures that documentation is produced and donor reports provided with respect to these donations.

Among the most important of the Organization's projects is the Tarabot Project. It is a project implemented at East of Amman (AL Mahatta) and funded by Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation. Tarabot Community Center was established in April 2015 to provide a range of services to the most vulnerable population groups in the East Amman region for all nationalities, focusing on providing services to Syrian refugees. The project focuses on providing a safe and a comfortable environment for affected population groups; providing the necessary support through the various activities carried out by the center departments; and ensuring that every beneficiary receives services without discrimination, regardless of gender, ability, language, race, religion, or nationality.

Still, despite numerous NGOs operating in the region, statistics say that recent decades have witnessed a significant cascade of restrictive and repressive measures against non-governmental organizations in MENA region (Glasuis et al., 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the numerous NGOs operating in the Middle East have promoted human rights, social welfare, female empowerment, human rights, health care, political freedom, and strengthening civil society. Not

everything, however, has been positive. Many of the NGOs are semi-autonomous and can be used as political tools by other countries for promoting interest-based gains. Thus, many Arab countries see this as indirect interference, attempts at social-engineering, and grafting Western (otherwise alien) values into the Middle East. This has often caused negative side effects, such as increasing tension between state and civil society with powerful NGO-propagated messages, with high amounts of resources, money, and contacts. Many of the NGOs are ideologically driven and see democratization or value-promotion as key functions of their operation, often mixing it with charity-based or humanitarian work, which is supposed to be ideology-free.

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Smart City—A Global Project of Late Capitalism

Mikhail A. Molchanov and Vera Molchanova

Cities and global city networks have acquired a reputation as independent actors in global politics, possessing their own potential authority and opportunities. All across the world, global financial centers and intermediary cities, as well as global transport and information hubs offering a number of specialized transactional services to firms and governments, are justifiably considered "strategic centers of the global economy" (Sassen, 2005). The impact of cities is enormous. Currently, 600 cities of the world produce 60% of the global GDP (Antonelli & Cappiello, 2017). Moreover, London accounts for one-fifth of the UK's entire economy, while the Northwestern corridor (Boston–Washington) and Los Angeles account for a third of the US economy (Eggers & Skowron, 2018). Tokyo's gross product is higher than Canada's GDP; New York's GDP

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is almost 30 percent higher than Australia's GDP; Seoul produces more than the whole of Malaysia; Beijing is economically larger than Sweden, and the economy of Paris is bigger than South Africa's (Florida, 2017).

The role of cities was acknowledged on a global scale by the decisions made during the 2016 UN Conference (namely Habitat III), the adoption of the New Urban Development program, and cooperation between international development banks (including the World Bank Group) in financing urbanization projects. Global cities and regions have their own international rep offices and often unite into international organizations (Herrschel & Newman, 2017). The international organization "United Cities and local Governments," being a non-governmental stakeholder in the UN, aims to solidify the role and influence of local governments in global governance. A global working group of local and regional governments has been active since 2013, coordinating positions and furthering the interests of local governments on the global political arena. A global network of megapolises and city agglomerates, such as the Global Parliament of Mayors, the Compact of Mayors, the Cities Union, and other such organizations, have been created.

Global cities set a development standard that many aim to imitate. As a result, the idea of smart cities has been receiving more and more popularity in the last decade. Smart cities already number in the hundreds and are likely to soon number in the thousands. Subsection 66 of the New Urban Development Program, passed by the UN General Assembly on December 23, 2016, provides that principles of smart cities are to be used for the purposes of stimulating sustainable economic growth and improving the quality of city services. International acknowledgment as a "smart" city is currently an integral condition of success in the global race for investments and for human capital of talented, creative workers, both of which are indispensable for the modern economy.

The policy of smart cities has been drafted and developed in obvious opposition to the concept of the Westphalian system of nation-states that has become the norm. Escalating international competition increases demand for supranational regulation, as has been adopted by global economic governance institutions in the interests of ensuring a coordinated, coherent form of globalization. The issues of hierarchical coordination in a system of agency relations, borne by such actors as nation-states, along with the administrative and transactional expenses incurred in such attempts, give birth to an urge to coordinate actions on a group and on a personal level. This thus leads to the emergence of professional, corporate

networks, as well as networks for institutional links among middle-ranking officials, judges, members of parliament, and municipalities. These "disaggregated sovereignty" systems (Slaughter, 2004) solve the tasks of global governance with more ease and efficiency than government authorities, known to be the subjects of world politics.

New relations of power, borne by the return of cities as independent power entities to the global arena, set the tone for a post-liberal globalization policy (Woodley, 2015). This policy transitions from international to corporate and junctional, linking individual cities and urban agglomerates with each other independent of state and national government structures. The discourse on smart cities, grounded on benchmarking tactics and an imitation of successful models adopted from business management, organizes cities and city networks under the flag of corporate governance, supposedly going beyond the traditional political (and as a result, democratic) action schemes. The flexibility of city governance and, at the same time, its obvious dependence on large private investors creates a perfect platform for implementing the oligarchic tendencies of late capitalism. The system of global governance based on a coordinated city network, contrary to Barber's optimistic predictions, may not turn out to be an effect of "grassroots democracy" (Barber, 2013). It is vested with other tasks and functions.

Methodology

This essay analyzes the rise of the smart city as part of the global trend of the rise of city-regions in late capitalist society. The methodologies employed are those of international political economy, the theory of international relations, and the French Regulation School (FRS). The conceptual lenses of the FRS drive an argument that the political and economic significance of smart city projects is based on their intended use as elite-preferred tools meant to forestall the ongoing global crisis of capitalist accumulation.

The interaction of transnational corporations (TNCs), international organizations, and state and municipal governing authorities in the field of strategic information and communication technology development is a prime example of "governance without government" (Rosenau et al., 1992). In analyzing the defining features of the regime of accumulation and the mode of regulation of the relations between capital and labor in the context of late capitalism, the French regulationists demonstrated

the crisis of capitalist industrialism ("Fordism") and an objective necessity to replace it with a post-Fordist regulation system. However, the precise features of a post-Fordist system of regulation were described only briefly; its detailed study remains a standing task.

We propose a hypothesis that the creation of an international network of global cities, serving as a basis for the transition to post-national, network-based economic and political governance, suits the interests of the global capitalist oligarchy. Smart cities, which appear as new actors in world politics, not only open new markets for financial capital and TNCs in the IT sector, but also retrench class divisions, equip the ruling classes with new tools to monitor and control dissent, and rejuvenate the class-stratified mass consumption schemes within a particular city-region. Smart cities' capital accumulation and ideological and regulatory functions are equally important. Class stratification within a particular smart city-region is masked by the façade of a pseudo-democratic "stakeholder capitalism," with non-elite population drawn in by opportunities to take part in various "city betterment" and "citizen inclusion" initiatives. The actual deterioration of national institutions of governance is compensated by the creation of a new global system of city-regions, with businesses and states gradually leaving unpromising national and global peripheries.

The data from IT companies' business websites, government documents of a number of US departments and agencies, and a review of actual smart city projects in the USA, the EU, and a number of Asian countries served as the empirical basis for the study.

Results

Smart Cities as a Business Ideology and a Governance Strategy

According to the European Commission, "a smart city is a place where traditional networks and services are made more efficient with the use of digital solutions for the benefit of its inhabitants and business" (European Commission n.d.). Smart cities of the late capitalism era are cities of advanced technology integrated into everyday life. Advanced technologies that were previously attributed exclusively to manufacturing and the military now serve as a foundation for mass consumption. No longer limited to catering exclusively to the privileged population strata (early capitalism) and no longer lingering on in the middle-class consumption zone (mature capitalism), high-tech is becoming accessible to practically

everyone. Moreover, a defining feature of smart cities is a somewhat paradoxical for the capitalist economy phenomenon: high technologies that used to be reserved for the elite and the military-industrial complex exclusively are now being transformed into a public good (free Wi-Fi, free or near-free access to the online resources, e-government, and the like).

However, smart cities are not "commissioned" by the city-dwellers themselves. In most cases, they are created as a result of public–private partnerships, operating beyond the scope of the city itself, or as a result of higher authority initiatives. Smart city policies are being presented as both necessary and unavoidable. Yet, their real-world evolution is not driven by a popular demand. Rather, it is predetermined by a particular configuration of political and economic forces and resources of the late capitalism era. It is important to understand the key features of this historical and social context.

The so-called post-Fordist era of capitalistic development breaks down a vertically integrated company and replaces it with decentralized production, outsourcing, subcontracting, and the transfer of productive assets to offshore jurisdictions. Mass production of stereotypical goods yields to flexible specialization that better responds to the smallest variations in demand. Financial globalization destabilizes national welfare systems. National economic systems lose integrity and cohesion. In their place, international production networks arise. Internationally competitive industries that remain in this or that country concentrate in few regional clusters (Vidal, 2013). These developments facilitate freeing the industrial and financial capital from the shackles of national regulation and legal systems. They increase capital's transnational mobility and profit margins (Jessop, 2018). The concentration of TNCs and business elites within few city-regions that provide the best environment for capital accumulation and mobility corresponds to this global trend.

The post-Fordist society has to be post-mass, free from the illusions of a "welfare state" and "people's capitalism." Mass production of standard consumer products, inherent to late industrialism, is being left in the past not just because the classic conveyor-belt economy is giving way to flexible specialization systems, but also because the mass consumption society increasingly presents itself as an ideological fiction that does not conform to the reality of a deeply segmented, fractioned, and sometimes collapsing consumer market.

According to Joseph Stiglitz, "the American dream of a decent life in exchange for hard labor is slowly dying out" (Stiglitz, 2013). The

members of the French school of regulation describe the post-Fordist development model as the "regime of extensive accumulation coupled with the fragmentation of mass consumption" (Boyer & Juillard, 2002). The consumerism of the late capitalistic society is mass in name only. In reality, consumption is taking on a mass-individualized character, with the economy as a whole switching from mass production of commodities to mass production of the class-stratified and nominally individualized consumer.

The rise of a new urban environment—a globalized, "smart" environment that rewards conformity with the latest digital, socio-economic, and socio-political trends of the so-called platform capitalism (Srnicek, 2017)—reproduces mass consumption stratified by class. This new, mass-individualized urban society rejects equality, sameness, and standardization and replaces them with difference, uniqueness, and variation (Spierings & Van Houtum, 2008). Mass consumption of the elites that smart cities stimulate and enable resurrects the failing markets, creating a new type of the world economy and global politics and a new system of developmental governance. Strategic objectives of this new type of developmental governance are unashamedly elitist. Smart cities' elites learn how to solve their problems directly and without intermediaries, often sidestepping the elected government. New urban diplomacy emerges and acquires global significance (Acuto et al., 2017).

The regime of capitalist accumulation based on the primacy of the nation-state falters, stumbling upon the limits to its growth. Classical Fordism failed to suppress wage growth or roll back welfare expenditures that ate into corporate profits. The counteroffensive of the capital, which took on the form of neoliberal globalization, sought to address these problems through capital exports, transnationalization, and outsourcing. Wage restraint was put at the forefront of competition in the market (Vidal, 2019). As a result, the real wages of American workers remain at their 1973 rates almost 50 years later (DeSilver, 2018). To reduce the cost of labor in the face of ever decreasing profit margins, the choice was made for stratification and polarization of labor resources into a well-paid, permanently employed elite and a mass of underqualified, low-paid, partly, and temporarily employed workers (Berg, 2015; Jessop, 1993). The majority of Western states have adopted austerity measures to help their businesses grow, but the result was often only the rise in inequality. Having started as a provisional instrument of anti-crisis regulation, austerity measures soon grew into a vehicle for redistribution of

the national income and wealth to corporations (DiMuzio & Robbins, 2020).

However, even these extraordinary measures of maintaining profit rates do not bring the growth that modern capitalism needs. It has been noted that the "decentralized and dispersed global economic system created by neoliberal economic restructuring requires nodes of command and control" to direct investment and circulation of capital, and it is internationally connected cities that provide this control (Curtis, 2014, p. 9). City networks reshape international governance rules and economic regulation regimes, enabling a "great reset" of neoliberal globalization (Schwab, 2020) and the attendant restructuring of global capital and commodity flows in the interests of business elites and internationally mobile professionals. Smart city projects are offered as a policy compromise to satisfy both neoliberal critics of state failure and those taking an issue with openly predatory tendencies of global capitalism.

A shift in activity toward city-regions, along with an implied juxtaposition of a "global" city not only with the periphery surrounding it but also with the nation-state as a whole, should be viewed as a result and an effect of the post-Fordist shift in business and politics. The concept of the smart city has arisen as a natural development of the idea of the entrepreneurial city. Both concepts are driven by the market logic and the presumed necessity to limit public expenditures. A smart city is envisioned as an environment that costs little to run. Smart technologies are called for to improve the living conditions of the underprivileged strata of the population, while saving tax moneys to the privileged.

The main selling point of smart city projects is their offering of "cost-cutting means of providing services in a neoliberal governance climate" (Wiig, 2016). Smart city initiatives promise to help "enterprises, governments and citizens" save money—to the tune of US$5 trillion annually (Nolan, 2018). However, the promised benefits are often poorly defined, not measured, and not properly communicated (Dameri, 2017). The gulf between corporations' enthusiasm for SC strategies and the near-absence of hard data on long-term benefits of these projects has been feeding into the skeptical reflections and outright criticism of the smart city narrative as a form of neoliberal "corporate storytelling" (Söderström et al., 2014).

TNCs active in the field of urban planning and development create demand for "smart and sustainable cities" while at the same time offering their services to those who can pay for them. At first, smart city programs promised to make cellular data more accessible, improve transportation

services, and solve various ecological issues. Smart cities today are called to engage citizens in co-creation of value and overcome social exclusion, poverty, and crime—to achieve more than the capitalist state could ever achieve before.

While smart cities are pushed forward as instruments of choice for the comprehensive betterment of human environment, nation-states are quietly sidelined or relegated to make room for "spatial rescaling of policy fields, policy choices, policy communities and policy-making institutions" (Keating, 2020). Corporations are the principal vehicle of this movement. The combined purchasing power of the aspiring smart city municipalities, national governments, and regional integration organizations, such as the EU, is immense. A global smart city market is expected to grow from US$410.8 billion in 2020 to US$820.7 billion by 2025, at a compound annual growth rate of 14.8% (MarketsandMarkets, 2020). Getting cities on board as adopters and promoters of the SC agenda creates an open-ended, steady stream of public procurement orders that will boost the ICT sector's growth for years to come. No company can pass on such opportunities.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is obvious that the global crisis of capitalism will not be overcome through neoliberal globalization understood as the total transnationalization of business, finance, labor force, and governance. It gives way to selective, city-based, and network-based transnationalization. The internal segmentation of Western countries stands in the way of them keeping their role as a collaborative global center. A hundred or so global cities are called forth to play this role. The global cities of Alpha, Beta, and Gamma ranks (GaWC n.d.) are to rely on several thousand smart cities and settlements providing services to them. The state is fusing with the city as an actor of global politics.

Despite proclaiming that technology is capable of solving socio-economic issues, the smart city ideology is silent on a key point: that these cities are to serve as a tool of capitalist accumulation and redistribution of resources. A number of academics believe that information society "is rather a political program and not a theoretical concept" (Bechmann, 2000). The smart city concept is an example of both a concrete utopia and an ideological tool serving the group interests of the elites (Grossi & Pianezzi, 2017). Corporate ideas of a smart city include not only an economy's increased competitiveness (by means of reducing wage shares), maintaining an ecologically sound environment (for the purposes

of attracting talent and to sustain the elites themselves), and creating new jobs (thanks to the fragmentation and polarization of labor resources). A definitive feature of smart cities is their all-encompassing data analysis and collection; data flows, including personal data flows, will be combined into "a common mass of data for more efficient decision-making" in business interests (Deloitte n.d.). The alienation of information that accompanies the alienation of labor will strengthen the anti-democratic trends of post-Fordist regulation. An ideal, completely transparent, and entirely see-through city—an informational panopticon of sorts—cannot fail to arouse suspicion. The implementation of new surveillance systems and the threat of informational and technological control over a person are both standing features of a smart city design and a real modern risk (Wood & Mackinnon, 2019).

Smart Cities Through the Lenses of the French Regulation School

The FRS insights into the current, city-based transformation of the global landscape have much to do with the answers this school provides to the question of stabilization of the late capitalist, or as the FRS theorists themselves prefer to call it, the post-Fordist mode of development (Amin, 1994; Lipietz, 1997). The FRS perspective allows us to see the worldwide rise of the smart cities' movement as something more than just a fashion trend in urban planning.

According to the regulationist perspective, smart cities are not a trend. This development is systemic, and it is necessary. It aims at reintegration of the late capitalist system of governance around a few thousand urban hubs that take it upon themselves to revive the fading fortunes of the global neoliberal project. The question then becomes, what is the nature of the societal function that the smart cities movement serves globally? Having that function described or postulated makes it possible to address the essence of the smart cities network itself.

Starting with Michel Aglietta (1979), the FRS theorists sought to explain, how a system as fraught with contradictions as contemporary capitalism is can, nevertheless, adapt and reproduce itself. Their answer to this question focused on regulation, or normalization of inherently conflictual relations by means of channeling them through of a set of formal and informal institutions that mitigate social contradictions. These institutions form a coherent whole that operates as one mechanism propelling modern capitalist economy forward.

The systemic arrangement that makes various agents and forces of the capitalist market economy coalesce around a particular regime of accumulation is called a "mode of regulation." It is defined as "the ensemble of institutional forms, the networks, the explicit or implicit norms, which assure the compatibility of behaviors in the framework of a regime of accumulation, in conformity with the state of social relations, and thereby through the contradictions and the conflictual character of the relations between agents and social groups" (Lipietz, 1986). Creation of a global smart city landscape establishes an institutional field of a new type that helps regulate the capitalist system and stall its decline. It is important to understand why, and how, it happens.

When transnational corporations (TNCs), international organizations, and national, regional, and municipal governments interact in one strategic area to develop and implement ICTs with a goal of enacting systematic changes in the human environment, they engage in a *bona fide* governance process. This form of governance becomes necessary when historically established national governments fail to do what they were set to do. Because of the ongoing debilitation of the nation-state across the West, soft management of territories on the basis of a city-region is called forth to replace hard management of territories on the basis of a state. Regulation of the global network of economic transactions increasingly passes to global cities.

There is a reason for that. For as long as they remain territorially embedded and reliant on locally provided services and infrastructure, all corporations will have to ensure their local, spatially defined survival first. Their global reach comes, of necessity, second. To adapt to the realities of increasingly fragmented yet globalized world, corporations need to optimize their interactions with the immediate environment, its key agents and regulators.

In the process of optimizing these interactions, the corporation seeks to improve the conditions of its existence, support those tendencies of development that are favorable to profit accumulation, and dispel those tendencies that are counterproductive and detrimental to corporate goals. The increasingly cumbersome and unwieldy national states cannot compete with global city-regions in either flexibility or speed of adaptation. Because of that, capital accumulation in global age takes place around large urban agglomerations. Capitalist globalization gets mediated through the international archipelago of city-regions rather than the system of sovereign territorial states (Moisio & Jonas, 2018).

Foreign direct investment, competitive advantage, productivity growth, innovation, and firm creation rates are all concentrated in a few subnational regions and global cities (Hutzschenreuter et al., 2020). The "smartness" of these cities is being increasingly evaluated by their business prowess and efficiency, and to a much lesser extent by either smart technologies per se or the avowed goals of sustainability and social advancement (Scornavacca et al., 2020). As David Lane (2020, p. 1316) notes, the digital economy that makes these smart cities what they are "is dominated by the corporate elites controlling profit-maximising companies predicated on neoliberal ideology—to the detriment of democratic control and participation."

Smart cities not only open new markets for the financial capital and TNCs of the ICT sector, but also bring new life to the class-based, socially stratified scheme of mass consumption within the boundaries of a single city-region. This allows them to overcome the crisis of the post-Fordist accumulation, which has been largely precipitated by a falling consumer demand and stagnant real wages. Since indefinite expansion of demand is the *sine qua non* of capitalist development, stimulating mass consumption and hyper-consumerism is an important mechanism of regulation. Researchers note that the real promise of digital capitalism is the "solving of the consumption problem of our contemporary production system" (Staab, 2017). The ongoing degradation of the national economies is compensated via formation of a new world system of city-regions that evolve in parallel to the withdrawal of business and the state from the declining national and global peripheries.

It is possible to formulate a hypothesis that the subnational management of development against the background of the emerging transnational regime of accumulation is needed to attract investments, stimulate innovations, and resurrect consumption patterns for the continuing growth of the capitalist market economy. This hypothesis lies within the general conceptual paradigm of the FRS, since it relates to changes in the mode of regulation.

FRS theorists demonstrated the systemic crisis of classic industrialism ("Fordism") and the necessity of its replacement by the post-Fordist system of regulation (Boyer, 2005; Lipietz, 1997). They noted that "post-Fordism" ushers in decentralization of production, outsourcing, subcontracting, and relocation of productive assets offshore (Amin, 1994). Mass production of stereotypical goods yields to flexible specialization

that better responds to the minute variations in demand. These developments facilitate freeing the industrial and financial capital from the shackles of national regulation systems. They increase capital's transnational mobility and profit margins. The ensuing financial globalization destabilizes national welfare systems. National economic systems lose integrity and cohesion. In their place, global production networks arise. Globally competitive industries concentrate in few regional clusters (Vidal, 2013). The concentration of TNCs and intellectual and business elites within the boundaries of the same city-region—the one that boasts the best competitive environment for the accumulation and mobility of capital—corresponds to this global trend.[1]

The Smart City in the Global System of Governance: The Coronavirus Update Managing late capitalism on the basis of territory meets with unique challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these challenges by pitting, in the words of Robert Boyer (2020), a myriad of assertive state-driven capitalisms against transnational capitalism of the GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft) variety. It is noteworthy that, even as national states were partially rehabilitated in their sovereign and regulatory functions by their assertive responses to the pandemic, coronavirus-related developments have actually strengthened digital capitalism more than the power of states. Lockdowns and travel restrictions have accelerated the flow of value between declining industries and a growing platform economy.

A new mode of regulation emerges from this crisis. The pandemic threw into a sharp relief the dependence of national capitalisms on the robust application of instruments of regulation and control. Successful administrative control has been demonstrated by a few hierarchically organized and traditionally disciplined states, such as China, Korea, and Singapore, which could fight the pandemic through efficient containment strategies. In the West, the impact of the pandemic differed across regions and municipalities. Deprived areas were strongly affected, while wealthy cities and counties coped better. Within cities, poorer neighborhoods were most exposed (OECD, 2020).

The available health statistics demonstrate the importance of municipal, city-based instruments of regulation. Internal segmentation of the

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[1] More than half of all TNCs in the world are headquartered in just seven global centers: New York, Tokyo, London, Beijing, Paris, Seoul, and Hong Kong.

Western nations prevented their consolidation in the shape of a collective world center even before the pandemic; achieving a "great reset" of capitalism through a unified action of leading nation-states is even more difficult now. By exposing the inadequacy of both national and global (e.g., the World Health Organization or the UN) structures, the pandemic heightened skepticism toward these structures' ability to lead the revival of globalization. What we have seen instead was the disjointed and ill-informed responses of national governments, as well as poor leadership and occasionally misleading advice by the world organizations (Gebrekidan & Apuzzo, 2021).

Individual city-regions had to fill in that executive vacuum by themselves, in reliance on their own resources and ability to negotiate supports they needed with their national governments. Characteristically, in many instances it was municipalities and regions that pioneered the lockdown measures; the nation-states followed. Thus, Moscow was the first to introduce mandatory self-isolation in Russia; Tokyo's governor clashed with prime minister over lockdown measures in the city; Seoul took a leadership role in the immediate crisis response; and Bogota intervened in private health sector to ensure beds' availability for all patients. The pandemic has provided an additional push for smart cities through the increased reliance on teleworking, telemedicine, surveillance systems, and online commerce and education (Kunzmann, 2020). However, even in the countries where digital solutions are less widespread, local governments often stepped up to fight the pandemic.

The new world center that has been growing out of these events is not based on the known organizations of the nation-states. It consists of an assembly of city networks orbiting one another: a few dozen global cities supported by several thousand smart cities of regional significance that support, accompany, and service global leaders. All of the global cities are smart cities by definition. However, in addition to such global cities as Tokyo, Shanghai, New York, or London, hundreds of smart cities that are smaller in population or importance play a vital role in the system. Typically, they are transmitters of information and local hubs within a global network of information, capital, and labor. They may be occupying niche markets or exploiting locational advantages. Often, they boast of regional prominence in finance, trade, logistics, and shipping. These cities provide infrastructure that stimulates interactions among governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and communities. Because

of their importance for capital accumulation and their recently demonstrated efficiency in containing the spread of the virus through contactless diagnosis and other technical solutions, smart cities will remain preferred targets for public investment.

These cities have also become sales markets of choice for the IT companies that push them to adopt proprietary smart technologies. A key corporate measure of "smartness" and a recommended way for a non-global smart city to achieve a global city status is the city's ability to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). This, one author writes, is more important than just implementing smart solutions in transport and mobility, sustainability, governance, innovation economy, inclusion, and living standards (De Falco, 2019). Perhaps, smart cities need capital infusions in order to grow. It is no less important that they are needed by corporations as the enablers of corporate growth.

To facilitate the reopening after the pandemic, politicians have been requested to "use city governance as a platform for problem-solving" (Pipa, 2020). From Canada and France to the USA and Japan, local governments enjoy significantly higher levels of trust than the national government.[2] Reconfiguration of the relationship between metropolises and states leads to a new structure of global governance, whereby global smart cities acquire a good deal of autonomy from the state. Against the background of very distinct regionalization of policy responses to the pandemic and after several decades of massive urbanization of the production and consumption of wealth, even the return of certain forms of city-states and the appearance of the "new privatized metropolises" may become possible (Le Galès, 2020). As Neil Brenner (2019) observes, the new goal of spatial policies is no longer to alleviate uneven geographical development, but to intensify it by strengthening the "putatively unique, place-specific socio-economic assets and infrastructural equipment of transnationally networked urban regions."

Taken together with the latest string of crises of global capitalism, the inadequate or weak performance of many national governance structures during the pandemic supports the view that regulation shaped solely by the national macroeconomic policies is no longer sufficient for the current regime of accumulation. A transition to a new mode of regulation is required. Policy makers encourage the formation of globally

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[2] Edelman Trust Barometer 2020. Spring Update: Trust and the Covid-19 Pandemic, available via https://www.edelman.com/

connected, "smart" city-regions to attract investments, stimulate inno-
vations, and resurrect consumption patterns needed to keep the economy
afloat. In the process, smart cities become the main element of a new
post-Fordist mode of regulation that "glocalizes" neoliberal globaliza-
tion within the boundaries of elite urban centers while leaving the rest
of the formerly unified national space to a slow-moving degradation and
near-abandonment.

Conclusions

One of the most pronounced phenomena of twenty-first-century world
politics is the fragmentation and the spatial and institutional reformatting
of the global capitalist center. This process, arising from the neolib-
eral globalization of the 1990s, brings the globally echeloned network
of city-regions to the forefront. Global cities position themselves as a
cornerstone of the world system of transnational interactions that aim
to relaunch stagnating market development against the background of
progressive debilitation of the capitalist nation-state. These cities are key
links in the global chain of transnational relations, and their significance
will only grow. A defining feature of a global city is its connectivity and its
junctional location in the net of political, economic, and cultural centers.

Based on the theoretical and methodological approaches of the French
Regulation School (FRS), we speculated that a transition toward a new
system of global governance, which will be rooted in a planetary network
of "advanced" city centers, meets the demands of the post-Fordist stage of
late capitalist development. The advent of a smart city is directly related
to the ongoing crisis of the neoliberal globalist project and the regime
of accumulation that it spawned. The FRS understanding of a mode of
regulation as a stabilizer of the regime of accumulation is instrumental
in seeing the rise of the world network of technologically advanced city
centers as a necessity, given the actual degradation of the state-society
relations at the post-Fordist stage of capitalist evolution.

Smart cities' industries, population, and consumption resurrect the
investment potential of the finance capital and bring new life to the ICT
sector, thus helping to overcome the deindustrialization tendencies of
the advanced capitalist states. The smart city movement revives neoliberal
globalization and transnationalism at a time when leading capitalist states
appear increasingly incapable of providing solid regulation and playing the
stabilization role they have been playing for the capitalist markets until

very recently. Governance based on ICT, mass screening of information, and oligarchic control over its use currently seems to be one of the most promising means of post-Fordist regulation. The governance ideology and strategy based on the concept of smart cities meet the demands of the post-Fordist capital accumulation, with the implementation of this strategy aiding in the crystallization of the oligarchic tendencies of late capitalism.

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"Failed" Arab States–A Threat to Regional and International Stability

Yuri Kostenko

The post-World War I agreements signed by the Powers partitioned the Middle East into artificial states that grouped together diverse ethnic groups, rival religions, and, in some cases, speakers of different languages. The lack of correlation between nation and state, especially when various national or ethnic groups aspire to independence or view themselves as belonging to a neighboring state, increased tensions between populations. This tension led to a protest; the Arab Spring has changed the Arab world. Many of its members found themselves in an accelerated process of state failure. According to the U.N.'s definition, "failed states" are political entities that demonstrate little or no ability to provide their citizens with basic security. Such states suffer from at least three key failings: a weak government that lacks legitimacy and does not enjoy a monopoly on the means of violence; extreme political and societal fragmentation;

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and severe economic weakness. In most cases, the process of state failure is gradual and prolonged. States that suffer from internal disintegration and simultaneously are characterized by weak or non-functioning institutions are liable to become failed states. The phenomenon of state failure has become much more relevant and worrying than ever before.

New entities have arisen on the ruins of the failed Arab states. As the nation-states in the Arab world continue to disintegrate, the power of non-state hybrid actors is likely to increase. Failed states have come to be feared as "breeding grounds of instability, mass migration, and murder" as well as reservoirs and exporters of terror. Failed states are tense, conflicted, and dangerous.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the Middle East partitioned on the basis of agreements signed by the Powers, which grouped people of different ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds into states that possessed little to no national identity and lacked correlation between their territories and their population. The majority of these state entities failed to create a uniform and accepted national idea nor a system of values for their population over the course of their existence. They failed to mitigate the tension arising from the religious, communal, and ethnic disparities (Michael & Guzansky, 2016).

Tension and friction between population groups reinforced the feelings of dissatisfaction and served as fertile ground for protests that grew into a wave of civil unrest which was sweeping over the Arab world in 2011. One of its most noticeable effects became the acceleration of state disintegration and the process of collapse in certain Arab states (Michael & Guzansky, 2016).

Over many years, processes had been brewing in Tunisian society that resulted in a mass protest in the capital. A local protest quickly enveloped the whole of Tunisia before spreading to the rest of the Arab world. At first, the protest was dubbed "the Arab spring", a term which reflected the hope for social and political changes in the Arab community.

However, the mass protest would soon fall under the coordination of radical Islamic organizations that had nothing in common with the values of freedom, democracy, and equality. "The Arab Spring" turned into a wave of regional uprisings.

These changes in the Arab world have had far-reaching consequences: Europe is filled with millions of refugees which has sparked an acute crisis testing the European Union's resilience, the confrontation between

Russia and the US is getting more heated, and terrorism, having its origins in the Middle East, has turned into a threat to Europe and the US.

The regional wave of uprisings did not come out of nowhere. The signs of the gathering phenomena had been there long before the actual events occurred. Scientific research published during previous periods drew attention to the feelings of frustration and despair experienced by citizens of Arab nations stemming from their leaders' corruption and inability to improve the population's economic livelihood. These feelings fostered the protest movement. The existence of these movements was to have served as a warning for the rulers of various nations (Zartman, 1995).

Some other signs were also present. Almost half of the Arab League member states could be characterized as fragile states prior to the wave of uprisings due to an assortment of political, economic, and social issues that they were facing (Michael & Guzansky, 2016).

Israeli experts Michael and Guzansky have concluded, based on an analysis of the events of the past twenty years, that most of modern conflicts, including international terrorism, have their roots in the so-called failed Arab states (Michael & Guzansky, 2016). In their opinion, "failed states" can be characterized by: a weak government that has lost its monopoly on power and that is unable to ensure safety for its citizens, political and social fragmentation of the population, and serious economic problems.

One of the reasons why "failed states" received insufficient attention from academics, experts, and intelligence analysts was their focus on the Arab states' leaders, political elite, and armies; the processes brewing in civil society were thus pushed into the background.

"However, the current era is also characterized by the growing influence of the masses gathering in the streets and squares" (Baron, 2015). Intelligence services have hurried to formulate an "intelligence gathering in the social sphere" concept. (Michael & Kellen, 2009).

"Failed states" had existed in the Arab world even before the latest wave of uprisings, though this wave has led to an escalation in the countries that were at different stages of state disintegration.

Arab nations, especially republics, were relatively stable, due to their rulers suppressing any dissatisfaction. They utilized violence to reinforce and to sustain their power, while at the same time striving for legitimacy by developing political and social ideologies strengthening the feelings of

nationalism. However, the sources of legitimacy and control mechanisms drafted in previous years failed to withstand the trial by mass protests.

"Failed states" are mostly unable to ensure personal safety for their citizens. A lack of personal safety is one of the main reasons for the population's mass migration.

Refugee camps are experiencing a growth of humanitarian crises, serving as a brewing ground. The instability emanating from them is likely to spill over to neighboring countries. Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey all have huge refugee camps housing hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees. These camps increase the risk of these states transforming into "failed" ones, especially in Lebanon and Jordan.

The ongoing changes greatly influence the international system. They disrupt safety and stability, exacerbate the controversies between the powers and their protegees pursuing their own interests in the regions, and cause disturbances on a social, economic, and political levels.

"Failed states" are not a local problem; they are a regional and an international challenge. This is due to the instability that they "export" to their neighbors and faraway partners and due to them having been turned into a confrontation arena between regional and international actors.

The terrorist acts of September 11th 2001, which caused many casualties, and the preceding terrorist acts against American facilities in the Middle East and in Africa became turning points concerning the West's opinion on the fact that "failed states" are mostly an international problem and that they are becoming a terrorism exporter.

Academics, experts, and intelligence analysts in many states have started conducting active research into "failed states". The need for studying this phenomenon has become evident. One US official document, dated from 2002, states that "The US sees a threat to its security coming from "failed states"" (Roberts, 2015).

THE PHENOMENON OF "FAILED STATES"—THEORETICAL ASPECTS

Studies on the subject of "failed states" have increased in number over the last decade. Along with studies into particular aspects of a "failed state" came further studies analyzing the phenomenon as a whole. Target groups for studying this phenomenon were established within leading international organizations, e.g., in the World Bank. There is currently a number of terms describing a "failed state" in professional studies. Parallel to the

term (Guzansky & Kulik, 2010) run other terms, such as "fragile state" (Cooke & Dowine, 2015), "collapsed state", "state failing", and "crisis state" (Guzansky & Kulik, 2010).

The multitude of terms is not the only obstacle in the way of studying "failed states". There are also analytical and methodological difficulties concerning evaluation criteria and state disintegration signs, as well as concerning the means to distinguish between the causes of state disintegration and the results thereof. Reilly writes on the different stages of state disintegration and the need for dividing "failed states" into categories in accordance therewith (Reilly, 2008).

Call, in touching upon the term "failed state", notes the broad and the general nature of the term. In his opinion, the use of the term "failed state" puts states at different stages of state disintegration into one category (Call, 2008).

"Failed states" can be distinguished by the inability of the central authorities to exercise control over the country's territory. Weak authority is an authority limited in or deprived of its legitimacy that does not enjoy a monopoly on law enforcement. According to Call, a state "fails" when its institutions and authority relative to its domestic and foreign affairs become deficient (Call, 2008).

In a state that consists of various population groups lacking a unified national identity, a dictatorship may serve as an "adhesive" holding back state disintegration and securing control and governance of the territory. Totalitarian states tend to "fail" due to being corrupt and due to their leaders relying on terrorist and criminal organizations for survival (Reilly, 2004).

Zartman views "failed states" as a threat and a challenge to the existing system of international relations among states. According to him, this phenomenon possesses two interconnected parameters: the state-institutional one and the social one (Zartman, 1995). From a social standpoint, the state "fails" when authorities lose their legitimacy; from a state-institutional standpoint, "failure" occurs when the state loses its ability to function and to govern. As a result, laws cease to be observed and the country's political establishment is broken. This allows other actors, mostly forces competing with or opposing the existing authorities, to take over the authority fully or partially.

In analyzing the process of a state's "failure", Zartman notes that in most cases the process is a lengthy one. This point is substantiated by the UN reports on the state of the Middle Eastern countries, according to

which the ongoing wave of socio-political unrest in the region is not the result of a single outbreak (Michael & Guzansky, 2016).

Zartman notes that states suffering from domestic religious, ethnic, or communal fragmentation, while at the same time being characterized by weak state institutions losing their ability to function, may "fail".

Hudson, not unlike Zartman, concludes that in times of low state governance efficiency and high fragmentation there emerges a real danger to the stability of the state (Hudson, 1977).

Guzansky and Kulik assert that state disintegration occurs as a sequence of two main developing scenarios. The first is the impending domestic crisis, and the second is the actual disintegration finalizing the process (Guzansky & Kulik, 2010). The first scenario occurs in states where the authorities are unable to prevent a domestic crisis and facilitate its escalation through their actions. Iraq and Lebanon are examples of such states.

At the disintegration stage, the state is likely to experience the paralysis of all decision-making bodies as well as growing social fragmentation. It is no longer in a position to ensure the safety of its citizens and to enforce laws on its sovereign territory. A "failed state" experiences the collapse of both the authority institutions and civil infrastructure. Syria, Libya, and Yemen are examples of such states.

Fukuyama uses the term "state efficiency" (Fukuyama, 2005) in the sense of how efficient state authorities are in dealing with domestic and foreign challenges and threats. The lower the level at which state authorities function, the lower the degree of legitimacy that society convenes to state authorities; while the more pressing the social issues or domestic and foreign conflicts, the higher the risk of non-state actors seizing power in a state. In most cases, they are radical revolutionary or religious groups. Outside interference usually accelerates state disintegration (Guzansky & Kulik, 2010).

Other features of "failed states" include cross-ethnic and religious conflicts and a lack of a unifying national idea (Michael & Guzansky, 2016). This is clearly evidenced by Afghanistan—a multinational state with different ethnic groups residing within it. These groups are forced to live in close proximity to each other within a single state which creates tension and facilitates armed conflicts, even though they all profess Islam. Other examples of such states include Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Lebanon.

All "failed states" have three things in common: a weak, illegitimate government, poverty among the majority of the population, and a long-standing domestic conflict. The International Fund for Peace described 33 states as "fragile" or "in the early stages of disintegration" in 2014 (Fund for Peace, 2014). There are currently about 200 states in the world. Many of these states are at different stages of state disintegration.

The phenomenon of states "failing" due to ethnic and religious disparities is not inherent to a particular geographical region or to a particular culture. Although it has to be acknowledged that it is more widespread in the Middle East and in Africa, it can be observed in European states as well, e.g., in Bosnia.

Is a multinational state necessarily doomed to "fail"? Some researchers give an affirmative answer to this question. Miller, for instance, speculates that a lack of correlation between the nation and the state is the main factor of regional instability and domestic and regional conflicts (Miller, 2005).

The experts from the Fund for Peace have developed a "Fragile States" index. The criteria for determining a state's place in the "failed states" index allow for pinpointing the early stages of state failure.

Zartman notes that the weakening of the central government and the strengthening of new actors attempting to seize some of its functions are one of most important criteria. The further stages of state disintegration feature authorities, acting on behalf of the state, who start construing laws and act with full discretion (Zartman, 1995).

One of the most noticeable signs of a weakening central government is its inability to enforce laws in the country and at the border. Terrorist organizations take advantage of the resulting power vacuum.

Non-State Actors and State Disintegration

A distinctive process that has been taking place since the end of the Cold War is the strengthening and reinforcement of non-state actors, thanks in large part to the weakening of state institutions. This occurs mainly due to globalization and state functions being granted to mostly non-state actors (Rapley, 2006).

Different authors have varying approaches to defining and classifying non-state actors. Geeraets and Mellentin think of "non-state actors" as "any entity performing a specific task in international relations" (Geeraets & Mellentin, 1994).

Miodownik and Barak believe that "non-state actors are not sovereign states or some other entity acting on their behalf. They are not a part of formal state institutions such as the military, law enforcement or governing bodies. They act outside of this framework" (Miodownik & Barak, 2014).

Geeraets and Mellentin divide non-state actors based on:

1. their degree of autonomy and dependence on the central government;
2. the grounds on which non-state actors function: whether ideological, ethnic, tribal, or religious; and
3. the degree of influence.

Other researchers categorize them into:

1. local actors active within a single country;
2. transnational actors active in several states, e.g., "Hezbollah" and "Hamas";
3. global actors such as "Al-Qaeda" active on several continents.

Although national liberation movements, militia, and terrorist organizations (and other such bodies) are defined as violence-oriented organizations, in certain cases they act as hybrid actors engaged not only in military action or acts of violence but also in the issues of civil governance on territories that have fallen under their control. "Hamas", "Hezbollah", and "The Islamic State" are examples of such hybrid actors, having become the owners of the territories under their control.

Along with the weakening and the disintegration of the Middle Eastern states came the strengthening of non-state actors, mostly radical Sunni movements, with the most notable one being "The Islamic State". Some of these have undergone institutionalization and have transformed from non-state actors into hybrid actors in control of the territory, offering their population a fraction of the services that a government would ordinarily provide to its citizens (Rotberg, 2002).

"The Islamic State" in Iraq and Syria, "Hezbollah" in Lebanon, and "Hamas" in the Gaza sector are all examples of non-state actors that have undergone institutionalization thanks to being in control of the territory and its population. As a result of institutionalization, a non-state actor

becomes a hybrid actor (Valensi, 2015); it utilizes its new status in order to spread its ideology with the help of, among other things, the education system, providing the controlled population with government services and thereby increasing the population's dependence on it.

Non-state actors disrupt the values of national Arab states, intending to reformat the region. They wipe away the existing boundaries and create new formations.

Besides non-state actors interfering with the domestic affairs of the "failed states" they are based in, they also expand their activity to neighboring states. The Somali organization "Ash-Shabab", active on the territory of neighboring Kenya, is one example of such activity.

Non-state actors take advantage of a lack of governance within "failed states" in order to create their own state within a state. This takes on the form of instituting armed militia and alternative bodies of authority in such spheres as education and welfare. Examples of this include a network of madrasahs under the auspices of the "Taliban" movement in Afghanistan as well as a network of charity institutions of Islamic organizations in many countries.

Non-state actors are not sovereign entities; this does not, however, decrease their influence on the events on the international stage and sometimes even leads to essential changes therein (Ahmed & Potter, 2006).

Three scenarios are possible, relative to the activity of non-state actors:

1. Non-state actors will continue to function in their current format and will aggravate instability in their home-states and beyond.
2. Non-state actors will undergo institutionalization and will become hybrid ("Hamas", "Hezbollah", ISIS) or even state actors.
3. In combating armed non-state actors, "failed states" will resort to their methods which will aggravate instability. This is exemplified by Assad's regime in Syria.

Maybe it is time to develop new action concepts and methods to combat the phenomenon of "failed states". For example, instead of clinging on to the paradigm of unified national states, perhaps it is now time to develop the paradigm of federate states, allowing for the existence of religious, tribal, and communal identities.

Climate Change and State Disintegration

The climate crisis is one of the factors raising the risk of the emergence and escalation of military conflicts and state disintegration. The increasing incidence of natural disasters in recent years has been proven to be the consequence of imprudent human activity and its devastating impact on nature. Notably, natural disasters occur all around the world, not only in the countries, where nature suffers the most.

Global warming is accelerating and exacerbating conflicts, which can lead to both local and regional wars. Climate change makes conflicts, associated with water management and the rights to water resources, more violent; it downsizes agricultural areas and forces large masses of people to flee their homes.

According to the specialists of the American university of Notre Dame, more than half of the 25 countries, most gravely affected by climate change, also suffer from long-lasting internal military conflicts or civil wars. In Somalia, for example, the armed conflict has been going on for decades. In addition to that, starting from the year 1990, the incidence of natural disasters in the country has tripled in comparison with the previous twenty years. Each new natural catastrophe makes it harder for the population of the country to restore its economy. UN data show that in 2020 more than 1 million Somalians fled their homes—one-third of them because of drought.

Military analysts consider climate change to be the "accelerator" and "multiplier" of the threats that lead to armed conflicts and wars, as well as to the potential state disintegration.

The situation in Afghanistan is an example of a new type of international conflicts and threats to global peace and stability—the combination of wars or internal armed conflicts and climate change. Moreover, the case of Afghanistan illustrates how a non-governmental actor—the Taliban movement—has gone through all the stages of institutionalization and seized power over the country.

In several regions of Afghanistan, the temperature has gone up twice as high as the global average. In the past 60 years, the average temperature across Afghanistan increased by 1.8 degrees Celsius. However, the southern regions have suffered a temperature rise by 2 degrees. There are fewer rains in spring. Drought is more frequent. All of this has led to a massive outflow of the population from the southern provinces of the country, with some families deciding to leave the country. The rival

military groups and organizations have been fighting most fiercely for the control of water resources.

In a country, where the vast majority of the population lives off agriculture, the central focus and funds are allocated to the armed struggle between groups of its citizens. The ongoing war is only increasing the effects of the climate crisis.

Afghanistan is not the only country that is facing a collision of climate change and an internal armed conflict.

The prolonged drought that struck Syria a little over a decade ago and that scientist attribute to the impact of human activity on climate change has caused many citizens to flee their villages. Some experts consider it one of the factors fueling the popular uprising against the regime of Bashar Asad in 2011, which later turned into the ongoing civil war.

The military conflict in Mali makes it extremely tough for farmers and shepherds to fight successive droughts and floods.

Climate change is not to be blamed for all wars, but raising temperatures and more frequent natural disasters caused by climate change do lead to the escalation of ongoing conflicts. It is particularly true to the countries with a long-lasting military conflict and an erosion of the institutes of power.

There is also no evidence to claim that climate change is the sole or the most important trigger of conflicts. However, the combination of military action with climate change is sure to escalate at least some of the conflicts involving the most vulnerable groups of the global population.

"Failed State"—A Regional and a Global Threat

The reality of last two decades demonstrates that the majority of the ongoing conflicts in the world, including international terrorism, are the result of intrastate conflicts (Coggins, 2014).

These issues are born of "failed states", they lead to an escalation of these states, and they disrupt national stability and security. In other words, the crises arising in "failed states" are similar to a virus. This is clearly evidenced by a wave of uprisings in the Arab world.

Basically, every "failed state", to some extent or another, causes damage to the world order. State disintegration may spill over to neighboring states. This happens due to weakening border control or when there are members of one ethnic or religious group living on the opposite sides of the border. Iraq and Syria are examples thereof.

After the fall of the Gaddafi regime, radical Tuareg groups who had previously fought on the side of the regime fled to Mali and fortified local Tuareg tribes. As a result, Mali saw the rise of separatist tendencies, followed by a military coup and an actual split of the country into two states. From a fragile African democracy, Mali has transformed into a "failed state" (Michael & Guzansky, 2016).

In many cases, "failed states" "export" their domestic crises. They use force and direct it outwards in order to minimize the domestic threats (attention diversion theory) (Groff et al., 1983). One can speak of a growing negative influence of intrastate conflicts on the stability of the international relations system.

A "failed state" becomes a haven for terrorist organizations. They increase their influence thanks to a lack of efficient central government and secure the right to use means of violence. "Failed states" are one of the sources of recruitment for terrorist organizations.

Institutionalization reinforces the position of terrorist organizations on controlled territories which allows them to act outside the territory, i.e., to "export" terror to the neighbors of a "failed state", which, in turn, damages regional stability and international security. "The Islamic State", for instance, supports the "Islamic Jihad" organizations active in the Sinai region, cooperating with them in the fight against the Egyptian authorities. It is active in Libya, Yemen, Nigeria, and many other locations through its loyal supporters.

It is possible to speculate about the possibility of terrorism exports with the use of weapons of mass destruction. There is a risk of states in possession of weapons of mass destruction transforming into "failed states", which would allow terrorist organizations to gain control of said weapons. In 2014, the guerrilla fighters of "the Islamic State" active in Iraq took possession of low-grade uranium stocks (Nicholas, 2014).

"The export of instability" coming from "failed states" in the form of refugees is a threat not only to Middle Eastern states but to Europe as well. Some claim that if the European Union helps to minimize poverty in unstable zones close to its eastern and southern borders, the number of migrants from "failed states" will also decrease. However, this statement is quite detached from reality: Syrian, Iraqi, and Afghani refugees are not fleeing because of poverty.

Experts predict that instability in "failed states" of the Middle East and Northern Africa will escalate in both the short and long term (Guzansky & Berti, 2013) and will proceed to spread over to the majority

of states. This will result dire consequences for the security and the economy of the region.

Simultaneously, the power and the influence of non-state and hybrid actors such as "Hamas", ISIS, and "Hezbollah" will continue to increase, as the aforementioned organizations are already in control of large chunks of territory in the Middle East and are actively attempting to reformat it.

One can also suppose that as state disintegration in the Middle East and Northern Africa deepens the involvement of foreign non-state and state actors will also increase.

Reilly believes that the phenomenon of "failed states" will not disappear from the international arena in the near future, but that a confrontation between stable and controlled states and "failed states" is imminent (Reilly, 2008). One of the reasons for the imminence of such a confrontation is the threat coming from "failed states".

In light of this, one can suppose that, in the short and long term, the instability and the changes in the region will be present. These factors may affect those Arab monarchies that have, as of yet, managed to avoid revolutionary uprisings. One should not forget that protests in the Arab world are akin to a virus.

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The Origin, Present State, and Future of Multipolarity from a Connectivity Perspective

Andrew Korybko, Vladimir Morozov, and Ekaterina Shebalina

The world is in the midst of an ongoing systemic transition from US-led unipolarity to multipolarity, with some experts, such as the Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) Andrey Kortunov, arguing that the current state of International Relations is actually bipolar (Kortunov, 2019). However one chooses to describe it, the

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contemporary world is unquestionably undergoing profound changes in all spheres, whether geopolitical, social, economic, political, or any other such area. All of these developments are connected to different philosophies, which will be touched upon when examining the origin, present state, and future of this global trend from a connectivity perspective (here being described as multipolarity for simplicity's sake).

An emphasis is placed on the role of civilizations within this emerging paradigm, since the state-centric system that hitherto characterized International Relations is theorized as becoming outdated in light of the socio-economic changes that globalization is creating within polities. The method applied is admittedly ad hoc as the authors do not believe that any fixed framework can adequately account for the paradigm changes that they argue are currently taking place during the ongoing global systemic transition; this is why, instead, different concepts are casually touched upon to refer to various explanations of these complex processes in an attempt to float a trial balloon, introducing another way for understanding them in the emerging context.

Having explained the reason for this research and the means of its undertaking, the article begins by discussing the nature of the unipolar moment that preceded the present one. It then moves along to explaining the processes by which the ongoing global systemic transition began. After that, a structural analysis of the current state of affairs commences. Next, the article discusses the relevance all of the aforementioned has on Russian grand strategy, seeking to point out both problems and opportunities in order to imbue readers with a better understanding of the circumstances in which the country has found itself. Finally, the work's main conclusions are listed in order to remind the reader of the research's most important takeaways.

Methodology

The chapter's methodological bases are chronological, comparative, and empirical. The piece covers the historical transition from the unipolarity of the 1990s to the multipolarity of the present day, but cites some of the relevant historical literature on political theory in order to frame the complexity and context in which this process is unfolding. It also briefly reviews some of the key historical events related to the development. Special attention is paid to Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations"

theory and China's Belt & Road (BRI) vision of New Silk Road connectivity throughout the Eastern Hemisphere. Their pertinent implications for political science and International Relations are elaborated upon in the text.

The chapter then contrasts the two through comparative methodology by positing that China's strategy is to overcome the risk for a "Clash of Civilizations" through what essentially amounts to its unique variation of Neo-Liberalism, integrating as many countries as possible into what Beijing regards as its "Community of Common Destiny" via BRI-driven New Silk Roads. This insight then enables the reader to better understand the empirical nature of the chapter wherein important observations are made about contemporary Russian foreign policy and its most likely future direction through the Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP).

Results

The Unipolar Moment

Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin postulated in his book about the "Fourth Political Theory" (Dugin, 2012) that the twentieth century was characterized by a battle between the three main ideologies of liberalism, communism, and fascism. He writes that World War II saw the first two jointly defeat the third, after which they competed with one another on a global level during what become known as the Cold War. The dissolution of the Soviet Union from 1989 to 1991 resulted in the global victory of liberalism, which heralded what can be described by Thomas Kuhn's teachings as a paradigm shift (Naughton, 2012). Francis Fukuyama was greatly influenced by this development and provocatively proclaimed "The End Of History" in his famous book on the topic in 1992 (Fukuyama, 1992) that was written as an elaboration upon an eponymous article that he wrote in 1989 (Fukuyama, 1989), dealing with his prediction about the future of global society.

Fukuyama believed that the West's model of liberal democracy would eventually become ubiquitous, following a linear understanding of history influenced to differing degrees by Hegel (Hegel et al., 1979), and thus, mankind would no longer consider returning to any other political or economic systems; this is what he meant by "The End Of History". It can also be said that this view resembles what can be described as "historical evolution", building upon Darwin's theory of biological evolution

(Darwin, 1859), Spencer's thoughts on what's since been called Social Darwinism (Spencer, 1852), and Comte's conviction of societal evolution toward positivism (Conte, 1908). Seeing as how liberal democracy and its associated economic model epitomize the most recent (not necessarily highest) level of the West's civilizational development, Fukuyama's thesis can be reinterpreted as representing the concept of civilizational evolution or Civilizational Darwinism.

There is more to Fukuyama's "End of History" than just that, however, since his thesis also carries with it very strong innuendo about the inevitability of the forthcoming US-led unipolar moment, with the latter term ("unipolar moment") having been popularized two years earlier by Charles Krauthammer in 1990 (Krauthammer, 1990) (before Fukuyama's book, but one year after his original "End of History" article was published). Kant is regarded as the godfather of what International Relations scholars term the "Democratic Peace Theory" (Huth & Allee, 2002) because of his belief that global peace could potentially be realized if every country shared the same political model, as he wrote about in his 1795 essay "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" (Kant, 1903). Likewise, Hobbes' 1651 book "Leviathan" (Hobbes, 1969) is seen with hindsight as the forerunner of what's since been called the "Hegemonic Stability Theory" (Hobbes, 1969), postulating that a global hegemon (or "leviathan") is needed in order to ensure world peace.

These two concepts initially appear contradictory, but they can be reconciled through an understanding of the US' post-Cold War power being conditioned on fusing the (oftentimes militant and subversive) proselytization of liberal democracy ("Democratic Peace Theory") with its unparalleled leadership over global affairs ("Hegemonic Stability Theory") in order to establish the structural basis by which it could indefinitely perpetuate unipolarity. In a world comprised solely of liberal democracies, the aforementioned observation theorizes that the US' grand strategic goal is to be the "first among equals", thus institutionalizing its structural role over the future global system and therefore enabling it to more easily shape its future for time eternal, at least in theory ("The End Of History"). In addition, this imperative is paired with the (oftentimes militant and subversive) proselytization of Adam Smith's free market principles (Smith, 2001), which, when combined with Burke's domestic conservative influence, created the ideological basis for the US' neoconservative faction that formed during the 1990s and ultimately took control of the American state during the presidency of George Bush, Jr.

(Marshall, 2003), which also coincided with the climax of the unipolar moment. Of course, this is only an interpretation of many complex events outside the scope of the present piece; however, although these references are somewhat casual, they lay the frameworks for the reference points through which the subsequent sections of the article will be analyzed.

The Onset of the Global Systemic Transition

Many commentators, analysts, and scholars attribute the US' relative decline in international influence under the presidency of Barack Obama as being due to a combination of uncontrollable external circumstances, such as the Great Recession, and voluntary decisions, such as his comparative focus on domestic issues over international ones and the massive financial consequences of the wars that his predecessor began in Afghanistan and Iraq. These destructive forces were unleashed concurrently with China and Russia emerging as major international players; China underwent its historically unprecedented economic rise, while the relative restoration of Russia as a Great Power followed the successful completion of its federal intervention in Chechnya, a years-long spree of high oil prices that provided the government with excess foreign reserves for stabilizing the economy after the chaos of the 1990s, and the country's subsequent renewed geopolitical focus on its "Near Abroad" (Georgia, Ukraine) and beyond (Syria).

The simultaneous rise of China and Russia together with the US' seemingly endless wars in majority-Muslim countries like Afghanistan and Iraq in the first decade of the twenty-first century led to the popularization of Samuel Huntington's thesis about a "Clash of Civilizations" (Huntington, 1996), which he believed would characterize the future of International Relations. Sorokin and Spengler's philosophical contributions to this topic are relevant in this regard in order to better understand this outlook; Sorokin's "Social and Cultural Dynamics" (Sorokin, 1957) classified civilizations based on their "cultural mentalities", while Spengler postulated "The Decline of the West" (Spengler, 1991), which is relevant to the present article in the sense that it provides a detailed philosophical backdrop for explaining the conditions that some have argued are driving this civilization's accelerated decline in current times. Taken together, Sorokin's and Spengler's works add much substance to the claim that civilizational differences are significant enough to be factors of geopolitical—and therefore historical—change, similar in spirit to Huntington's

thesis, albeit without the explicit assertion that civilizations are supposedly destined to clash.

Broadly speaking, there are some key differences between Western Civilization and some of its counterparts. Unlike the former's naturally declining population, the Islamic, Hindu, Latin American, and African ones continue to grow. They are also visibly less influenced by the trend of "feminizing" males in society caused by the standards of so-called political correctness which discourage the public expression of traditionally male behavior in many Western countries nowadays. Although China's civilization is presently experiencing some of the same challenges as Western civilization is when it comes to its naturally declining population and the "feminization" of males, the increasing spirit of patriotism in its society as a result of the country's rapid expansion of global economic leadership appears to have offset the consequences, at least for now, and might partially explain why the state hasn't been as adversely affected by these trends as many of its Western peers have. One intriguing commonality between Chinese civilization and its Islamic, Hindu, Latin American, and African counterparts is the trend toward promoting traditional values, which has served not only to reinforce their societies in the face of the West's export (oftentimes militantly and subversively) of liberal social values, but also to undergird popular support for governments like Russia's and Iran's, which have aspired to retain as much of their sovereignty as possible while resisting the West's geopolitical will during the unipolar moment. Forthcoming research should be conducted in this direction in order to identify whether consequential causation is at play or not in these cases or if the aforementioned socio-political observations are just coincidental correlations.

Interestingly, the "authoritarian" trends (by some critical descriptions, being socially traditional and politically centralized) unfolding in majority civilizations of the world, even within some sectors of the Western one (e.g., the US under Trump, Brexit Britain, Poland, and Hungary), raise fundamental questions about the true meaning of democracy on a global scale. The popularly cited principle that the "majority rules" suggests that liberal democracy as envisaged and practiced by Western Civilization only represents the minority, and that the true democracy in this pure sense is actually the antithesis of that same principle. Continuing with this train of thought, the global liberal democratic revolution that Fukuyama expected at the end of the Cold War only superficially came to pass but never substantively, actually being reversed in practice in many cases even

if some of those same states are reluctant to openly acknowledge this and instead retain the same rhetoric as if nothing changed since that time. Robert Kagan touched upon this in his 2008 book "The Return of History and the End of Dreams" (Kagan, 2008), which was more relevant than he thought.

Liberal democracies are relatively new in history, so the re-emergence of illiberal ones (and especially those that espouse traditional values over socially liberal—"progressive" ones) literally represents a return to historic models, albeit largely reformed in the domestic political sense from the days of fiefdoms, monarchies, and empires. The case can be made that liberal democracy was only speciously natural and not actually organic, raising questions among those who believe that social systems can be compared to natural ones and therefore follow similar patterns such as evolution. How and why the movement toward liberal democracy originally occurred is less important in this context than the observation of its current reversal after having possibly reached its peak during the heyday of the unipolar moment, nowadays being largely promoted outside of Western Civilization by militant and subversive means (e.g., Color Revolutions). Framed another way, liberal democracy has become totalitarian toward those societies not practicing it, thereby embodying the exact opposite that it claims to represent and thus throwing its raison d'etre into question.

Structural Analysis

At this moment, two complementary models best represent the present state of International Relations with an eye toward the future: Wallerstein's world-systems theory (Wallerstein, 1974) and Barnett's core and non-integrating gap (Barnett, 2004). The first postulates that the core countries are expanding their reach into the semi-periphery and periphery, while the second essentially says the same thing except as a more inclusive global core expanding into a non-integrating gap of countries; the common principle between them holds that cores are economically and militarily strong centers of power. However, a fusion of Sorokin, Spengler, Fukuyama, Huntington, and Dugin's civilization-centric theories could be applied to theorize that civilizational cores are possible too: examples of those can be found in emerging regional integration blocs including the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC, comprised of several sub-continental integration blocs such as Mercosur

and CARICOM), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA, also comprised of several sub-continental integration blocs like ECOWAS and the EAC), the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and ASEAN. This worldview of several civilizational cores is most strongly influenced by Huntington's model, whose work on the "Clash of Civilizations" self-explanatorily describes his prediction about their future behavior with one another, albeit along different geographic fault lines.

Civilizations aren't destined to clash, however; they may possibly end up cooperating instead. China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) aims to build a Community of Common Destiny (CCD) (Kortunov, 2018) along the lines envisaged by Xi Jinping Thought (Baijie, 2019); while dealing mostly with the domestic political dynamics of the People's Republic, it also, intriguingly, touches upon the trend of global connectivity across the New Silk Roads that his country is building all over the world. Even the popular synonym for BRI, the New Silk Road, harks back to concepts Kagan noted in "The Return of History"; the reality seems to have somewhat overtaken the ideas he predicted, given this worldwide network wasn't publicly proposed until half a decade after his book's publication in 2013. Whether contemporary International Relations are conceptualized according to the world-systems theory, the gap and non-integrating gap, a civilizational perspective on regional integration blocs, or Huntington's purely civilizational theory, these supranational entities are poised to be unprecedentedly connected through BRI, leaving open the possibility of various convergences between them in the long term.

Important to note, too, is that the trend of BRI-driven civilizational integration across the New Silk Roads is occurring at the opening stages of multipolarity, which is generally understood as having shown then signs of its inception around the mid-2000s and then becoming a common topic of International Relations conversation around a decade later. Steven R. Mann's, 1992 work on "Chaos Theory And Strategic Thought" (Mann, 1992) is relevant to mention in connection with this, since his main idea is that even slight changes at the onset of complex processes (such as this one in the present article's context) disproportionately affect the ultimate outcome, meaning that there is a theoretically high probability that this civilizational integration trend will greatly determine the final form that multipolarity takes once the ongoing global systemic transition eventually stabilizes sometime in the future. It's unlikely that the aforementioned trend will cease to be a factor in shaping the global

system, which explains why it's being taken for granted throughout the rest of this article, barring any black swan event that renders this outlook unviable. That said, one can once again refer to Kuhn to describe the current state of affairs as representing yet another paradigm shift after that previously mentioned of the unipolar moment, which has led to the zeitgeist (to apply one of Hegel's concepts) of multipolarity or what could even be described as civilizationalism if taken to its fullest extent as anticipated.

The widespread worry among many Western experts is that Huntington's dark scenario of a "Clash of Civilizations" will inevitably come to pass: if not happening already when it comes to the friction between Western and Islamic Civilizations, then one day soon between the West and China, owing to the so-called Thucydides Trap predicting that war will break out whenever an established power like the US fears the rise of a credible competitor like China. The problem with that train of thought is that its roots are found in Western philosophy and historical experiences which neglect to take into account Eastern perspectives. The Chinese Ambassador to the UK, for example, wrote in an op-ed published in early December 2019 that his country "does not believe in the logic that power inevitably leads to hegemony" so this fact "requires those who see China's rise as a threat and China's development as a risk to cast aside their Cold War mentality and give up their belief in the 'Thucydides trap'" (Liu, 2019). Phrased another way, it can be argued that the tension between the US (which represents the broader West) and China is due to the former's wary perception of the latter which is rooted in philosophical differences.

Nevertheless, BRI in and of itself hardly disproves Huntington's thesis; instead, all that it does is create an opportunity for an alternative model of inter-civilizational relations to develop out of the shared economic interests of each civilization's constituent states (regardless of which civilization or civilizations one classifies them as belonging to). The Neo-Realist paradigm of International Relations strongly suggests that "security dilemmas" (whether in the tangible military sense or the intangible economic one for instance) could develop between civilizations for zero-sum reasons and therefore destine them to clash; its Neo-Liberal counterpart, though, could be evoked to claim that they can all peacefully cooperate so long as they have the same economic interests and values (the latter of which could in turn be developed through Constructivist means via perception management techniques, whether carried out by its

own civilization/state or others through soft power). There is the possibility that an interplay of these three theories could result in neither of these radical scenarios arising but rather a "moderate" one incorporating elements of both: for example, China's inter-civilizational BRI partners may cooperate more closely while the US-influenced Western partners that either remain outside of this connectivity system or are not as closely tied to it as their counterparts would clash with their the BRI civilizations/countries for strategic-economic reasons, which might be publicly portrayed as a "clash of values" (a potentially more widely accepted euphemism for "clash of civilizations").

With this possibility in mind, the philosophical question becomes one of whether China is replacing the US' post-Cold War role in the world system by attempting to become the new global hegemon, albeit through mostly economic means (Neo-Liberalism) instead of the combination of ones that the US utilized and which often relied upon militant force (conventional wars) or subversion (Color Revolutions, coups, etc.) throughout the past quarter century (Neo-Realism). Tangential questions then arise about the morals, ethics, and principles of each method for either attaining or retaining global hegemony (Neo-Liberalism vs Neo-Realism), as well as the effectiveness of each given the contemporary circumstances. Should the US seek to compete with China's Neo-Liberalism by offering better economic incentives to third countries, and/or should China incorporate a more overt element of Neo-Realism to its foreign policy to push back against the US' containment efforts against it (both directly and by proxy through the BRI countries)? Another pertinent question is whether the "Democratic Peace Theory" can be substituted for a more apolitical and economic-oriented one, whereby China (which isn't regarded as a "democracy" in the popular Western sense of the term) can successfully bring peace to the world by connecting civilizations together via BRI into a "Community of Common Destiny" which respects the domestic political differences between its many states and concentrates chiefly on their self-interested reasons for remaining in this system of complex interdependence as regulated by Beijing. These questions cannot be answered within the scope of this article, but nonetheless are being introduced this precisely with the intent of generating a wider discussion about them in the hopes of inspiring further research in these directions.

In summation of this section, civilizations—just like states—could be seen as actors in their own right, even if they're not (yet?) unitary ones

(except when acting under the aegis of the aforementioned regional integration organizations), just as Dugin proposed in his "Fourth Political Theory". These are not predestined to clash as Huntington feared, but could very well cooperate instead if they become increasingly connected to one another through BRI, with the basis for this second scenario being the self-interest that they have in perpetuating peace so as to continue profiting from the New Silk Roads. As for the social tensions that might ("naturally"?) arise within or between them—whether on the civilizational, state, or local levels—these could potentially be smoothed over through the continuous implementation of the proposal first presented by former Iranian President Khatami for a "Dialogue Among Civilizations" (Petito, 2004) in a manner that positively pervades through all societies via the "social reconstructionism" (Edupedia, 2018) objective of Critical Theory (Corradetti, 2017) if applied toward this end. From a structural-systemic perspective, the combination of each civilizational actor (and lesser one contained therein) respecting one another's socio-political sovereignty within their agreed-upon spheres (however determined) could pair with their economic self-interests in benefiting from BRI to make a Kantian peace theoretically possible between all players, not on the grounds of shared political systems as he thought, but in the fact that none of them have a problem with each other's sovereign decision to implement different ones (similar in spirit to the American motto "E pluribus unum", "out of many, one").

Russian Interests

All of the aforementioned directly concerns Russia, which is poised to play one of the leading roles in the multipolar-civilizational world order by virtue of its geostrategically central role and its strong influence across the supercontinent due to its status as a Great Power. The country's leadership has presided over a diverse civilization for nearly half a millennium since the incorporation of the Muslim Khanate of Kazan in 1552, and has maintained peace and harmony among its culturally diverse citizens and peoples (which collectively constitute "Russian civilization") through various means during the Imperial and Soviet periods; now, however, a new model influenced by the flexible principles of Dugin's "Fourth Political Theory" is arguably needed in order to sustain stability in the face of its growing Muslim population. Russian Grand Mufti Ravil Gainutdin predicted in early 2019 that Muslims will comprise approximately 30% of

the country's population in the next 15 years (Times, 2019), and while Article 282 is proactively used to thwart the spread of extremist ideologies in society that could be exploited to cause problems between this minority and the Orthodox Christian Slavic majority, the author's proposed social engineering solution from the previous section of this article represents a more comprehensive plan for responsibly dealing with this demographic trend and its possible consequences.

Then-Prime Minister Putin's article for Nezavisimaya Gazeta in January 2012 titled "Russia: The Ethnicity Issue" (Putin, 2012) elaborated on the state's envisaged plan for dealing with this and other related issues. The Russian leader clearly explained why he regards the West's "multicultural" model as a failure, but importantly noted that his country could never follow the "ethnic state" model that some of its European counterparts do because that would "make people destroy their homeland with their own hands". Putin explained that Russia has always existed as a multicultural civilization, united by a common cultural code and values, whose diverse members historically respected their countrymen's many differences; he pointed to the pivotal role that educational programs played in this, as well as the state's efforts to assimilate and integrate the countless minorities within its borders who didn't identify as Orthodox Christian Slavic Russians. He preached the need for people to identify more with a civic nationalism than an ethno-regional or religious one in order to maintain national unity, and he also proposed the visionary idea of "close integration across the post-Soviet space [being] a real alternative to uncontrolled migration". This last point would later be used as one of the justifications for the EAEU two years later.

That regional integration organization could eventually be instrumentalized for socio-civilizational ends on top of its official economic ones. In fact, it is regarded as forming the core of Russia's Greater Eurasian Partnership, which Putin sees as being brought about by the pairing of the EAEU with BRI in order to create the basis for eventually integrating Russia with the SCO, ASEAN, and one day even the EU; this would be the embodiment of International Relations' latest trend toward inter-bloc and civilizational connectivity. The conceptual mission is clearly influenced by Classical Eurasianists like Trubetskoy (Dugin, 2016) and Neo-Eurasianists like Dugin; however, it has been modified for the modern-day conditions of the emerging multipolar-civilizational world order by incorporating a prominent role for China's Silk Roads, specifically the Eurasian Land Bridge which is planned to transit the

country in facilitating East–West trade between China and the EU. Putin put a unique twist on Eurasianism by also proposing the creation of an Arctic-Siberia-Indian Ocean corridor while speaking at the Valdai Club in October 2019 (Putin, 2019a, 2019b), which follows in the tradition of Russia historically seeking access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, the body of water which can more accurately be described as the "Afro-Asian Ocean" for reasons of geographical and civilizational inclusiveness.

Although the North–South Transport Corridor (NSTC) that Russia is pioneering with Azerbaijan, Iran, and India could theoretically accomplish the goal of Russia's integration with the countries and civilizations along its southern periphery, that project has its practical geopolitical limits. These stem from the Islamic Republic's relative isolation as a result of the US' unilateral sanctions regime against it, as well as related secondary sanctions which put pressure upon its partners like India, which have led to New Delhi curtailing its enthusiasm for this initiative and investment within it in recent years. Nevertheless, considering the geostrategic imperative of improving Russia's North–South connectivity (with a view toward reaching the Afro-Asian Ocean) and its geo-civilizational one (in improving its physical linkages with Muslim countries as per its desire to maintain harmony with this growing civilization), the country cannot afford to risk losing these opportunities by betting on such an unreliable project as the NSTC. It is therefore in Russia's grand strategic interests (which in this context also includes civilizational) to take advantage of Putin's pronouncement from his keynote speech at the second BRI Forum in April 2019 (Putin, 2019a, 2019b) that his country envisages pairing the EAEU with BRI. From that strategic starting point, it can then pioneer an alternative solution that could replace the NSTC in the event that that project isn't ever completed or could complement it in the best-case scenario that it's successfully constructed.

This leads Russia in the direction of exploring the possibility to improve its connectivity with Pakistan, which is the largest Muslim-majority country near its borders and also doubles as the host of BRI's flagship project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). These two countries' interests have come closer together as a result of the shared security threats stemming from the "Islamic State" (ISIS) terrorist organization's expansion into Afghanistan in recent years; this spurred a rapprochement between them which has since led to the comprehensive development of relations into the military, commercial, and energy

spheres, among others. Remembering Russia's historical imperative of obtaining reliable access to the Afro-Asian Ocean, after the end of that landlocked country's conflict, the joint construction of a trans-Afghan trade corridor between Russia and Pakistan could finally fulfill that dream as well as also advancing inter-civilizational connectivity between them too. The Russian Empire always had its strategic sights set on what is nowadays Pakistan but was for centuries regarded simply as the western part of "India". What is known as the "Great Game" between the Russian Empire and the British one in the 1800s was driven by the former's desire to reach the Afro-Asian Ocean through modern-day Pakistan and the latter's efforts to stop it.

Unlike centuries past, Russia's historical geostrategic goals and its forthcoming civilizational ones could be attained not through conquest, but through the spirit of cooperation that increasingly characterizes relations between diverse actors (be they states or civilizations), and which is being facilitated by none other than its former rival China. This is because BRI's CPEC can be conceptualized as having the potential to serve as the "Zipper of Eurasia": it could expand CPEC along various geographic branch corridors prospectively referred to as CPEC+ , such as a northern route (N-CPEC+) through post-war Afghanistan to Central Asia en route to Russia, which could function as Moscow's long-desired outlet to the Afro-Asian Ocean. Furthermore, N-CPEC+ could achieve the goal of inter-bloc integration by linking the EAEU, SCO, and the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which in turn can facilitate the concept of a "Convergence of Civilizations" that corresponds with the previously described civilizational world order presently emerging.

The end result of this vision's successful implementation would be that Russia's East–West connectivity role would be complemented by a North–South one between itself and Islamic Civilization, as most prominently represented in this instance by the pivot state of Pakistan, which also doubles as the most important BRI participant of Russia's Chinese strategic partner with whom it is jointly working to gradually reshape contemporary International Relations. Altogether, Russia's improved linkages with Western Civilization (EU) and Eastern Civilization (China) through the Eurasian Land Bridge would be paired with improved connectivity between the Eurasian Civilization that it represents (EAEU) and the Muslim one (Pakistan) through the expression of Putin's

Arctic-Siberia-Indian Ocean corridor via N-CPEC+ , which could collectively boost the country's role as one of the most pivotal states in the emerging multipolar-civilizational world order.

Conclusions

With the research into the origin, present state, and future of multipolarity drawing to a close, it is worthwhile to review the main conclusions and their implications to ensure that they aren't lost on the reader. In what the author regards as their logical order, they are:

Historical Processes Are Non-Linear ("The Return of History"):

Fukuyama's thesis that the global victory of liberal democracy is inevitable has been disproven, thus throwing into doubt the conclusions of some of his philosophical predecessors who influenced his provocative proclamation about "The End Of History".

Civilizations Can Be Understood as Subjects of Study in Their Own Right ("Civilizationalism"):

Sorokin, Spengler, Huntington, and Dugin make the case, each in different ways and to differing degrees of directness, that civilizations are actors in their own right, which makes them worthy subjects of study, even if such research can only be carried out qualitatively without any (as yet?) agreed-upon quantitative method.

Liberal Democracy Isn't Democratic on a Global Scale ("Paradox of Democracy"):

Considering that the pure practice of democracy is that the "majority rules", then liberal democracy cannot be democratic, as it is not practiced in its originally envisaged form by the majority of the world, and is oftentimes spread by those that do through militant and subversive means.

Civilizations Are Converging Because of China's New Silk Roads ("Community of Common Destiny"):

Taking advantage of both economic globalization and the information-communication technology revolution as they accelerated after the Cold War, China is crafting a Community of Common Destiny that will link the world's diverse civilizations closer together than ever before.

The Orthodox & Islamic Civilizations Might Converge ("Ummah Pivot"):

The convergence of the Orthodox and Islamic Civilizations could occur, stemming from Russia's rapidly growing Muslim minority and its foreign policy outreaches to Muslim-majority states such as Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan ("Ummah Pivot"), in pursuit of its historical objective of obtaining reliable access to the Mediterranean Sea and Afro-Asian Ocean.

Inter-Regional & Eventually-Civilizational Regulatory Structures Are Needed ("Multipolar World Order"):

The trend toward inter-bloc and eventually-civilizational integration necessitates the creation of new regulatory structures, with it initially being possible for the SCO to fulfill this role in Russia's GEP prior to its expansion on a supercontinental scale and potentially even a global one via the "United Civilizations" (new UN).

Given these conclusions, the new knowledge brought to the table by this article includes further arguments about comparative decline of the West's civilizational influence over International Relations, as has been seen since the beginning of the century. The claim that civilizations are increasingly becoming more easily identifiable actors of geopolitical—and therefore historic—change in their own right is significant because it builds upon previous philosophical research into this topic. Moreover, the article uniquely addresses the envisaged inter-civilizational role of China's BRI and raises the question of whether the People's Republic can replace the US' hegemony over the world system, using mostly economic means aimed at regulating Huntington's feared "Clash of Civilizations" instead of militarily advancing this theory or reacting to it like America has been accused of doing.

On topics more directly related to Russian interests, the research proves that the country's society is changing as a result of demographic trends that are predicted to increase the influence of Islamic civilization within its cosmopolitan civilization. This does not predetermine a civilizational clash between Christians and Muslims on its territory, but could actually become a powerful soft power asset, facilitating Russia's ambitious connectivity initiatives associated with its Greater Eurasian Partnership; in particular, this may aid President Putin's plans to pioneer a corridor from the Arctic Ocean to the Afro-Asian ("Indian") one through some Muslim-majority countries which would therefore also fulfill a centuries-old strategic goal. Considering the importance of BRI as a catalyst for international change and the fact that Pakistan's CPEC is this initiative's flagship project, the proposal has been put forth that Russia should seriously consider the physical connectivity and inter-civilizational benefits of pairing its southern-directed Afro-Asian Ocean plans with Pakistan's northern-directed ones through N-CPEC+ .

The future of International Relations will likely be shaped to an influential extent by inter-civilizational relations (whether formalized or not), which makes it incumbent on Russia to seize the initiative by proactively cooperating with the large Islamic community along its southern borders in a tangible way that also yields economic benefits, hence the wisdom of accomplishing both objectives through the single initiative of N-CPEC+ . After all, the main idea behind its Greater Eurasian Partnership is to meaningfully cooperate with the supercontinent's diverse states, which makes this proposal fully in line with the country's foreign policy. In addition, its successful execution would also strengthen the trend of multipolarity by bringing together two formerly adversarial nations as well as showing the world that Christian-Muslim cooperation is possible on serious projects of mutual interest, all of which dovetails with the Chinese-promoted vision of a "Community of Common Destiny".

The authors acknowledge that they introduced several contentious claims in their article, but did so as a trial balloon for generating more concentrated discussions about them by others in forthcoming articles, should there be an interest in doing so. The scope of the present piece could not be enough to adequately address all the concerns about the points that were brought up, but such concerns were nevertheless casually touched upon to explain their worldview and predictions about the future of International Relations so as to contribute to the growing body of literature about the role of civilizations within it. By provocatively

introducing new ideas into the discourse—both those that are observations of others' works (such as Dugin's, Fukuyama's, and Huntington's, for instance) and unique ideas (such as the inter-civilizational impact of BRI and the proposal for N-CPEC+)—it is hoped that the reader will be inspired to think "outside the box" when contemplating the ongoing global systemic transition.

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Trends in Interstate Relations in Modern World Politics

Significant Improvement in Relations Between Russia and Japan, and Why There Was No Breakthrough

Sergey Sevastyanov

The first intergovernmental contacts between Russia and Japan date back to the end of the eighteenth century, and their history, being more than two centuries long, is marked by frequent conflicts and even wars (for more details, see, e.g., Kireev, 2017; Streltsov & Lukin, 2017).

The contemporary situation surrounding the South Kuril Islands arose in the 1950s, and since then the official positions of its key parties have undergone no fundamental changes. Russia believes that its existing border with Japan is a result of the Second World War and that there is no territorial dispute between the two countries. At the same time, Russia's supreme political leadership has stated at various times that it is ready to discuss peace treaty signing with Japan based on the Joint Declaration

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of 1956, provided that Japan has met certain conditions. According to the Joint Declaration, two of the islands (Shikotan and Habomai) are to be transferred to Japan once a peace treaty is concluded. Japan's position, while retaining its historical legacy of denying the legal grounds of Russian sovereignty over the South Kuril Islands, has been fluctuating to a greater degree due to the succession of its political parties in power and the changing factors of the international environment (Kireev, 2017; Sevastyanov, 2013).

As a part of these processes, in 2012, Russia's President Putin and Japan's Prime Minister Abe indicated their readiness to improve relations between two countries. While a significant shift in them took place in May 2016, when the leaders agreed to develop a "new approach" toward the resolution of the territorial issue and a comprehensive plan of economic co-operation.

As a result, the question of whether the two countries would manage to settle their territorial dispute became highly relevant in 2016–2018 years in both scholarly and practical terms. That also brought about a large number of publications by experts, whose opinions were divided. Some of them demonstrated cautious optimism to the effect that the "window of opportunities" for the settlement of the territorial issue would be in place until Prime Minister Abe left his office (Akaha, 2016; Kireev, 2017; Sevastyanov, 2017; Streltsov & Lukin, 2017; Togo, 2016), whereas others argued that the settlement was impossible (Brown, 2017; Katani, 2014) or undesirable for Russia (Tkachenko, 2016; and many others).

However, by 2020, it became clear that not much progress had been made and that both parties had largely retreated to their previous positions as regards their approaches toward the territorial dispute. In this paper, the author tries to find out why the specific efforts of the two respected and influential leaders have failed to bring about any successful resolution of this key problem and to identify the results that they have nevertheless achieved in the development of bilateral relations. In order to answer these research questions, we will comprehensively review the regular personal meetings between Putin and Abe, the fields of their interaction, and the mechanisms that they have developed in order to solve the problems at hand, as well as the foreign policy and domestic policy factors that have influenced the results of bilateral co-operation.

Methodology

The relations between Russia and Japan constitute a complex phenomenon, including the intertwining problems of ambiguous mutual perception, the personal attitudes of their national leaders, their international policy agenda, and domestic policy priorities. The Northeast Asia (NEA) as a region is characterized by high tension in security terms and unresolved historical and territorial issues; thus, for the purpose of this research, the author considers NEA as a regional security complex on the basis of Buzan's theoretical ideas (Buzan, 2003). In this regard, we should mention one extra-regional actor (the United States), which keeps strongly influencing the region's developments in the security and economic areas, while NEA is simultaneously affected by the transition of power from "stagnating" Japan to "rising" China.

Neorealists believe that the security order in NEA continues to be "instrumental," far from being "normative" or "solidarist" (Alagappa, 2003). At the same time, Pempel, a supporter of neoliberalism, believes that economic ties in the region "have ripened for co-operation" (Pempel, 2013). Acknowledging these features of NEA, it is possible to conclude that the proposed topic of this chapter cannot be studied on the basis of only one theoretical approach. For this purpose, it would be appropriate to apply analytic eclecticism, which suggests integration among the various scientific paradigms of the theory of international relations (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010).

This is especially relevant to this paper since, in order to study the "power structure" of the region, the author applies, on the one hand, certain theories of the neorealist paradigm (first and foremost the "balance of powers" theory [Waltz, 2008]), and, on the other hand, some theories associated with neoliberalism and constructivism. This choice is due to the fact that, although the problems related to the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan have developed and continue to exist within the "power framework" of neorealism, the two countries' leaders have tried to influence their resolution relying mainly upon the economic and intangible components of international relations.

The author has used the neoliberal theory of neofunctionalism (Haas, 1958) in order to evaluate plans of economic interaction and also relied on some principles of neoinstitutionalism to analyze the additional institutions established for the purpose of accelerating bilateral co-operation in politics, economics, and humanitarian matters. As regards constructivism,

Wendt believed that the interests of actors were not constant and could be transformed in their relations with friendly states capable of going beyond their customary role (Wendt, 1992). The author used these ideas in order to analyze the activities undertaken by the two leaders for the purpose of strengthening their trustful relationship and expanding contacts between the peoples of Russia and Japan.

Results

The Initial Steps and Premises for Improving Russian-Japanese Relations

Even before Vladimir Putin and Shinzo Abe first took their leadership roles in Russia and Japan (in 2000 and 2006, respectively), both leaders had proposed to open a new era of bilateral relations, and they re-united their efforts to this end in 2012. When Shinzo Abe again became Prime Minister in 2012, he stated that improving relations with Russia would be one of his foreign policy priorities, a position he subsequently confirmed in the course of his numerous visits to Russia and meetings with the Russian President on the margins of international summits. Vladimir Putin, in his turn, believes that the territorial dispute with Japan can only be settled on the basis of a compromise, or a draw ("hikiwake" in Japanese). However, that would be hard to achieve, since Japan wants to get all four South Kuril Islands at once, whereas Moscow is ready to discuss the peace treaty issue and subsequent resolution of the territorial dispute pursuant to the Joint Declaration of 1956. According to this declaration, only two islands (Shikotan and Habomai) are to be transferred to Japan once a peace treaty is concluded.

Due to some coincidence of the two national leaders' political choices, over eight years bilateral relations between Russia and Japan have significantly improved. Many causes have contributed to this result, but, in our opinion, three time-limited factors relevant to the personal qualities of Putin and Abe have played an important role: the high level of political goals, mutual personal trust, and their high popularity within their respective countries (for more details, see Sevastyanov, 2017).

From the Formulation of a "New Approach" Toward the Resolution of the Territorial Issue to the Occurrence of Differences Between the Parties' Positions

In May 2016, Putin and Abe agreed to develop a "new approach" toward the resolution of the territorial issue and a comprehensive plan of economic co-operation on the basis of the "eight-point plan" proposed by Abe with respect to development, primarily in the Russian Far East (RFE), in such areas as: energy, industry, health care, agriculture, urban development, medium and small businesses, high technologies, and humanitarian exchanges. At the same time, Abe declared that he would appoint a special minister for economic co-operation with Russia—a cabinet position that had no analogues in Japan.

In December 2016, Prime Minister Abe received President Putin during his official visit to Japan, which helped to more specifically determine ways to strengthen ties in politics, economics, and humanitarian matters. Despite that these goals were not new, their implementation for many years had been impeded by the differences between the two countries in terms of geopolitical approaches and domestic policy priorities. Putin said about it at his (and Abe's) news conference as follows: "Japan has lived without close co-operation with Russia for 70 years, and we lived that way as well. Could we further live without it? Yes, we could. Would it be the right solution? No" (Putin & Abe, 2016). Therefore, he confirmed that a positive change in the nature of the relations was the result of the political choice made by the two state leaders rather than a predestined event.

Since 2015, Vladivostok has annually hosted the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF), which has become an important international platform for discussing the problems and prospects of RFE development. In September 2017, its participants included—in addition to the Russian President—the Presidents of the Republic of Korea and Mongolia and the Prime Minister of Japan, so on that occasion the forum resembled a mini-summit of NEA. In his report, Putin noted that 80% of foreign investments in the RFE during a two-year period had come from China and indirectly expressed his dissatisfaction with the low level of co-operation with Japan (EEF, 2017). Abe, on the contrary, stated that Japan had achieved some success in implementing its "eight-point plan" in the RFE. He also supposed that, if the two countries kept moving at the same pace, Russian-Japanese relations would in two years achieve a

level sufficient for the signing of a peace treaty, thus assuming, in a way, that the territorial dispute could be settled in 2019.

When evaluating the negotiations of the two leaders in Vietnam on November 10, 2017, "on the margins" of an Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, Putin for the first time sent contradictory signals concerning the territorial dispute. On the one hand, he confirmed that treaty signing was the most important part of his and Abe's plans, but on the other hand, he paid attention to two issues which he had never before identified as primary focuses (Putin, 2017). First, he indicated that Japan should, in the context of the peace treaty, explain what obligations in the field of security it would have to comply with as a partner under its security treaty with the United States, and that it might take years for treaty negotiations to be completed as long as this issue was unclear.

Second, Abe had previously tried to convince Putin that they should conclude the treaty personally, by virtue of their historical mission. However, when meeting the press, the Russian President stated that a decision to conclude any peace treaty could not be reserved to political leaders and that the desire of the two countries' peoples to develop their relations and to resolve all problems was key to the achievement of this goal. However, this principle is very difficult to implement in practical terms, and its unlikely success should be preceded by a qualitative change in social relations between two peoples that would require a long period of time. The experience of successfully resolving conflicts and territorial disputes in various regions demonstrates that such a resolution has been, in virtually all cases, brought about due to the efforts of state leaders rather than under the pressure of the public, according to the top-down rather than bottom-up principle (Ripsman, 2012). In this regard, Putin himself successfully resolved territorial disputes with China and Norway by acting according to the top-down principle, without trying to influence the public opinion of the Russians.

In May 2018, Abe took part in the St. Petersburg Economic Forum and in the opening of the Cross-Years of Russia and Japan in Moscow and stated that many interesting events in politics, science, and culture would be offered to Russians during that period. Taking into account that, as well as Abe's words about high rates of economic interaction, it became obvious that he planned to reach the peak of co-operation with Russia in the summer of 2019 by inviting the Russian President to visit Japan during that period simultaneously with participation in a G20 summit. In

addition, Abe appointed an ambassador-level Japanese diplomat in order to supervise the implementation of the rich program of the Cross-Year.

In March 2017, a meeting of the Japanese and Russian ministers of defense and foreign affairs was held in Tokyo for the first time in more than three years, in the 2 + 2 format as was requested by Russia. A further round of those negotiations was held in Moscow in July 2018, but the differences were in no way reduced. Russia continued to object to Tokyo's plans to deploy US-made anti-missile systems in the Japanese islands, but the Japanese representatives explained that those were defense systems that posed no threat to Russia. This difference in the interpretation of each other intentions evidence the neorealist security structure of NEA and the lack of trust between the parties in this area. In this regard, Moscow's position can be explained by the fact that the leaders of the USSR and then Russia, when trying to build more friendly relations with the West in the 1990s, received numerous promises from their counterparties that NATO would not expand to the East, but those promises were not kept.

2018 saw several rounds of negotiations regarding the implementation of joint business activities on the South Kuril Islands, while the Russian approach toward those negotiations firmly relied upon three principles: no prejudice to its legal position that the South Kuril Islands lawfully belonged to Russia as a result of the Second World War; the commercial feasibility of any projects; and assisting the social and economic development of the Sakhalin Region.

At the EEF-2018 session in Vladivostok, Abe stated again that Japanese-Russian relations were making unprecedented progress and emotionally called on Putin to reaffirm "…our aspiration [to conclude a peace treaty] in front of an audience. If we fail to do it now, then when will we do it?" (EEF, 2018). After this Putin said that "a simple thought has just come to me": "Let's conclude a peace treaty before the end of this year, without any pre-conditions [and then we will continue to settle our disputes in a friendly manner]." That was a powerful psychological blow to Abe, because such an approach toward treaty signing had never been discussed at any negotiations.

In conclusion, the Russian President said that he was not joking "about signing a treaty without pre-conditions. We can indicate it in the treaty that we will work on settling all the issues and we will do it someday." According to Putin, "we need to create an environment in which we could solve these problems comfortably … and I hope that someday this

will occur." He stated twice that the solution could be found "someday," thus Moscow was not in a hurry. Besides, in his response, Putin demonstrated that Abe chose the wrong place and too persistent manner for discussing this sensitive bilateral problem. At the same time, his words indicated hardening of the Russian position at the negotiations.

A poll conducted in Japan after those events showed that about 75% of the Japanese were against the signing of any peace treaty with Russia without pre-conditions. Further research revealed that two thirds of the Japanese favored prior settlement of the territorial dispute and only 19% admitted that it was possible to sign the treaty first (RIA Novosti, 2018).

Japan's Approval of Concessions and Further Hardening of the Russian Position

In September 2018, Shinzo Abe was elected Chairman of the ruling LDP for the third time and became entitled to retain the office of Prime Minister until September 2021. Given that the dialogue on the territorial issue stagnated during 2017–2018, Tokyo decided to offer concessions to give momentum to the process. After his meeting with Abe on the margins of the East Asia Summit in Singapore in November 2018, Russian President confirmed that Japan was ready to return to discussing the Soviet-Japanese declaration of 1956, although the official position of Tokyo so far had provided for a different sequence: first the transfer of four South Kuril Islands to Japan, and then the signing of a treaty. In this regard, he made an important note that the declaration contained many things that were still subject to discussion and agreement (Kommersant, 2018). Thus, in 2018 Vladimir Putin was not very enthusiastic about Japan's compliance with this condition of the 1956 declaration, although in many of his statements in 2012–2016 he had called it fundamentally important for treaty signing (Togo, 2016). Nevertheless, at the G20 summit in Argentina in December 2018, Abe and Putin agreed to appoint special representatives for the purpose of treaty conclusion.

In the course of his visit to Moscow on January 22, 2019, in order to develop at least a preliminary "formula" leading to the signing of the treaty, Abe, at his negotiations with Putin, noted that 2018 had become a turning point in bilateral relations and expressed the hope that 2019 would be a year of their rapid enhancement. However, the news conference following the negotiations clearly demonstrated that this hope would not be fulfilled. Putin, as usual, mentioned some positive developments in

bilateral economic co-operation, but saw no qualitative shift in this area. As regards peace treaty negotiations, he stated that long and hard work was still to be done in order to find a solution acceptable to the public in both states (Putin & Abe, 2016).

During their negotiations in Osaka on June 29, 2019, Abe and Putin paid particular attention to the results of the Cross-Year of Culture in terms of enhanced exchanges between the peoples of the two countries and agreed to continue this trend in 2020–2021 by holding a Year of interregional and twinning exchanges. But no progress in peace treaty discussions was made.

The next meeting between Putin and Abe was held in Vladivostok in September 2019 at the fifth EEF summit (in fact, in 2016–2019 years the Japanese Prime Minister took part in four EEF summits; only then Mongolian President Battulga could match him in this regard). In his report, Putin, like in previous years, spoke about the plans of the Russian government and mechanisms for accelerated development of the RFE (EEF, 2019). In his speech, Abe underlined that it was his 27th meeting with Putin and, by referring to this unprecedented number, confirmed the close nature of their relationship, considering this, in the spirit of Wendt's constructivism, as a key tool for improving the bilateral relations.

Then, he described the participation of Japanese companies in RFE business projects, whose total number had already exceeded 200. Specifically, Abe mentioned the agreement reached in June 2019 regarding the participation of two Japanese businesses (Mitsui and Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation) in Novatek's project Arctic LNG-2; they invest more than $3 billion in it, and this makes Japan an important participant in this Arctic project. In fact, discussion is underway regarding a plan to involve Japanese companies in the construction of an LNG transhipment facility in Kamchatka, where LNG will be supplied from the Arctic as part of Novatek's projects Yamal LNG and Arctic LNG-2 (Sevastyanov & Kravchuk, 2020). Within the framework of neofunctionalism, Haas described such examples where co-operation in one sector enables the development of co-operation in neighboring areas, as a "spill-over effect."

In conclusion of his speech, Abe, although less emotionally than before, called on Putin to enter into a peace treaty without delay, in accordance with their common historical mission and the 1956 declaration (EEF, 2019). Responding to that, Putin noted that Russia wanted it as well, but the declaration involved many questions going beyond the

relations between Russia and Japan. First of all, this concerns the security area, in which Moscow cannot ignore the positions of, and Japan's obligations to, third countries, including the United States.

Putin made similar comments at his end-of-year news conference in 2019 where he restated that Moscow and Tokyo had to hold negotiations regarding guarantees to the effect that no new US attack systems would appear on the Japanese islands. He also reiterated that any solution of the territorial issue should satisfy the public opinion of both countries and that a very long period of time would be needed to achieve this goal (Putin, 2019).

Therefore, the Japanese concessions in late 2018 did not result in any modification of the Russian approach toward treaty conditions, and that became clear to Tokyo. In May 2020, Japan included in its "Diplomatic Bluebook" a reference to its "sovereignty over the South Kuril Islands," thus reinstating its traditional position that no treaty could be signed until "the belonging of the four islands" (Kunashir, Iturup, Shikotan and Habomai) was determined. The 2019 version of this document, however, contained a softer statement to the effect that Japan intended to settle its territorial dispute with Russia (Kommersant, 2020). Thus, that change in 2020 amounted to an admission that Abe's policy aiming for a quick resolution of the territorial issue had failed.

In its turn, Moscow confirmed that the issue of sovereignty over the disputed islands was essentially closed in the amendments to the Russian Constitution, including the one proposed in February 2020, according to which "the alienation of any Russian lands" was prohibited. President Putin had backed these amendments, and they have been finally approved by the all-Russian note on amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation on July 1, 2020.

In September 2020, Prime Minister Abe retired early for health reasons and after that two of his political protegees held the post of Prime Minister (Yoshihide Suga and then Fumio Kishida). During their tenures, they traditionally stated that signing a peace treaty with Russia have been a priority for them, but these statements did not go beyond rhetoric. At the same time, Tokyo emphasizes that signing of this treaty must be preceded by solution of the territorial dispute, while Moscow insists that firstly two countries should develop mutual trust and friendly relations, including joint realization of and Japanese financial investments in economic projects at Southern Kuriles, and only after that it will be possible to discuss the signing of a peace treaty (Lenta.ru, 2021). It is

obvious that such approaches of the other side do not suit either Japan or Russia.

The Geopolitical Framework of Russian-Japanese Relations

The regional security complex of NEA is greatly influenced by two global powers (the United States and China) that have entered a period of harsh confrontation affecting all aspects of global, regional, and bilateral relations. These processes also have a serious restraining effect on the prospects for economic and political co-operation between Russia and Japan, including the signing of their peace treaty. In this regard, China plays a largely indirect role, to the extent that the strengthening of political ties with Moscow is part of Japan's hedging strategy against any possible formation of an anti-Western China-Russia coalition. Moscow is in a similar situation, where the strengthening of co-operation with Tokyo is important in order to insure the risks of geo-economic overdependence upon China (Streltsov & Lukin, 2017).

The United States have, for many decades, exerted significant influence within the Asia–Pacific both on Japan, for which it has always been the main partner, and on the security interests of the Soviet Union and then Russia. In this regard, Moscow has always considered Washington as the leading actor in the US-Japan security alliance and the US military bases on Japanese soil as the principal threat to Russia's security in this part of the world (Sevastyanov, 2013). Contemporary relations between the United States and Russia are at a very low level as well, being aggravated by such problems as NATO's expansion to the East, the withdrawal of Washington from most arms control treaties, plans to deploy or expand national missile defense systems in Eastern Europe and NEA (including Japan), and more.

There have been some differences between several recent US presidents as regards their policy with respect to the Russian-Japanese relations. Barack Obama openly hampered their development, and Tokyo was forced to limit its contacts with Moscow. Next US President Trump did not object to the development of political ties between Russia and Japan, while pressing Tokyo to pay more money to base US troops in Japan. However, given the existing Western sanctions against Russia, President Trump disapproved any expansion of Japan-Russia economic ties, especially the involvement of Japanese companies in energy projects in the RFE and in the Arctic. As for the incumbent US President Biden, he made

serious efforts to return bilateral relations with Japan to the highest level, and the last two Japanese Prime Ministers (Suga and Kishida) eagerly responded in kind, thus dramatically overshadowing Japan's relationship with Russia and making further progress in bilateral ties with Moscow in the current geopolitical environment impossible.

Conclusion

At the end of the chapter, answers to its key research questions are stated.

1. Over recent years, Japanese Prime Minister Abe and Russian President Putin made a serious attempt to raise the level of trust and improve relations between the two countries to a significant extent by developing their co-operation, predominantly along the economic and humanitarian lines; these steps should have created conditions for the signing of a peace treaty and the resolution of the territorial dispute.

As a result, the relations in the field of politics and security have been improved only formally, and the resumed $2 + 2$ meetings have become a forum where both parties primarily expressed discontent with respect to the acts and plans of each other in this area. In this regard, Tokyo could not agree with the demand of Moscow, concerned with the growing security threats on the part of Washington, to guarantee that no US attack weapons would be deployed in Japan, because, in accordance with the balance of powers theory, bilateral security treaty with the United States is much more important to Japan than any possible settlement of the territorial dispute with Russia.

Economic co-operation in the RFE has, in Abe's opinion, made significant progress. In this regard, a number of Japanese projects have been initiated in the region in accordance with the neofunctionalist "spillover effect," although that was not enough for Putin, who evaluates any success against the benchmark of Russia-China interaction. Any further participation of Japanese businesses in major RFE projects, especially in the energy sector, will be limited due to counteraction on the part of the United States, while the development of joint business activities on the South Kuril Islands is inhibited by the uncertainty of their legal status.

According to the postulates of neoinstitutionalism, to enhance efficiency in the key areas of co-operation (negotiating a peace treaty, interactions in economics and humanitarian matters), special representatives with high cabinet or diplomatic ranks were appointed by each country. They have played a positive role in developing co-operation in

the economic and humanitarian areas. As regards the institution of special representatives for peace treaty issues, Moscow has used it as a platform where ideas that were previously expressed by Putin, such as the proposal to sign a peace treaty before the settlement of the territorial dispute, later has been stated by the foreign minister Lavrov as imperative elements of Russia's negotiating position.

Staying within the framework of the theory of constructivism, Abe and Putin however disagreed as to who should become the principal driver capable of improving the bilateral relations significantly. Abe believed it to be the historical mission of strong leaders trusting each other, whereas Putin preferred to reserve the leading role to the peoples of the two nations. Taking this into consideration, the Cross-Years of Culture were launched on the initiative of Tokyo. However, international experience, including that of contemporary Russia, demonstrates that it is national leaders who are the most efficient actors in settling conflicts and territorial disputes.

During recent years, therefore, Abe and Putin, relying on the co-operation areas offered by the theories of neoliberalism and constructivism, have made a well-conceived attempt to significantly improve Russian-Japanese relations and to resolve the territorial dispute firmly embedded in the predominantly neorealist structure of NEA security complex. Thus, that has proved impossible due to the bitter confrontation among the key actors (USA–RF, USA–China, China–Japan), as well as Japan's high dependence on Washington in terms of security.

2. Nevertheless, the eight-year period of active efforts has resulted in a significantly improved quality of bilateral ties. Trustful relations have been established between the leaders of Russia and Japan, who have met 27 times over the period; the 2 + 2 format of meetings, which is characteristic of friendly countries, had become operational; the number of joint projects in the RFE region and even in the Arctic has increased; and humanitarian exchanges have expanded.

In the complicated geopolitical situation of NEA, Russia is generally satisfied with the achieved level of its relations with Japan, taking into account that their further enhancement would be constrained by acute competition between Tokyo and Beijing and the fact that the latter is Moscow's principal partner both in the region and globally. In connection with this, and against the background of the worsening relations between the United States and Russia, it has become obvious to Russia that the settlement of the territorial dispute (which is not a priority for Moscow)

on the basis of its prior negotiating positions will not yield meaningful economic gains to it, but involves serious political risks. For this reason, starting from late 2017, Moscow's position at the negotiations began to "drift" from the achievement of a compromise based on the provisions of the 1956 declaration to the advancement of additional conditions that would made the resolution of this problem unlikely.

The activities of Abe and Japan's Foreign Ministry in the spring of 2020 demonstrate that they admitted the failure of their policy in gaining control even over two of the South Kuril Islands—a goal that was an important part of the Prime Minister's political agenda during his term in office. At the same time, he has managed to achieve the significant improvement of political and economic relations with Moscow, which is important to Tokyo in the context of its regional competition with Beijing.

As expected, (Sevastyanov, 2017), the Japanese Prime Ministers following Abe demonstrated other strategic priorities and replaced the friendly political and economic course with respect to Russia, which was largely based on the personal vision of Abe, with a more ordinary for Tokyo neutral one toward Moscow. As for the territorial dispute with Russia, its discourse returned to a more familiar track, while its possible solution is postponed for an indefinite period, if not forever.

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Theoretical Perspectives on BRICS: What Kind of an International Institution Is It?

Valery Konyshev and Alexander Sergunin

BRICS has always been an "uncomfortable" or exceptional case for IR (International Relations) theorists. Theories which they have tried to apply to the study of BRICS as an institution or its international activities worked poorly or did not work at all. Scholars who want to apply Western theories to BRICS often have to justify this against claims that BRICS is *sui generis*, and that empirical knowledge of BRICS' current policies is far more important to understand this grouping's international behavior than any theoretical sophistication. However, as we know from the history of science, it is useless and counterproductive to contrapose

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theory to empirical knowledge; ideally, they should go hand in hand, and support each other.

It should be noted that very few works try to interpret BRICS theoretically as an embryo of an alternative economic and political world order (2014b; De Coning et al., 2015; Fulquet, 2015; Konyshev et al., 2017; Sergunin, 2020; Sergunin & Gao, 2018; Sergunin et al., 2020; Stuenkel, 2014a).

Numerous theoretical questions remain unanswered: Is BRICS just another institution of interstate cooperation which fits into a system of already existing structures, or is it a fundamentally different mode of international relations that can seriously change the present-day world politics? What drives BRICS countries' policies? Can the BRICS group become an alternative to the domination of the Western powers, which is formalized in the present system of international institutions and regimes? Will this institution provide fundamentally new conditions which may lead to the development of international cooperation as opposed to power politics pursued by the U.S. and its allies? Can BRICS be considered a new mechanism of global governance, or is it nothing more than a temporary/short-lived intergovernmental arrangement?

Without setting out to attack all the above questions, this study examines how the main IR theories interpret the BRICS phenomenon. The goal is not only to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of these theories, but also to identify their heuristic potential for studying such a complex phenomenon as BRICS.

This study is based on the assumption that BRICS is a promising integration association which so far has no formalized institutional or organizational nature and which is therefore best understood as an intergovernmental discussion forum rather than a full-fledged international organization. However, BRICS has every chance of becoming an influential institution of global governance, albeit playing by rules different from those imposed on the international system by the most powerful Western states.

It should be noted that among many IR theories dealing with the study of international institutions, we selected only those that, on the one hand, are the most influential within their respective IR paradigms and, on the other, represent the most interesting conceptual interpretations of BRICS.

Neorealism

The power transition theory (PTT), first proposed by A. F. K. Organski (1958), is the most popular theoretical approach to the study of the BRICS phenomenon among neorealists. PTT is based on the assumption that changes in power balance in world politics happen systematically. This theory believes that conflicts and wars are normally the results of the growing influence of states competing with the dominant powers. In this regard, all states are divided into two groups: those which support the status quo, and "revisionists." Powerful and influential states, such as the U.S., enjoy the advantages of the established world order and fall into the status quo category, while states dissatisfied with their place and role in the international relations system are considered revisionists. According to PTT, the latter favor radical changes in the existing international order. In this sense, Russia and China are the primary candidates for the revisionist powers, while Brazil, India, and South Africa are perceived by PTT as the states with "moderate" revisionist ambitions (mostly of a regional character, although Brazil and India have some global aspirations such as their intention to become permanent members of the UN Security Council) (Carafano, 2015; Cheng, 2016; Granholm et al., 2014, pp. 10, 26–29).

While revisionist powers are viewed as a source of destabilization for the international system, and their activities are automatically associated with negative consequences, the dominant (status quo) states perform protective functions within the system, and thus their behavior is conversely considered positive. Paradoxically, from this point of view, cases such as the NATO military intervention in Kosovo (1999) which led to the final collapse of Yugoslavia, U.S. ballistic missile defense system deployment in Europe, NATO's eastward expansion, Western sponsorship of a series of "color revolutions" in the post-Soviet space, bullying Iran, American military assistance to Taiwan, the U.S. navy's regular demonstration of the free navigation principle in the South China Sea, etc., cannot be seen as "revisionist" acts and do not pose a threat to Russia, PRC, or anyone (Carafano, 2015).

Despite its popularity among neorealists, PTT is the subject of criticism both from the neorealist and competing IR paradigms. This theory was more applicable to the period of the Cold War, when two superpowers were interested in maintaining the status quo given the threat of mutual

destruction in the event of nuclear war. The present-day international relations system, including its structure, is still in its formative phase. In this context, PTT can explain little about the BRICS states' behavior.

Moreover, PTT does not take into account the existence of a third type of state: reformist states, which do not fully agree with the existing international relations system, but prefer not to radically change the "rules of the game." Instead, they try to adapt these rules to dynamic changes in the world order to make them fairer and more comfortable for all members of the international community. Quite often, these states do not behave as revisionists, but rather they favor the status quo by demanding that the previously established "rules of the game" and international legal norms should be observed. For example, the BRICS countries firmly oppose any attempts to revise the UN Charter regarding the use of military force as well as the principles of inviolability of state sovereignty and noninterference in the internal affairs of sovereign states (as opposed to the Western doctrine of "humanitarian intervention") (Konyshev et al., 2015; Sergunin, 2010).

At the same time, the BRICS countries are unhappy with the current order of things, in which a small group of highly developed countries dominates and tries to impose its rules on the rest of the world. These countries would like to change the existing world order, but in an evolutionary rather than radical (revolutionary) way, which justifies considering them reformist rather than revisionist powers (Hansen & Sergunin, 2015). The BRICS countries are also striving to cultivate an image of themselves not as spoilers or revisionists, but as reformers of the existing unfair international relations system. For instance, they are trying to create alternative financial institutions that would help prevent a new global financial and economic crisis (Mikhailenko, 2016).

As recent BRICS documents show, this forum also assumes responsibility in other areas of world politics—the environment, the fight against the negative effects of climate change, international terrorism, transnational organized crime, cybercrime, and the reform of leading international organizations, including the UN (BRICS, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). In general, the BRICS countries demonstrate their willingness to build a more efficient model of the world order, trying to do this in a non-confrontational way (Mikhailenko, 2016).

To sum up, if PTT supporters want this theory to better fit into the present-day realities and retain its explanatory power, they need to revise

the typology of states they use and supplement it with a new ("reformist") type of powers.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberal IR theorists believe that the BRICS phenomenon can be better explained by the soft power concept. They underline that, in contrast with the Cold War era, when many countries preferred to rely on hard (military) power, nowadays soft power instruments are more effective. The neoliberals note that the soft power strategy is attractive to BRICS countries for a number of reasons. First, it can help them overcome their negative image in the international arena, the image that resulted from their systematic involvement in a series of international conflicts (Russia versus Georgia and Ukraine; China versus its neighbors in the South China Sea; India versus Pakistan and China; South Africa versus Angola and Namibia). Second, the soft power arsenal can also be helpful in diversifying BRICS countries' methods of geopolitical and geoeconomic expansion and making these methods more effective.

Some specifics in the BRICS countries' interpretation of the soft power concept should be noted. First and foremost, the BRICS States interpret soft power differently from its initial meaning advanced by Joseph Nye, who defined soft power as the power of attraction. In reality, however, BRICS (especially Russian and Chinese) soft power policies are often dominated by pragmatic interests rather than the aim to be attractive for other countries. For this reason, such soft power strategies do not always take into account international partners' preferences. In Nye's view, this is often unacceptable to BRICS countries' partners and may even provoke a hostile reaction to their soft power initiatives (Nye, 2013).

As some experts rightly note, BRICS' reading of the soft power concept is much broader than Nye's one. Nye (2004) believed that the soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture, its political values, and its foreign policies which should be attractive to foreign partners. BRICS theorists, however, tend to include into the soft power problematique everything which cannot be attributed to the hard (military) security agenda. In other words, for BRICS countries, the soft power concept is synonymous to the soft (non-military) security concept which includes not only diplomatic and socio-cultural components (as according to Nye) but also other elements such as, for example, economic and/or financial power (2013b; Sergunin & Karabeshkin,

2015; Tsygankov, 2013a). The latter was unacceptable for Nye, who believed that economic and financial instruments can be tools of coercion and payment rather than attraction.

Furthermore, for BRICS theorists, soft power is an umbrella concept which covers other closely related concepts—public diplomacy, peoples' diplomacy, the humanitarian dimension of politics and NGO-diplomacy. Among soft power instruments, economic and financial tools, cultural cooperation, ethnic diasporas, and educational and religious institutions are preferable methods for the BRICS countries. The BRICS states established special bodies for soft power implementation: for example, China's Confucius Institutes, Russia's Rossotrudnichestvo (agency for cooperation with compatriots abroad), "Russian World," Gorchakov and Andrei Pervozvanny foundations, and others.

It should be also noted that BRICS' interpretations of the soft power concept are rather instrumentalist. For these states, the soft power potential is just one of many tools to protect their national interests, which should be used pragmatically and, if necessary, in combination with other methods, including coercive ones.

In these countries, soft power policy is controlled and directed to a large extent by the government, and this makes it less flexible and effective. In Nye's (2013) opinion, Russia and China made a mistake by underestimating the importance of civil society's institutes and initiatives; for instance, on the other hand, in the U.S. the main sources of soft power are universities, NGOs, and cinema and pop culture rather than the government. According to Nye, the state should multiply the effect of the civil society's activities rather than limit them.

However, it would be wrong to depict BRICS soft power strategies as a complete failure. Along with some shortcomings, these strategies have certain achievements and competitive advantages. For example, BRICS managed to successfully demonstrate the inclusive nature of its cooperative format. The BRICS countries are located on different continents and have different political systems, levels of economic development, histories, and cultural traditions. However, BRICS shows that different countries are able to overcome old conflicts, negative historical experiences, and mutual misperceptions, and successfully cooperate in a mutually beneficial way.

Moreover, India, China, and Russia have long histories and unique cultures which have substantially enriched world culture and still remain very attractive for other nations.

Generally speaking, BRICS countries use soft power in their own way, trying to avoid copying the Western experience and going beyond Nye's "narrow" interpretation of the soft power concept. In practical terms, they stick to an instrumentalist and pragmatic approach to the use of soft power which is oriented to the promotion and protection of national interests rather than accounting for international partners' preferences.

At the same time, BRICS countries have a tremendous soft power potential which could strengthen their international positions if it is properly used. On a number of occasions, BRICS countries demonstrated successful use of the soft power arsenal: China's economic, financial, and cultural expansion in South-East Asia, Africa, and Latin America; Beijing's "Belt and Road" initiative; Russia's rather successful integrationist projects in the post-Soviet space (Eurasian Economic Union, Collective Security Treaty Organization), etc.

The Peaceful Coexistence Concept

Historically, the peaceful coexistence concept was and is one of the distinctive characteristics of Russia's, India's, and China's foreign policies, although Moscow and New Delhi have not used it in their official vocabularies since the end of the Cold War. It was developed—in various forms—by representatives of neoliberalism, globalism, and neorealism.

This concept dominated Soviet foreign policy thinking not only in the times of its author Vladimir Lenin but also in the post-World War II period, including Mikhail Gorbachev's "perestroika," (restructuring). However, it turned out that with the end of the Cold War the concept was no longer interesting to the Russian political class, partly because of its Marxist-Leninist connotations, and also because in the 1990s Moscow aimed to integrate Russia to the world capitalist economic and political systems rather than coexist with them. The concept itself thus disappeared from Russian doctrinal documents.

China, in contrast with Russia, never abandoned the peaceful coexistence concept and elevated it to the status of a fundamental international relations principle after the 1999 NATO military intervention in Kosovo. China suggested peaceful coexistence as an alternative concept to American "neo-interventionism."

In India, the peaceful coexistence concept was transformed from its initial version (*Pancha Chila* or "Five Principles") into the *Vasudhaiva*

Kutumbakam concept ("the whole world as one family") which rejected the very idea of hegemony (Gupta & Chatterjee, 2015).

In formal terms, Brazil's foreign policy doctrinal documents stopped mentioning the peaceful coexistence concept in the 1960s; however, the state's real international policies were in line with this principle (Abdenur, 2015).

In South Africa, the peaceful coexistence principle in the form of the *Ubuntu* concept was formally acknowledged in the 2011 White Paper on foreign policy. This concept was defined as "respect for all States, nations and cultures," while the understanding of national security was based on the acknowledgment of the priority of human security (Mandrup & Smith, 2015).

It should be noted that, presently, the peaceful coexistence concept has a different meaning as compared to the Cold War era, as the antagonistic confrontation between the two sociopolitical systems—capitalism and socialism—has ended. The BRICS countries do not aim to defeat the global capitalist system as was the case with socialist states in the past. They just want integration into the world economy and global governance systems on an equal basis. In geopolitical terms, Russia has lost its superpower status and cannot compete with other poles of power as it could previously, while other BRICS countries try to avoid global confrontation with the U.S. altogether.

The updated interpretation of the peaceful coexistence concept by the BRICS countries can be summarized as follows:

> countries with different economic and sociopolitical systems can coexist peacefully;
> the dominance of one or several countries in world politics is unacceptable;
> preference should be given to the soft power tools, while military force should be used only as a last resort, on the exceptional level;
> despite the numerous divergences with the West, the BRICS countries have a broad cooperative agenda with the U.S., EU, Japan, NATO, and other Western-led institutions that includes weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation; arms control and disarmament; conflict prevention and resolution; fighting international terrorism and transnational crime; environment protection and climate change mitigation; civil protection; outer space and world ocean research; humanitarian and cultural cooperation, etc.

It should be noted, however, that the peaceful coexistence concept cannot embrace the entire complexity and diversity of BRICS and its international activities. This partly sheds light on the motivation and certain features of "the five" in the international arena, but it cannot give a full explanation as to why these countries have united into a group, and what long-term strategic goals they pursue. It also cannot explain where the limitations of the peaceful coexistence policy are, beyond which the BRICS countries are willing to resort to force, and what factors induce them to take such sometimes risky steps (De Coning, 2015; Sergunin, 2016).

Postpositivism

There are two main postpositivist schools that try to explain the BRICS phenomenon from different theoretical viewpoints.

Status theories. Being rooted in psychology, status theories are also used by social sciences, including IR theory. They are particularly useful for explaining those cases in which the BRICS countries' policies seem emotional, irrational, and unpredictable. Such policies do not fit into the theories built on the principles of rationalism, including the PTT, peaceful coexistence, and soft power concepts. Status theories address policy motives related to self-esteem, reputation, honor and dignity, fame, sympathy, and other emotional and psychological categories that introduce an element of unpredictability into the political behavior of leaders, social groups, and states.

In terms of status-seeking strategies, states seeking to improve their international standing may try to pass into a higher-status group of states (mobility strategy), compete with the dominant group (competition strategy), or achieve preeminence in a different domain (creativity strategy) (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010). The choice of one type of strategy over another depends on the openness of the status hierarchy as well as the values of the status-seeker and established powers.

For example, since the end of the Cold War, the BRICS states have embarked on liberal democratic reforms to enter the economic and political institutions of the West, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the Council of Europe, and the G7. At the same time, the closed nature of organizations such as the OECD, EU, or NATO prompted China and Russia to move to a strategy of competition (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010).

On the path of creative strategy, Russia is trying to rely on the neoconservative ideas of collectivism, spirituality, and orthodoxy as opposed to the individualism, materialism, and liberal morality of the West (Sergunin, 2014). Creativity is also produced by charismatic leaders at the level of "grand" diplomacy. For example, due to these qualities, President Vladimir Putin has managed to achieve international fruition of his September 2015 plan to destroy Syrian chemical weapons and thus avoid U.S. military intervention in this country. The "New Silk Road" concept of another charismatic leader, Xi Jinping, was perceived as a Eurasian economic integration project that could be mutually beneficial for all its participants.

Despite their attractiveness, status theories still leave a number of important questions unanswered. For example, the question about status indicators (which should help in measuring a state's international rating) should be clarified. It is also important to clarify the question of when status becomes more important than material interests. In terms of content, the question of which instruments—peaceful or coercive—the state uses to change its status is of great importance. As for the internal aspects of the status-seeking strategies, it is necessary to examine the extent to which domestic political institutions can influence the growth or reduction of the feeling of status inconsistency/underachievement in their society. These questions status theories have yet to answer.

Theory of "Global Regionalism." BRICS is unique because it does not represent a typical geographical region consisting of a set of states that are geographically close to each other and form a single historical, economic, political, and socio-cultural community (or at least seek to create such a community). According to the theory of "new regionalism" (Lagutina, 2009; Lagutina & Vasilieva, 2012; Acharya, 2014; Hettne et al., 1999; van Langenhove, 2011), BRICS belongs to the category of the so-called "global regions" which are based on functional, network-type, identity, multi-actor, and multifactor principles rather than on geographic proximity. Such regions have a cross-cutting nature: they easily permeate various levels—local, regional, and global—to create a completely different type of world politics. In addition to BRICS, such global regions include, for example, the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Mercado Común del Sur, the Eurasian Economic Union, and the Arctic.

Supporters of the global regionalism theory believe that during its existence BRICS has managed to form a common transnational agenda.

Among the most important areas of the BRICS countries' cooperation are the following: improvement of the global financial system; development of industrial and commercial relations; energy security; cooperation in the field of climate change and environmental protection; joint research projects; the fight against cyber terrorism; and coordination of these countries' activities in international organizations, including the UN and its specialized agencies.

In support of this global agenda, BRICS created a number of its own financial institutions, such as the New Development Bank with a capital of $100 billion and a Contingent Reserve Arrangement ($100 billion as well). In 2013, China has launched the New Silk Road (or Belt and Road) initiative. At first, it was aimed at the development of a land transport corridor through the territory of Eurasia. It was then supplemented by sea routes from East Asia to Europe, both in southern (through the Suez Canal) and northern (Northern Sea Route) directions. In the end, the project has acquired a truly global dimension, incorporating the Asia–Pacific region and South America, where one of the BRICS members is located (Brazil).

At the same time, critics of the global regionalism theory note that in the framework of BRICS, a truly unified agenda has not yet emerged. With rare exceptions, most of the cooperative ties within BRICS are bilateral, not multilateral. In addition, there are numerous differences between the members of this international group. Particularly, there are serious disagreements between India and China, including territorial disputes between them, that regularly lead to direct military-political confrontation. Opponents of this theory believe that it is too early to speak of BRICS as a whole community comparable with other integration entities. For this reason, BRICS is not yet able to play a truly influential role either in world politics or the global economy.

Conclusions

Various IR theories offer their explanations of the BRICS phenomenon, including the sources of this assembly, motives for its member-states' behavior, and the role that this group plays in present-day world politics and the global economy. Speaking about the relative value or explanatory power of each of these theories, it seems that they often complement

rather than exclude each other. Together, on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach, they form the foundation for studying a complex politico-economic phenomenon such as BRICS.

The newest IR theories (postpositivist schools) tend to hold that, along with the pursuit of purely material and pragmatic interests (hedging financial and economic risks in the era of globalization, developing joint industrial and infrastructure projects, counterbalancing Western expansionism, solving various common problems ranging from environmental protection to fighting international terrorism and transnational crime), the BRICS countries are actively using this forum to strengthen their positions on the world stage and elevate their international statuses.

In their status-seeking policies, the BRICS member-states apply various methods—from the mobility and competition strategies to different types of creativity. These foreign policy strategies have had some effect, with the exception of Russia whose international reputation has suffered because of the Ukrainian crisis. In general, most of the BRICS countries have managed to create an image of themselves as constructive and peaceful states, preferring cooperation to confrontation while respecting international rules and their international partners. Even for Russia, participation in BRICS has proved to be very useful from a reputational/status point of view. Since the BRICS countries did not support Western sanctions against Moscow, Russia managed not only to avoid complete international isolation, but also to actively influence international developments, both regionally and globally.

In general, BRICS has managed to shape its image as an alternative model of world order based on principles and rules of interstate cooperation which exclude discriminatory and hierarchical types of relations. It is too early to say that a fundamentally new type of international relations or international institution has been created within the BRICS framework, but, undoubtedly, some positive experience has been accumulated by this association. It is safe to assume that in the foreseeable future the BRICS phenomenon will remain a subject of the closest attention from IR theorists.

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Russia and the Arctic Council: Toward a New Cooperative Agenda?

Alexander Sergunin

Russia's policies toward and within the Arctic Council (AC) is not a very popular theme in international scholarship. Some analysts believe that Russia was included into the Council as a full-fledged member simply because of its formal status of a coastal Arctic state but, in practical terms, it had little effect because of the country's economic and technological backwardness and poor financial resources (especially in the 1990s and early 2000s) (Chater, 2017; English, 2013). This group of experts suspected that Moscow joined the AC in a hope to get additional channels of assistance to the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), rather than to contribute to solving problems and further development of the entire Arctic region.

Other group of Western specialists criticized Russia for its passive/reactive rather than proactive policies within the Council and its

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units, the lack of initiatives and fresh ideas (Kankaanpää, 2012; Nord, 2017; Thiele, 2018). These Western authors were especially critical of Russia for the temporary suspension of its only Indigenous peoples' organization represented in the AC (RAIPON) which heavily criticized Moscow for ignoring aboriginal ethnic groups' problems in the AZRF (Digges, 2012; Nord, 2016; Rohr, 2014; Wallace, 2013).

With the start of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 and the imposition of Western sanctions on Russia, many experts questioned Moscow's willingness to cooperate in the AC framework and the Council's ability to remain an effective regional cooperative platform (2015b; Borgerson & Byers, 2016; Exner-Pirot, 2015a; Huebert, 2014; Klimenko, 2015). Very few foreign scholars viewed any positive dynamics in Russia's AC policies over the last quarter of the century (Chater, 2016; Graczyk & Koivurova, 2015).

For natural reasons, the Russian discourse on Moscow's relations with the AC is much richer than the foreign one and Russian authors are more sympathetic with the Kremlin's policies on and within the Council.

One group of Russian scholars studied the AC's history and its role in Arctic politics (Gavrilov, 2017; Lyapchev, 2016; Mikhailova & Mikhailov, 2014; Sakharov, 2015; Tikhonov, 2018; Voronchikhina, 2019; Voronkov, 2014; Voronkov & Smirnova, 2017). Another group of authors examined the AC's relations with other regional and global institutions dealing with the High North (Gavrilov, 2017; Vasiliev, 2016; Voronkov & Smirnova, 2017). Some Russian analysts reflected on the future of the Council, including its potential transformation into a full-fledged international organization (Tikhonov, 2018; Voronkov, 2014; Voronkov & Smirnova, 2017; Zhuravel, 2020). Finally, some experts critically examined Russian policies within the AC by identifying success stories and failures of Moscow's diplomacy in this area (Mikhailova & Mikhailov, 2014; Sakharov, 2015; Tikhonov, 2018; Voronchikhina, 2019; Zagorsky, 2015; Zhuravel, 2020).

Based on the past research, three main research objectives have been identified: first, to examine Russia's academic and political discourses on the AC; second, to study Moscow's policies on and within the Council in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis; finally, to discuss Russia's possible future strategy with regard to the Council, including its agenda during the Russian AC presidency in 2021–2023.

Russia's Academic Discourse on the Arctic Governance Regime

There are three International Relations (IR) schools with clear identities—neorealism, neoliberalism, and globalism—and numerous ones of a 'hybrid' nature. Three former schools are based on classical IR theories; the latter ones try to combine various research approaches in a rather pragmatic/eclectic way.

Neorealism. The vision of Moscow's policies in the Arctic through a Russian neorealism perspective is based on the following principles:

National interests are a key category. Among them, the economic and strategic interests are most important ones.

Emphasis is placed on the need to ascertain Russia's sovereignty over the Arctic territories, natural resources, and maritime routes.

International law is mostly seen as an instrument to resist any foreign encroachments' on the Russian sovereign rights in the region and keep control over the Arctic spaces/resources/transport communications (Ovlashenko & Pokrovsky, 2012).

A regional governance regime is only possible as a temporary compromise between the major (coastal) Arctic powers (A5)—Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States.

In contrast with the neoliberals, the neorealists are quite pragmatic as regards the international institutions such as the UN, AC and Barents-Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). They do not believe that these international fora are the components of the global or regional governance system whose existence is sharply denied by them. They suggest using these bodies first and foremost to protect Russia's national interests in the region (like other member states do) rather than to promote some abstract universal/cosmopolitan values.

Neoliberalism. According to this school, the Arctic (particularly, its natural resources and sea routes) is a common heritage/asset for humanity that should be exploited together with other countries and in a very careful way (Leshukov, 2001; Zagorsky, 2011). International law and institutions should be in the focus of Arctic politics and be a basis for an emerging regional governance regime. The neoliberals believe that subregional institutions such as the AC and BEAC are parts of the global and regional governance systems and should be designed and function accordingly. For them, the AC and BEAC should avoid discussion of security

issues; rather, environmental issues and the "human dimension" (Indigenous people and other residents of the Arctic regions) should be their main priorities.

The proponents of the neoliberal approach point out that the military significance of the Russian North has dramatically decreased in the post-Cold War period. The region is, in their view, unable to play the role of a Russian military outpost. The neoliberals hope that the Arctic will be further opened up for international cooperation to become a Russian "gate-way" region that could help Russia to be gradually integrated in the European and world multilateral institutions. They believe that, due to its unique geoeconomic location, the AZRF has a chance to be a "pioneer"/"pilot" Russian region to be included into the regional and subregional cooperation. They think that a particular priority should be given to the issues that unite rather than disunite regional players—trade, cross-border cooperation, transport, environment, health care, Arctic research, Indigenous people, people-to-people contacts, and so on. In this respect, they view the Northern Dimension partnerships as well as AC, BEAC, and Nordic institutions' programs as a helpful framework for such cooperation (Leshukov, 2001; Zagorsky, 2011).

Globalism. The Russian globalists go further than neoliberals in terms of possible participation of Russia in international cooperation in the High North. They believe that globalization and regionalization are worldwide processes and Russia cannot avoid them. According to this school, the Arctic is a place where these two tendencies are intertwined (Dodin, 2005; Kharlampieva & Lagutina, 2011; Perelet et al., 2000; Vasilyeva & Chen'sin, 2011). On the one hand, the Arctic is the subject of a dialogue between different regional and global players. On the other hand, there is a clear tendency toward making a new international (or even global/transnational) region in the Arctic where Russia could find a mission of its own. The globalists think that Moscow should not push onto the regional agenda sovereignty-related issues and, instead, should promote cooperative and cosmopolitan concepts and ideas.

The globalists support most of the neoliberal ideas, such as the vision of the Arctic as a humankind's "asset" or "treasury," the development of a governance mechanism in the region, conflict prevention and resolution on the basis of the international law, protection of Indigenous peoples, climate change mitigation, sustainable development strategies, establishment of regional arms control regime and CSBMs, etc.

Most radical globalist versions believe that an international legal regime similar to the Antarctic Treaty one should be established and a comprehensive agreement should be concluded on the Arctic to make it a "region of peace and cooperation" (Dodin, 2005; Kovalev, 2003; Perelet et al., 2000; Sivakov, 2009). Similar to the Antarctic legal system, a proposed new Arctic regime should prohibit any economic and military activities in the region. Only subsistence economies of Indigenous peoples of the North and research activities should be allowed in the High North. Some globalists suggest establishing an UN-based governance regime in the Arctic which should replace the existing national sovereignty-oriented model (Kharlampieva & Lagutina, 2011).

"Hybrid" schools. Along with two extremes—neorealism and neoliberalism/globalism—there are numerous "hybrid"/moderate schools in the Russian academic/expert community. Differing by their specific theoretical postulates these schools, however, share some common principles with regard to the existing and emerging Arctic governance system (Gureev, 2011; Vylegzhanin, 2003):

The moderates believe that Russia should be a responsible international actor who behaves on the international arena in line with principles of international law and international commitments. According to this school, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Ilulissat Declaration (2008), AC-sponsored agreements (particularly, on search and rescue [SAR] operations [2011], oil spill response [2013], and Arctic science cooperation [2017]), directions and recommendations, International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Polar Code, etc., should be the legal basis for Russia's Arctic strategy.

On the other hand, Russia should be firm in defending its legitimate rights and national interests in the region, including the definition and expansion of the outer limits of the Russian continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean; control over the maritime routes; fighting poaching and smuggling in the AZRF; modernization of the armed forces deployed in the High North, etc.

The moderates do not share the neoliberal/globalist view of the Arctic as the humankind's "common treasury" and they do not believe that it is realistic to establish an Antarctic Treaty-type legal regime in the High North (even in the distant future). The moderates point out that statements which mention the Arctic's deep seabed (or Area), continental shelves, and high seas in the same breath as the common heritage of mankind carry the risk of confusion. Deliberately or not, by omitting

to distinguish thoroughly between the different maritime zones, they may create the impression that the whole (marine) Arctic is considered a common heritage of mankind.

However, the moderates favor creating a flexible regional governance system in the Arctic based on the pragmatic combination of hard and soft law. The moderates even do not oppose establishing some elements of supranational governance in the region, like, for example, in the case of the Central Arctic Ocean (CAO) which is currently beyond the national sovereignty jurisdiction and where any economic activities—be it extraction of hydrocarbons or fishery—are presently impossible while the local environment is extremely fragile and vulnerable. For instance, under the moderates' pressure, the Russian government agreed to first sign a declaration on commercial fishing ban in the CAO in 2015 and later a binding agreement on this issue in 2018.

Similar to the neoliberals and globalists, the moderates suggest making a full use of the existing international institutions engaged in the Arctic affairs—the UN (and its specialized bodies, such as the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), IMO, UN Environmental Program (UNEP), etc.), AC and BEAC. However, they do not believe that these institutions will be able to exercise real supranational governance in the region in the foreseeable future. The moderates, however, think that some institutional reforms are possible. For example, they suggest empowering the AC with more rights, including the right to conclude binding agreements (similar to the SAR, oil spills response and science cooperation documents), and the further institutionalization of the Council with the aim to transform it from a discussion forum to a full-fledged intergovernmental international organization (Vylegzhanin, 2013).

To sum up the Russian theoretical debate on the Arctic, it should be noted that, regardless of its strong polarization (neoliberal-neorealist/globalist dichotomy), a compromise and moderate schools have emerged that formed a mainstream of the Russian foreign policy thought. This mainstream has managed to avoid xenophobic/extremist views on the Arctic international relations system and develop more or less moderate and well-balanced concepts.

The Russian Political Discourse
on the Arctic Council

Along with the academic/theoretical debate, there is expert/political discourse on the AC which is less pluralistic and more consolidated than the IR one. It should be noted that very important changes are happening in the Russian thinking about the AC: its future, its functions, and the role in the regional governance system. Prior to the Ukrainian crisis and the rise of tensions between Russia and the West, Moscow's official position and the Russian expert discourse favored transformation of the AC from the intergovernmental discussion forum to a full-fledged international organization (with formal charter, institutional structure and power to conclude binding agreements).

For example, in his 2013 article, the then Russian ambassador for Arctic Affairs and Senior Arctic Official (SAO) Anton Vasiliev noted: "In my view, we embarked on the path of turning the Arctic Council from a 'forum' into a full-fledged international organization, although we will move in this direction gradually, in stages, with full respect for the positions of all member states - after all, all decisions in the Council are taken by consensus" (Vasiliev, 2013). At the 2013, Kiruna AC Ministerial Meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov noted that the Council is on the way to becoming a full-fledged international organization, referring to the fact that two binding agreements were concluded under its auspices (Lavrov, 2013).

Many Russian experts on Arctic geopolitics, law, environment, economy, and humanitarian issues also believed (and still believe) that the lack of formal status and proper legal powers is a serious hindrance to further development of the Council as a key structural element of the regional governance system (Bekyashev, 2015; Inyakina, 2019; Konyshev & Sergunin, 2011; Levit, 2014; Tikhonov, 2018). In their view, the Council should be gradually, step by step, further institutionalized and finally transformed to a "normal" international organization with a proper legal status.

However, with the outbreak of a "new Cold War" in East–West relations, both the Kremlin and the Russian expert community serving the government realized that any plans to make the AC an intergovernmental international organization seem unrealistic. All Council member states introduced economic sanctions against Russia. Five Arctic countries, being NATO member states, canceled military-to-military contacts

with Russia, initiated military build-up in the North and increased their military activities, including land and sea military exercises, air, and sea patrolling in the Arctic region and so on. Generally, mutual trust between Russia and the rest of the AC member states was significantly undermined. As mentioned above, Russian activities in the Council's framework decreased in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis. It took some time to identify some areas where cooperation between Moscow and other Arctic countries was still possible and delineate them from the conflictual issues.

For the above reasons, Russian diplomats and politicians stopped speaking about providing the AC with new legal powers and its transformation from a "discussion forum" to a full-fledged international organization. For example, the 2016 Russian Foreign Policy Concept calls only for "strengthening interaction in the Arctic Council's format" without suggesting any institutional changes in the AC (Putin, 2016). The new Russian Arctic strategy reflected in two documents of 2020 favors "securing for the Arctic Council the role of a key regional institution coordinating international activities in the region" (2020b; Putin, 2020a) but again does not propose any modifications in its organization and functions. In his speech at the 2019 Rovaniemi AC ministerial meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov approved the initiatives, such as a continuation of the Project Support Instrument, drafting an AC Strategic Action Plan, and better coordination between different Council's units and with other regional and subregional institutions, but did not insist on providing the AC with new legal powers (Lavrov, 2019).

There can be at least two explanations why Russian leaders changed their mind about the Council's status. First, in the current situation of relative conflict, it is unrealistic to expect that non-Russian AC member states (especially the U.S.) would agree to create a new full-fledged regional intergovernmental organization where Russia would have an equal standing with Western states. Second, as some Russian experts (Sboichakova, 2016; Voronkov, 2014; Voronkov & Smirnova, 2017) believe, under the current circumstances, the AC, being an informal and flexible institution, can be more efficient and preferable cooperative platform that a formalized organization with rigid structure, rules and procedures. For example, as "classical" international organizations (e.g., UN and OSCE) demonstrate, if there are antagonisms between member states, in turbulent times the whole work of these institutions can be blocked. In contrast with these "traditional" institutions, the AC not only "survived" the crisis in the Russian-Western relations but also made

some progress in developing Arctic cooperation. Some Russian experts even called the AC a "new-type multilateral organization" which is more powerful than just an intergovernmental forum but less institutionalized and formalized than "classical" international organization (Voronkov, 2014; Voronkov & Smirnova, 2017).

One more important change in Russia's perceptions of the Council's future prospects relates to its role as a regional security provider. In the pre-Ukrainian era, both Moscow officials and the expert community believed that with time the AC should include the military security problematique to its mandate and become a sort of an Arctic OSCE (Konyshev & Sergunin, 2011; Wilson, 2016). However, for the same reasons as in the case of plans to turn the Council into an international organization, Moscow had to abandon the idea of including military security issues on the agenda of this forum. According to present-day Russian assessments, the Council should retain its role as an international body dealing only with the soft security issues, such as socioeconomic problems, environment, conservation of biodiversity, climate change mitigation, maritime safety, search and rescue operations, local communities, connectivity and social cohesiveness of Arctic regions, Arctic research, etc. (Lyapchev, 2016; Sboichakova, 2016; Voronchikhina, 2019; Voronkov, 2014; Voronkov & Smirnova, 2017).

Post-Ukrainian Developments

The Ukrainian and Syrian crises have negatively affected the Arctic cooperation in general and AC activities particularly. The US and EU introduced economic sanctions against Russia, including some offshore energy projects in the AZRF. NATO stopped all military-to-military contacts. SAR exercises under the auspices of the AC and BEAC were suspended for a while. During Canada's AC presidency, Canada and the U.S. skipped some working group and task force meetings in Russia, such as meetings in April 2014. The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov skipped a Council ministerial meeting in May 2015 in Iqaluit, Canada (the Russian delegation was led by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment) (Sergunin, 2015). Canada then canceled a planned AC event in Ottawa amid concerns that Russian officials would attend.

It is no surprise that Russian activities in the AC have significantly decreased. The average size of Russia's delegation during the Canadian

presidency was reduced to the minimum (one representative), although other Arctic states also reduced their representation in the AC meetings as compared to the pre-crisis period (Chater, 2016; Voronchikhina, 2019).

At the same time, Russia was rather active in terms of initiation of AC projects. During the Canadian presidency, Russia sponsored 21 projects, which is fewer than the U.S. (32), Canadian (29), and Norwegian (29) cases, but more than the Danish (11), Finnish (8), Swedish (5), and Icelandic (3) contributions (Chater, 2016). It should be noted that most of Russia's projects were circumpolar in scope (although four were domestic in scope, focused on contaminants and shipping). Russia also sponsored projects in a wider range of areas, compared to its earlier interest in economic development. Russia rather effectively collaborated with the US in the Council. For example, the US sponsored two projects on environmental protection in the Russian Arctic. The US and Russia co-sponsored eight projects. Russia co-sponsored four projects with Canada despite Ottawa's most tough position on Moscow in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis.

During the U.S. presidency (2015–2017), Russia preferred to keep a rather low profile in the AC. Its average delegation size was kept on the same level as under the Canadian chairmanship (1,0). It should be noted, however, that other AC member states were also relatively passive in terms of their representation in the Council's meetings because the Arctic was not very high priority for Washington (especially under the Trump administration). Their average delegation size remained almost the same as under the previous presidency: the US (12.0), Canada (10.66), Denmark (8.33), Norway (7.0), Sweden (6.66), Finland (5.33), and Iceland (4.0) (Voronchikhina, 2019).

However, Russia was a leader in terms of supporting Council-sponsored projects (6) while other countries (even as the US chaired the AC) were less active in this area: Canada, Norway, and Sweden supported four projects each, while Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and the US funded only three projects each (Voronchikhina, 2019). Moreover, Russia sponsored four more projects on a separate basis (Voronchikhina, 2019).

Moscow supported the US initiative to establish an Arctic Coast Guard Forum in October 2015. Now the ACGF operates as an independent, informal, operationally driven organization, not bound by treaty, to foster safe, secure, and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic. All Arctic countries—Canada, Denmark, Finland, Island, Norway,

Russia, Sweden, and the United States—are members of the forum. Chairmanship duties of the ACGF rotate every two years in concert with the AC Chairmanship.

Notably, the US and Russia co-chaired the Scientific Cooperation Task Force, which in July 2016 agreed the text of a third legally binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the AC, which was formally signed at the 2017 Fairbanks AC ministerial meeting. This development is particularly worth noting considering that the US co-chaired the SCTF along with Russia at the time of a general freeze in relations between the two countries following the start of the Ukrainian crisis. As Śmieszek and Koivurova note (2017), despite very serious tensions between the former Cold War adversaries in other parts of the world and the sanctions imposed on Russia by all other AC member states, it was the policy of the US during its AC chairmanship to diligently and consistently maintain the Council as a platform of dialogue, collaboration, and engagement with Russia.

The US and Russia also initiated the discussion on the need to develop a long-term strategic plan for the Council, the idea which was endorsed by the SAOs at their meeting in October 2016. These discussions were continued under the Finnish (2017–2019) and Icelandic (2019–2021) chairmanships.

Russia supported major initiatives of the Finnish presidency. For example, Moscow prioritized the preservation of the Arctic's biodiversity and its unique and extremely vulnerable ecosystems, as well as the prevention of sea and ground pollution and an improvement of practical cooperation among the Arctic states as regards joint response measures.

Russia favored expanding coastguard cooperation within the Arctic Forum framework. For example, the Russian Coast Guard took an active part in the multilateral Polaris exercise staged in the Gulf of Bothnia in late March and early April 2019.

Russia also supported Finnish initiatives in areas such as enhancing the region's resistance to global climate change, minimizing man-made environmental impacts, preserving biodiversity, developing the telecommunications infrastructure, and expanding the cooperation with the Arctic Economic Council, which was seen as a promising venue for attracting investment and promoting business and innovation (Lavrov, 2019).

Both President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov expressed their support to the program of the Icelandic Chairmanship (2019–2021).

They underlined that Russia has common interests with Iceland in the region, primarily in the sea, including the promotion of marine bio-economics and green shipping, mitigating marine refuse, including micro-plastics, and ocean acidification (International Arctic Forum, 2019; Lavrov, 2019).

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE: RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE ARCTIC COUNCIL' DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

The fact that the AC faced a series of challenges—of both endogenous and exogenous characters—became obvious even before the Council's 20th anniversary. The internal challenges stemmed from the evolving and constantly growing workload of the Council, which led to problems with overlapping and prioritizing work across AC working groups and task forces, funding the ongoing projects and new initiatives, and regarding the effective implementation of the AC recommendations by the member states (Supreme Audit Institutions of Denmark, Norway, the Russian Federation, 2015).

Many Russian and international experts (Exner-Pirot, 2015a; Graczyk & Koivurova, 2015; Klimenko, 2015; Lyapchev, 2016; Sakharov, 2015; Śmieszek & Koivurova, 2017: 17–18; Voronkov & Smirnova, 2017; Zhuravel', 2020) believed that a remedy for internal AC problems could be a comprehensive vision of Arctic cooperation to guide the work of the Council and bring to it more continuity between rotating chairmanships. Moreover, such a vision—as well as establishing more stable financing mechanisms—could make the Council more secure in view of shifting political priorities and radical changes on Arctic states' domestic political scenes. The 2013 AC "Vision for the Arctic" pledged to "pursue opportunities to expand the Arctic Council's roles from policy-shaping into policy-making" (Arctic Council, 2013). The statement missed, however, any further details and the debates on the prospects for the development of the AC's long-term strategic plan continued until the Icelandic AC chairmanship. The latter was able to finalize the work on the AC strategic plan which started under the Finnish chairmanship (2017–2019) and adopt it at the May 2021 Reykjavik ministerial meeting. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov promised that the Russian presidency will do the best in terms of implementation of this plan.

Moscow started preparations for its AC chairmanship well ahead. As for Russia's AC presidential agenda President Vladimir Putin was the first who tried to identify its main priorities as early as in 2019. At the 5th International Arctic Forum "The Arctic – a Territory of Dialogue" in St. Petersburg (April 9, 2019) he noted: "Priorities for our chairmanship include vitally important themes for the Arctic development: the development of environmentally safe technologies in the spheres, such as industry, transport and energy" (International Arctic Forum, 2019).

One month later, at the 11th AC Ministerial Meeting (Rovaniemi, May 7, 2019) Mr. Lavrov, on the one hand, emphasized Moscow's intention to ensure continuity between the Icelandic and Russian chairmanships: "We will ensure the continuity of the general Arctic agenda when the council chairmanship is transferred to Russia in 2021. We will pursue the implementation of all the initiatives originated under Reykjavik's chairmanship" (Lavrov, 2019).

On the other hand, Lavrov explained what specific priorities are planned for the Russian presidency agenda for 2021–2023: (1) sustainable socioeconomic development of the Arctic region on the basis of environmentally clean technologies; (2) development of renewable sources of energy; (3) promoting a circular economy; (4) environment protection; (4) climate change mitigation; (5) social cohesiveness and connectivity in the region; (6) improving the well-being of the people living in the Arctic, especially the indigenous peoples, preserving their languages, cultures and traditions; (7) science diplomacy, and (8) joint educational projects, including further support for the University of the Arctic (Lavrov, 2019).

In the course of Moscow's preparatory work, Russian top-ranking officials' clarified Moscow's specific priorities for the Russian AC chairmanship: (1) further development of Arctic shipping, including the NSR; (2) development of telecommunications in the region; (3) conservation of biodiversity; (4) increasing bio-security (anti-epidemic measures); (5) nuclear waste treatment; (6) organization of the Arctic indigenous peoples' summit; (7) Arctic cruise and coastal tourism; (8) establishment of an international Arctic Hydrogen Energy Applications and Demonstrations station "Snowflake" (in the polar Ural), and (9) creation of an International Arctic Development Fund (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2020).

According to the presidential advisor Anton Kobyakov, during the Russian chairmanship 38 various events will be organized under the Council's auspices. In addition, 50 other events are scheduled in Russia

itself. 17 federal agencies, 11 members of the Russian Federation, and 12 universities and NGOs will take part in organization of these events (The Government of the Russian Federation, 2021).

At the May 2021 AC ministerial meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov delivered a program of the Russian AC chairmanship. He told that cross-cutting priority of the Russian AC Chairmanship will be "Responsible Governance for Sustainable Arctic" through promoting collective approaches to the sustainable development of the Arctic, environmentally, socially and economically balanced, enhancing synergy and cooperation and coordination with other regional structures, as well as implementation of the Council's Strategic Plan, while respecting the rule of law (Arctic Council, 2021).

The Russian program includes the following priority areas:

People of the Arctic, including Indigenous Peoples. The sustainable development of the Arctic is largely determined by the quality of human capital. The Russian Chairmanship's main focus will be given to enhancing sustainability, resilience and viability of the Arctic communities, climate change adaptation measures, improving the well-being, health, education, quality of life of the Arctic inhabitants, as well as ensuring sustainable socioeconomic development in the region. Promotion of scientific, educational and cultural exchanges, tourism and contacts between peoples and regions will also be high on its agenda. Special attention will be given to the preservation of linguistic and cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, to the youth cooperation across the borders.

Environment protection, including Climate Change. Taking into account the rapid climate change in the Arctic, most notably accompanied by degradation of permafrost and the icy gas hydrides emissions, the Russian Chairmanship will continue supporting efforts to mitigate the negative effects of climate change, increase adaptation of life activities and ensuring resilience to its consequences, preservation and restoration of the environment, sustainable use of natural resources, maintaining the health of the Arctic ecosystems, including marine environment, preserving biodiversity, in particular, the Arctic migratory birds. In the context of further development of the region it is important to take into account not only the vulnerability of the Arctic to climate change, but also its long-term contribution—due to its natural, energy and transport resources and solutions—in facilitating the transition to a low-emission economy

and, accordingly, to the implementation of the goals of the Paris Agreement. Equally topical task is to promote the introduction of advanced sustainable innovative technologies into the transport sector, industry, infrastructure and energy, including the use of renewable energy sources to improve the standards of living of the Arctic inhabitants.

Socioeconomic Development. A key condition for the well-being and prosperity of the Arctic is its sustainable economic development. The Russian Chairmanship will be further promoting constructive economic cooperation in the region, developing of reliable energy infrastructure, sustainable transport routes, including shipping, telecommunication systems, food production sector, improving the conditions for sustainable investment flows, encouraging innovations and entrepreneurship, business financing.

Strengthening of the Arctic Council. The Russian Chairmanship plans to continue supporting the establishment of the AC as the leading format for international Arctic cooperation, improving its work, increasing the effectiveness of its Working and Expert groups, the Secretariat, as well as developing mechanisms for financing the Council's activities, including its projects and programs, implementing decisions and recommendations, as well as encouraging the dialogue and interaction with the Observers to provide their meaningful and balanced engagement in the Council's activities. It intends to further intensify collaboration of the Arctic Council with the Arctic Economic Council, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, the University of the Arctic. Among the priorities of the Russian Chairmanship—promoting international scientific cooperation, in particular, exploring the possibility to conduct an Arctic Council scientific expedition to the Arctic Ocean (Arctic Council, 2021).

Conclusions

Several conclusions emerge from the above analysis:

From the very beginning, Russia was actively involved in the AC activities. Russia was one of the initiators and active negotiators of all three binding agreements (SAR, oil spills prevention, science cooperation) concluded under the AC auspices. Moscow supported all major Council endeavors in areas such as sustainable development, energy security, environment protection, climate change mitigation, conservation of biodiversity, maritime safety, connectivity of Arctic regions, telecommunications, sustainable fisheries, well-being of local communities (including

Indigenous peoples), and so on. Russia favored further Council institutionalization and strengthening its role in the regional governance system.

At the same time, there were serious changes in Russia's thinking about the AC in the post-Ukrainian era. Moscow no longer wants to transform the Council into a full-fledged international organization, preferring to keep the AC as an informal and flexible intergovernmental mechanism which is better designed for difficult times than "classical" international organizations. Russia has also abandoned its previous plans to bring hard (military) security problematique onto the Council's agenda and currently it favors retaining the AC's competencies only in the soft security sphere.

As regards Russia's AC presidency program, on the one hand, it ensures continuity of the Finnish and Icelandic agendas and, on the other hand, it focuses on sustainable development of the Arctic region based on the use of environmentally safe technologies. Moscow will try to implement the newly born Council's Strategic Plan and streamline the AC's organizational structure. At the same time, it is unlikely that the Russian chairmanship will initiate any radical institutional reforms.

In general, Russia will likely use its AC presidency both to promote its national interests in the High North and increase the Council's role in an emerging regional governance system. The recent start of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine and the subsequent decision of Western members of the Arctic Council to boycott events planned by Moscow in the framework of its presidency can impede the Russian program's implementation.

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The UN and the Middle East Settlement—Mission: Impossible

Alexander V. Krylov

The Middle East continues to be the most conflict-ridden region of the world, as it has been since the end of the Second World War. The Arab–Israeli conflict is the oldest struggle—with the most difficulty in its resolution, that the world has ever seen. The current problem stems from the status of that part of historical Mandatory Palestine that was under the British control in 1922–1948; it was during these years that the confrontation between Palestine's principal communities—the Arabs and Jews—reached its peak. And preserving the territorial integrity of Mandatory Palestine while at the same time maintaining the co-existence of the two communities was simply unrealistic. Immediately after the UN was established in October 1945 as the successor to the League of Nations (the body that had transferred the Palestinian mandate to the United Kingdom in 1922), it set about becoming actively involved in the settlement of the escalating conflict between Jewish and Palestinian armed

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groupings. The British government did not impede the UN's peace-keeping activities, and in February 1947, it announced its decision to submit the Palestinian question to the UN General Assembly.

On 29 November 1947, the UN General Assembly came to a seemingly reasonable decision, enshrined in Resolution 181/II, on the division of Mandatory Palestine into two states, the Arab State and the Jewish State. This Resolution was supported by the majority of the UN members at the time, with 33 countries voting in favour, 13 voting against, and 10 abstaining. However, the very fact that a Jewish state had appeared in the land that was considered Dār al-Islam—that is, traditional Muslim land under Muslim religious law since the time of Caliph Umar, who conquered Palestine in 638—prompted an extremely negative reaction in the Arab world. Overnight, the inter-ethnic conflict between Jews and Palestinian Arabs had been transformed into an international conflict: when the State of Israel was proclaimed on the night of 14–15 May 1948, the militaries of seven Arab states launched a large-scale offensive against Israel in the territory that had just been liberated from what had effectively been British colonial rule.

The sharp aggravation of the situation following the Arab–Israeli military confrontation gave rise to the problem of Palestinian refugees, with approximately 750,000 Palestinians being forced to leave their homes. The Arab Palestinian State was never established. About 40% of the territory that the UN assigned to Palestinians was occupied by Israeli troops, while the other 60% was divided up (annexed) between Egypt (the Gaza Strip) and Jordan (the West Bank). Under UN General Assembly Resolution 181/II, a Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem was supposed to be established. Instead, the city was divided between Israel (73% of the city) and Jordan (East Jerusalem, 27%).

The nature of the conflict morphed on numerous occasions in the years that followed, and its scope expanded incessantly. New actors appeared (for example, the United Kingdom and France in 1956), but one thing remained unchanged: for 30 years, it was the United Nations that was responsible for settling the Arab–Israeli conflict. However, the situation that unfolded showed that this organization and its multiple resolutions on the key issues of the conflict (borders, refugees and displaced persons, the status of Jerusalem, the occupying state developing the land, and resources of the native ethnic communities) produced no results and failed to prevent the conflict at the early stages of its development.

We would like to note that our subject is rarely addressed in major academic publications that are focused on the Middle East; instead, a firm idea is prevalent: a belief that the UN is a reliable guarantor of peace and international security, an organization that prevents global conflicts. Additionally, there is the common and widespread belief that the UN (and the General Assembly sessions in particular) is the most promising venue for resolving the most controversial issues and pressing problems through the language of diplomacy. Yet the statistics are ineluctable: since the UN was established, over 300 major wars and conflicts have taken place across the planet, taking the lives of 26 million people. Thirty-five of these wars are going on today. According to the Global Peace Index compiled by the Institute for Economics and Peace in Sydney, the number of casualties from armed conflicts reached a 25-year high in 2015, while the number of displaced persons equalled that of the Second World War (IEP, 2016). For 70 years, the international community has been attempting to prevent the conflict over the possession of the British Mandate for Palestine. Nevertheless the conflict persists, and the humanitarian political bodies spearheaded or supported by the UN continue to demonstrate their powerlessness and inability to influence those involved in the protracted conflict. The UN has also lost its importance for the parties to the conflict themselves, and both the Israeli and Palestinian sides see the UN's endless calls for peace and for compliance with previously adopted resolutions as meaningless declarations.

Methodology

This article uses the content analysis method, also includes a critical analysis of UN Security Council and General Assembly documents and documents produced by other international organizations and forums, and also uses a critical analysis of initiatives that individual states have undertaken to settle the conflict under consideration. Many assessments and conclusions concerning the transformation of the Arab–Israeli conflict and the ways it may be settled are the outcome of the author's many years of diplomatic work in the immediate area of the Israeli–Palestinian confrontation.

The Main Part of the Study

In the late 1940s to the early 1950s, the UN paid particular attention to settling the Arab–Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem. On 29 May 1948, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 50, calling upon the warring parties to cease the military hostilities. Additionally, the same Resolution established the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). The first group of UN military observers arrived in the confrontation area in June 1948, establishing—a set of observers that has been permanently stationed on the Israeli border with its neighbouring Arab states ever since. The peacekeeping efforts of the UN Security Council resulted in truce agreements signed in February–July between Israel on the one hand, and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria on the other (UN, 2008).

The 3rd session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 194/III, outlining the ways to resolve future borders issues, the problem of Palestinian refugees, and the status of Jerusalem. The Resolution established a Conciliation Commission comprising the United States, Turkey, and France in order to 'provide for the maximum local autonomy for distinctive groups consistent with the special international status of the Jerusalem area (UN, 2008). The separate talks conducted by the Conciliation Commission with Israel and the neighbouring Arab states produced no results. It is noteworthy that the UN Conciliation Commission continues to operate to this day, but now mostly focuses on issues of property that refugees of all denominations lost during the first Arab–Israeli conflict.

On 11 May 1949, the State of Israel was admitted into the UN. Immediately, Representative of Israel to the United Nations Abba Eban spoke at the Special Political Commission of the UN, clearly demonstrating to the world that the new member had its own vision of the problems of the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, and the future borders of Mandatory Palestine. Eban specifically insisted that all resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN and international commissions and alliances concerning the Arab–Israeli conflict be non-binding and recommendations only. The UN may only issue recommendations, and the parties to which these recommendations are addressed may follow them only if they are rightful, fair, and do not infringe on their fundamental legal frameworks (Eban, 1957).

As early as February 1950, the Knesset, in contravention of General Assembly Resolution 181/II, declared the part of Jerusalem controlled by Israel the capital of the State of Israel and extended its sovereignty to the Palestinian lands occupied during the 1948–1949 war. In response, the House of Hashim declared the eastern part of the city its capital, and Jordan's parliament adopted the decision to merge Jordan and Palestine (the West Bank) into a single state.

The further internationalization of the conflict made the situation even worse. In October 1956, the United Kingdom, France, and Israel launched a military campaign against the Arab Republic of Egypt in response to the latter's nationalization of the Suez Canal. Under pressure from the UN, the tripartite coalition was forced to cease the bombing of Egyptian cities and evacuate Israeli troops from the Sinai Peninsula that it had occupied in the course of the hostilities. The Suez Crisis confirmed that the UN was capable of functioning normally and effectively only in conditions of concerted interaction between the world's leading powers.

After the failure of the Conciliation Commission, the UN General Assembly established the Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In its first years, the Agency mostly provided humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees, distributing food, tents, medicine, warm clothes, etc. Today, the UNRWA is the main international organization implementing hundreds of programmes and projects in refugee camps focused on education, healthcare, economic development, and the distribution of welfare payments. Approximately 5 million people in 59 camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank are registered with the Agency, and hundreds of thousands of these refugees receive different types of aid. A total of 7.1 million people live outside Palestine's historical borders (70% of the total Palestinian population worldwide) (Badel, 2010). Today, the Agency's spends an average of USD 70 on each registered refugee per year. The UNRWA maintains and finances about 900 different institutions in the Palestinian refugee camps, including 656 primary and secondary schools with approximately half a million pupils in total, and 122 medical centres (UN, 2008). The United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, Sweden, the European Union, and the World Bank are the principal donors. Russia provides regular humanitarian aid. The UNRWA has the annual budget of USD 1.1 billion (UNRWA, 2016), and the Agency is the UN's largest subdivision with over 30,000 people involved in its activities. Following his 2016 electoral victory, Donald Trump and his administration first reduced U.S.

financial support for the UNRWA (which accounted for about nearly a quarter of the organization's budget) and then cut financing for this UN Agency off entirely.

In addition to the UNRWA, the UN General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) in 1975. The Committee acts within the framework of the UN programme that aims to give the people of Palestine the opportunity to exercise their rights on the basis of Resolution No. 3236. In particular, this resolution reaffirmed 'the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including: (a) The right to self-determination without external interference; (b) The right to national independence and sovereignty; … the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and calls for their return'.

Additionally, the UN General Assembly recognized the need to cultivate an informed public opinion throughout the world in support for the exercise of Palestinians' rights. In this regard, the Assembly resolved to establish a Special Unit on Palestinian Rights within the Secretariat of the United Nations to assist the Committee in its work, prepare studies and publications on the matter, and give them as much coverage as possible. The Unit, subsequently renamed the UN Division for Palestinian Rights (UNDPR), is currently part of the Department of Political Affairs of the UN Secretariat. Its mandate is renewed annually, and its powers have been repeatedly expanded so that it covers programmes for organizing international meetings throughout the world, establishing a United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), and organizing the annual training programme for employees of the Palestinian National Authority.

In December 1991, the UN General Assembly established the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The new agency was tasked with alleviating human suffering following natural disasters and emergencies; protecting the rights of the poor; promoting preparedness and preventive action; and promoting sustainable solutions. In 1998, the Office's powers were expanded to cover, in addition to coordinating humanitarian aid, developing humanitarian policies and protecting humanitarian rights. The Office is headed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Office has branches in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. The OCHA's budget of approximately USD 8

million annually is mostly spent on monitoring the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT, 2016). Since 2003, the OCHA has published regular reports on compliance with the so-called Bertini Commitments: that is, the commitments of the Government of Israel to the representative of the UN Secretary General concerning compliance with international humanitarian law on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

In May 1994, the UN General Assembly established the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) after Israel and Palestine signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Cairo. In 1999, the UN's co-sponsorship powers were transferred to UNSCO. Since then, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (currently held by Tor Wennesland of Norway) speaks on behalf of the UN Secretary General at the ministerial talks of the 'Quartet' of international mediators on the Middle East peace process.

The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories performs roughly similar functions. The work of the Special Committee is directed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Currently, the Office is headed by Michelle Bachelet (Chile). Since 2007, the Committee has submitted an annual report to the UN Secretary General on the human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories and the Golan Heights in Syria. The most recent report was published in January 2020 (UNISPAL, 2021).

In 1993, the OHCHR established the position of the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, a non-UN post. In their capacity as an independent expert, the Rapporteur heads a working group that compiles an annual report on the human rights situation in the Palestinian territories that have been occupied since 1967 (Lynk, 2019). Currently, the position of the Special Rapporteur is held by Michael Lynk (Canada).

UN experts are also represented in the East Jerusalem Office of the Special Representative of the Quartet on the Middle East. The office occupies several floors in the five-star American Colony Hotel in the Sheik Jarrah neighbourhood. Starting from the time the Office was headed by former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair (2007–2015), its employees consider the focus of their work to be on promoting

the mobilization of international aid to develop the Palestinian economy. The current head of the Office is John Clarke (United States), formerly the Chief of the Coordination Unit in the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

Since 1993, the office of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has regularly collected materials for annual analytical reports entitled 'Economic and Social Repercussions of the Israeli Occupation on the Living Conditions of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab Population in the Occupied Syrian Golan' submitted to the UN General Assembly. Similar problems are the focus of experts of the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT).

The UN bodies listed above currently employ tens of thousands of people. They have spent hundreds of millions of dollars over the course of the past seven decades. It is evident that a significant chunk of the funds is spent on the salaries of the many thousands of officials. Objectively, the existence of a huge number of organizations that duplicate each other and handle similar tasks has resulted in the diffusion of funds and their inefficient use. Essentially, a stable mechanism has been established that ensures a cushy life for an impressive contingent of 'UN' functionaries.

From my personal experience of working in the Office of the Special Representative of the Quartet on the Middle East, I can attest that promoting humanitarian and economic projects in Palestinian territories makes no sense if there is no progress in resolving the fundamental issues that have been and always will be there. The Palestinian people also realize that the fixation of the UN and its divisions on resolving secondary issues does not promote normalization on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, nor does it do anything in terms of laying down the foundations of the future Palestinian state. The conference on 'Palestine in a Changing World' was held in May 2017 at Birzeit University in Ramallah, where keynote speakers included representatives of Russia, the United States, the European Union, and the UN; at it, the former UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov came under fire for the UN's failure in its many years of its political inaction to counteract Israel's expansionist policy.

Twenty years after the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution dividing Palestine into two states, Israel launched a massive blitzkrieg and occupied 68,000 square kilometres of Arab territory, including all the Palestinian territories and the whole of Jerusalem. The UN Security

Council responded to the new escalation of the conflict with Resolution No. 242, which was adopted unanimously. The Resolution included the following principle: 'Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict'. The Resolution emphasized 'the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war' and based the peace process in the region on the 'land for peace' formula. However, the years since the adoption of the Resolution revealed that the UN Security Council does not have effective leverage to implement its resolutions in the Israeli–Palestinian confrontation.

The conflict continued to develop. In October 1973, Egypt and Syria attempted to regain the territories lost in the 1967 war through military action. The initial successes soon gave way to failure. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 338 demanding that the parties cease military hostilities and start implementing Resolution No. 242. This too failed to have the desired effect.

Following the 1973 October War, efforts were stepped up to take the peace process beyond the UN and create a political mechanism for achieving a fair resolution to the Middle East crisis.

The Geneva Middle East Peace Conference, co-chaired by the USSR and the United States, was convened in December 1973. It resulted in agreements to separate the military forces in Sinai and on the Golan Heights, and Israel was obliged to return the lands it had seized in the 1973 war, as well as part of the territories occupied in 1967. However, the confrontation between the USSR and the United States prevented the sides from coordinating their actions. The situation was exacerbated when Israel and some western countries put the Palestine Liberation Organization on their respective lists of terrorist organizations (the PLO was established in 1964 and united all the leading Palestinian parties and armed units). On November 1974, the majority of countries in the UN General Assembly went directly against this move and approved Resolution 3236/XXIX recognizing the PLO as 'the representative of the Palestinian people'.

In the mid-1970s, the United States promoted the settlement of the Arab–Israeli conflict on the so-called separate basis. At that time, the Arab world was still dominated by the idea of pan-Arab unity. However, following the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt became the most suitable partner for testing the U.S. model of negotiations (Fedorchenko, 2018). The idea was that all the parties to the conflict would not meet; rather, each Arab state involved in the conflict would meet with Israel

individually. The combination of the 'land for peace' formula and the U.S. diplomatic efforts brought about some positive results. After the Camp David Accords (September 1978) and the Egypt–Israeli Peace Treaty (March 1979) were signed, the Israel–Egypt border was fully restored to the way it had been prior to 4 June 1967.

In 1994, Jordan adopted Egypt's tactic to settle its border disputes with Israel. However, the question of the status of Palestinian territories still remained unresolved. While the talks were underway, the territories in question were under the control of the Israeli military administration. Over the years, Israel created another problem that made the peace process significantly more difficult. Several Jewish settlements were built on the Palestinian territories, the largest being Ariel, Modi'in, Gush Etzion, Ma'ale Adumim, and settler neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem where there had been no Jews prior to the war of 1967. Today, approximately 620 000 Israelis live in 200Jewish settlements on the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (B'Tselem, 2021). Unlike the Egyptian, Lebanese, and Jordanian territories occupied during the war of 1967, Israel considers Palestinian and Syrian lands on the Golan Heights 'disputed territories' and, citing the 1917 Balfour Declaration that allowed the settlement of Jews throughout historical Palestine, actively incentivizes its citizens to develop these occupied neighbourhoods.

It was at the Madrid Conference 1991 that representatives of Israel and Palestine, under pressure from the United States, met for the first time. Although the conference did not produce direct practical results, it was important because Israel agreed to the 'land for peace' principle when discussing the future status of Palestinian territories.

After the collapse of the USSR, the Middle East peace process was largely directed by the United States. By the early 1990s, most Muslim countries also preferred to stay out of the conflict. In 1988, Jordan abandoned its claims to the West Bank and supported the idea of establishing the Palestine state there. Previously, the League of Arab States officially recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

On 13 September 1993, Israel and the PLO signed the joint Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (the Oslo I Accord) in Washington, witnessed by the representatives of the United States (Secretary of State Warren Christopher) and Russia (former Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Kozyrev).

On 28 September 1995, the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, or Oslo II Accord was signed in Washington. The document concluded the first stage of talks between Israel and the PLO. The agreements were called the Oslo Accords or Norway Accords since they had been developed at secret talks held in Norway with the mediation of MFA Minister of Norway Johan Jorgen Holst. The main achievement of the Oslo Accords was that, for the first time, the two parties to the conflict officially agreed on mutual recognition, the primacy of UN Security Council resolutions No. 242 and 338 as the basis for the negotiation process, and the right of all parties to the conflict, including the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, to have a peaceful and safe existence. In the context of the latter, Israel committed to gradually withdraw its troops from Palestinian territories.

Under the Oslo Accords, the parties to the conflict had to arrive at a final settlement agreement in 2000. However, intensive talks between the Palestinian and Israeli delegations with the mediation of the United States failed. On 28 September 2000, the leader of the Israeli opposition Ariel Sharon deliberately attempted to disrupt the negotiations by marching into Haram esh-Sharif (the Temple Mount in Jerusalem's Old City) accompanied by thousands of police officers. This caused mass protests among Palestinians and sowed the seeds for the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Additionally, even though the Oslo Accords clearly stipulated that neither side would initiate or take any steps that would change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip prior to the outcome of the permanent status negotiations and that 'the two sides view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period', the expansion of Israeli settlements and expropriation of Palestinian lands continued (Krylov and Sorokina, 2013). The main shortcoming of the Oslo Accords was that they did not stipulate any liability for the state holding the occupied territories.

Following the failures of American diplomacy, and in the absence of serious deterrents, the Israeli leadership essentially refused to participate in the political dialogue with Palestine and comply with previous agreements. It was in that difficult moment that a special alliance of co-sponsors was established in Madrid in 2002 to consolidate the efforts for the peaceful settlement of the Arab–Israeli conflict. This peace-making body that united Russia, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations was named the 'Quartet' of mediators in the Middle East settlement.

In summer 2002, the Quartet drafted a Road Map that outlined a three-stage advancement towards a comprehensive Arab–Israeli settlement over three years. The Quartet also expressed its readiness to support, as an intermediary stage on the path towards permanent status, the establishment of the State of Palestine with provisional borders in 2003. The Road Map was unequivocally supported by the Palestinian side, and Israel supported it in April 2003.

At the initiative of Russia, the Road Map was submitted for approval by the UN Security Council. Resolution No. 1515 duly endorsed the document and specifically called 'on the parties to fulfil their obligations under the Roadmap in cooperation with the Quartet and to achieve the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security'.

After the Road Map and several other initiatives of the international mediators started to stall, the Quartet's existence as an instrument capable of jump-starting the peace process came to an end. Currently, Israel ignores its regular declarative statements, and the Palestinian side is angered by its inability to undertake minimally effective measures to normalize the situation on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

Consequently, the Road Map failed to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian crisis. Citing the rise of HAMAS and other radical Islamist groups in Gaza, the Ariel Sharon government refused to engage in a political dialogue with Palestine and steered a course for unilateral disengagement. In August 2005, Israel withdrew its troops and settlements from Gaza. Ariel Sharon and his ministers attempted to spin this manoeuvre as compliance with the Road Map (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, 2005). The international community unequivocally viewed of Israel's actions as a tactical move that furthered the country's complete military and economic control over Gaza and gave it grounds to evade compliance with its commitments under the Road Map (Krylov, 2013a, 2013b).

In 2013, after a long hiatus, the United States once again offered to mediate the settlement of the Israeli–Palestinian differences. Secretary of State John Kerry was expected to present a plan in January 2014 containing solutions to all the Middle East settlement problems on the basis of the same Camp David principles. This is why the negotiating team included veterans of American diplomacy, such as those who had participated in the peace-making process under the auspices of presidents Carter and Clinton. However, at the negotiations, the United States essentially

refused to adhere to the previously developed international legal framework, and the Madrid principle of 'land for peace' was replaced with the 'territorial exchange' or 'swap' formula (Makovsky, 2011).

Direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine mediated by the United States started on 29 July 2013. And an exact date for their completion had been set as well—29 April 2014. By that time, the parties were expected to have agreed on all the issues of the ultimate status. However, as they had done 14 years previously, the talks began to stall, thus confirming that the Camp David scheme does not work on the Palestinian track. Following multiple rounds of negotiations, it became clear by April 2014 that the Israeli side had no intention of discussing the issue of permanent status, while the Palestinians would under no circumstances agree to transfer parts of their West Bank territories to Israel. The situation that emerged after the negotiations mediated by the United States best suits Israel, which continues the policy of developing and the occupied territories and removing the Palestinian people from them.

The Israeli leadership did not conceal its satisfaction with Donald Trump moving into the White House. By the end of his presidency, Trump had published his own plan for a Middle East settlement, which had a rather attractive name: 'Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People' (Trump, 2020). As expected, the 'deal of the century' confirmed the US's complete rejection of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements previously reached under their auspices, as well as the rejection of all known UN Security Council resolutions obliging Israel to liberate Palestinian territories within the borders that existed before 4 June 1967. Earlier, in May 2018, the U.S. Embassy was relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem against the objections of the overwhelming majority of UN member states. The move prompted the logical response of the Palestinian political leadership, which rejected any further U.S. mediation efforts. The process of Israeli–Palestinian settlement was at an impasse once again.

Results

This article proves that there are no effective levers of pressure today that would force Israel to abandon the expansion of settlements on the West Bank. The international community represented by the UN and other international organizations have demonstrated their complete ineptitude when it comes to counteracting the actions of Israel to alter its future

borders. The Israeli settlement sector is currently booming, and its level of development today means that it is impossible for Israel to return to the ceasefire line as it existed prior to 4 June 1967. All the parties to the Middle East settlement should openly acknowledge that time has been irretrievably lost. Over the course of 50 years of occupation, Israel has created those irreversible realities that the international community must live with. Approximately 40% of the West Bank is home to Jewish settlements, and Palestinians are not allowed to the area. In Area C—the area that is under the complete control of Israel (about 60% of the West Bank)—the process of 'de-Palestination' is almost complete. The overwhelming majority of Israelis consider this territory an integral part of the 'Jewish State'.

Conclusions

The confrontation between Palestinian Arabs and Jewish settlers from Europe over the issue of control over Palestine started in the early twentieth century, with each party believing Palestine to be its historical homeland. Our analysis demonstrates that once the UN decided to divide Palestine into two states in 1947 this confrontation acquired a regional character. Since then, neither the UN Security Council, nor the UN General Assembly, nor any other of the host of UN bodies established to implement UN General Assembly Resolution 181/II and thus settle the Arab–Israeli conflict were able to make any real progress. Moreover, the cumbersome and unwieldy UN bodies focused exclusively on resolving secondary issues, which created objective grounds for criticizing and eroding the international legal framework developed for the Middle East settlement. U.S. intervention in the Middle East peace process led to the gradual reformatting of the conflict. Egypt and Jordan signed peace treaties with Israel, and the most hostile Arab states (Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Lebanon) were essentially neutralized and are currently unable to affect the situation in the area of the Israeli–Palestinian confrontation. The attitude of all influential Arab monarchies to Israel changed for the better. Following the events of the so-called Arab Spring, the Arab–Israeli conflict receded into the background of international affairs and, as was the case during the existence of Mandatory Palestine, was restricted once again to the confrontation between Palestinians and Jews—citizens of the State of Israel.

Bringing the Arab–Israeli conflict back within the framework of the Israeli–Palestinian confrontation makes it significantly easier for Israel to annex the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel already has experience in expanding its territory through the deportation of the local population and the accelerated development of land by settlers. It is well known that during The First Arab–Israeli War, the Israeli military command carried out Plan Dalet, forcibly taking over Arab villages and cities that, under UN General Assembly Resolution 181/II, were on Israel's territory (Khalidi, 1988). Between 1945 and 1949, Jewish armed units and the Israel Defence Forces carried out four operations to deport the native Arab population from the predominantly Jewish neighbourhoods in Palestine (Davidson, 2012). No fewer than 118 Jewish settlements were established on lands seized from Palestinian Arabs, and these lands were soon integrated into Israel (Oren and Zand (ed.), 1976–2005).

The war of 1967 opened up new opportunities for Israel to absorb Palestinian territories. Since then, regardless of the political party in power, the Israeli leadership has used settlers to deliberately implement the policy of changing the demographic balance in the Palestinian territories, with the ultimate purpose of making them an integral part of Israel.

Meanwhile, the American initiatives on the Palestinian-Israeli trek suit the interests of Israel only and infringes upon the interests of Palestinians. Upon close inspection, all U.S. plans and initiatives to settle the Israeli–Palestinian conflict accord solely with Israeli political priorities, and these priorities exclude the very possibility of establishing a full-fledged Palestinian state. This, in turn, objectively blocks any initiatives to promote the Middle East settlement process.

The new plan of US President Donald Trump only pushed Israeli politicians to finally abolish the two-state principle of resolving the Palestinian problem. Immediately after the publication of the 'deal of the century', Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel hurriedly prepared his plan for annexation of the West Bank (Jonathan, 2017). If this does indeed happen, then all international political speechifying about the Palestinian state will soon become utterly pointless.

The new U.S. initiative has invited numerous complaints from most of the countries that are party to the Middle East political settlement process. However, recent experience shows that processes currently transpiring in the geopolitical space largely transpired from the unpredictability of Donald Trump's foreign policy and, in contravention of

all previous international agreements and arrangements, Trump had the chance to easily ignore the opinion of all his opponents and begin to push his 'deal of the century'. New US initiative to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is consistent with Israel's political priorities, and these priorities exclude any possibility of creating a sustainable Palestinian state.

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States in the Transforming Political Organization of the World

Biopolitical Challenges of Modern World Politics

Mikhail I. Rykhtik and Maria V. Vedunova

There is increased interest in the study of the socio-political aspects of the biorevolution taking place in our society. The modern world has raised a number of questions related to the theory and practice of the biopolitical administration of life, including those in the sphere of world politics. Philosophers Michael Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Anthony Negri, Michael Hardt, Pavel Tishchenko, Sergei Prozorov, Alexander Oleskin, and others addressed the problems of "biopolitics," particularly its genesis, which allows tracing the changes in the foundations of world politics and its management practices (Prozorova & Rykhtik, 2010). Further development of biotechnology will inevitably give governments an opportunity to further shape a biopolitical society using a flexible

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system of governance (governmentality). The shift in emphasis from disciplinary practices of influencing society to strategies of managing and preventing is becoming more obvious. The response of most governments to COVID-19 confirms the identified trend toward both disciplinary and preventive practices when biological safety risks arise. The combination of skills and professionalism guarantees the political stability of the system and society. The second aspect of the problem is the effectiveness of international cooperation, which is acquiring a new biopolitical dimension.

It is important to note that the use of poisons in warfare has been legally regulated since ancient times. Earliest laws prohibited food poisoning and the use of poison as a weapon. In ancient Greece and Rome, the use of poisons at war was considered as "jus gentium"—the law of the nation. According to the Indian Law of Manu in 500 AD, poisons were banned and declared inhumane. Hugo Grotius reflected on prohibiting poisons in war in his Law on War and Peace (1625). In 1675, France and Germany signed an agreement banning poisoned bullets in Strasbourg (Supotnitskiy, 2013). These facts indicate that attempts have always been made to cooperate in prohibiting poisons in conflicts. However, history, unfortunately, is full of examples of the use of toxic substances: evidence can be found from the second century AD in the "Description of Hellas" by the ancient Greek author Pausanias. Thanks, too, to the works of the British researcher Joseph Needham (1956), referring to ancient Chinese chronicles, another such example became know, this time regarding the use of poisonous fumes obtained from plants for military purposes. This practice was known as early as the fourth century BC. In addition to numerous examples of the deliberate use of poisons against humans, history knows numerous victims of epidemics.

Humanity faced a serious viral threat for the first time in the modern era in 1918, when it encountered the famous H1N1 influenza virus (Spanish flu); according to various estimates, this strain claimed from 50 to 100 million lives. With a population of less than 2 billion (1.734), this was 5% of the world's population—a staggeringly sizeable figure. For example, in the 30 years since the existence of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus became known, it has claimed about 25 million lives. Then, there were several more serious flu epidemics, the death rate from which was about 1 million. In general, according to the WHO, about 650 thousand people all over the world die from seasonal flu every year (WHO data, December 14, 2017).

Today, it is obvious that mankind has accumulated a large amount of knowledge on the toxic properties of various natural substances; at the same time, the traditions of selecting specific poisons (used for military purposes, mass murder, ritual execution, etc.) were formed. Globalization has made the problems of biological risk management actual. As the recent crisis has shown, society is not always ready to recognize and accept the behavioral patterns necessary for survival and prosperity under new conditions.

Methodology

We deliberately chose to use different theoretical approaches, a tool of applied research which is of great importance when analyzing cases. The functions of biopolitics are considered in the context of a systematic approach. The functions of the subjects of world politics in the field of biopolitics, subsequently, are considered based on the concept of Almond's political system of and the main provisions of structural and functional analysis. Biopower, as Russian researchers note, opens up the notion of problematizing human life, formed by a variety of discursive and non-discursive practices of biomedicine, engaged in the production of a person as both a "subject" and "object" (Podoroga, 1989; Tizhenko, 2001; Oleskin, 2007). Biopower determines an individual's well-being and self-awareness, permeating their micro- and macro-social connections promising health and offering protection against pathogenic influences. Modern biotechnology, which includes classical methods of healing (including psychoanalysis), and its newest forms (gene diagnostics and gene therapy, cloning, transplantology, in vitro fertilization, surrogacy, etc.) blur the line between the treatment of the human body and its biotechnological "modernization" (Trushina, 2010).

System analysis aimed at studying a complex object enables understanding of what makes it integral, despite the variety of properties of individual elements and their relations. It aims to study world politics in the context of a biological revolution. This approach is focused on identifying the hierarchy of general and private relationships that govern political processes.

Traditionally, political science pays great attention to studying institutional forms of social life. Health has long been classified as a non-institutional factor (Chubin & Chu, 1989; Jasanoff, 2002). According to

Urnov, much less attention was paid to such unformalized aspects of political activity in political science. According to the modern interpretation of the institutional approach, the system's efficiency is determined not only by the stable activity of ordered forms of social practices but also by the processes of self-organization. In terms of economic categories, such synergistic factors include, for example, "competition, decentralization of decision-making, rules and norms that suit not only the winning but also the losing parties," and so on. Foucault was one of the first to draw attention to the fact that disciplinary practices require a closed space, in each of which certain orders and laws function in order to more effectively isolate and control individuals in space and time. When analyzing the reaction of politicians from different countries to the threat of COVID-19, the majority choose to lock themselves in their "national barracks." We have seen that, in practice, the "biopower" technique in the context of the fight against the virus is characterized by isolation from the legal procedures practiced by the traditional government. "Biopower" decided to rely on extra-legal forms of power, which gave it greater freedom of action and a huge space unregulated by legal norms and laws (Martynov, 2006). The famous German scientist Schmitt believed that as a result of the refusal to apply the law, biopower could be used in civil wars, police operations, and even concentration camps, which leads not so much to destroying a person as to reducing him or her to animals, biological functions. The inapplicability of the law emphasizes the greater freedom of "biopower" in comparison with traditional power.

From the theoretical point of view, the evolution of the concept of "biopolitics" can be traced: from Foucault and Deleuze to Hardt and Negri and Agamben. Foucault understands "biopolitics" as an imperious method of managing a community with the help of disciplinary practices and the implementation of the mechanism of "general supervision"; Deleuze says that it is a "disciplinary society" replaced by a "society of control"; and Hardt and Negri propose a symbiosis of these two concepts as a theoretical basis (Prozorov, 2014; Foucault, 1998; Negri, 2008). All these theoretical considerations about the nature and evolution of "biopower" are united by the conclusion that when the authorities turn to "biopolitics," the "body" of a person is fully controlled (through health management, fertility, sexuality, hygiene, etc.). Most governments have demonstrated a commitment to this practice in their responses to COVID-19. This means that international cooperation and cooperation in health care and hygiene management will soon reach a new level.

Results

The biological view of man. Man, as a biological species, has an exceptional strategy for changing their numbers. It is known that all animals are divided into 2 types of reproductive behavior: large animals have low fertility and relatively low mortality of offspring primarily through caring for their offspring for a long time; other types have enormous reproductive potential, yet the number of individuals reaching sexual maturity is negligible. Both strategies ensure the relatively stable number of the species limited by the capacity of the environment. In this sense, Man is a truly unique representative of the animal world. As a large animal, we have a rather low reproductive potential, and the payment for walking upright is the birth of immature offspring, which needs long-term care and protection. However, human history demonstrates a completely different strategy. Indeed, at the dawn of human development, their number was controlled by natural factors—primarily by predators and the food supply—but people began to avoid the limiting environmental factors. People control the food supply, got rid of external enemies (large predators), and started to grow in numbers that is completely unique for large animals. In 1800, the population of the Earth was one billion people; it took 130 years to double the number; and in 1930, there were already 2 billion people on Earth. During this period, bacteria remained the only powerful growth-limiting factors. Bacteria controlled population numbers due to epidemics, wound infections, and high infant mortality. The discovery and widespread use of antibiotics led to an unprecedented rate of population growth. Already in 1959, the population of the Earth was 3 billion; after another 15 years, it was 4 billion; and after another 13 years, it grew up to 5 billion. The highest growth rates were achieved in the 1970–1990s—about 2% per year (80 million). Such explosive growth in numbers is characteristic of bacteria in conditions of unlimited resources (e.g., in a Petri dish with a nutrient medium). In such conditions, bacteria divide almost indefinitely until the nutrient medium ends. When food resources deplete completely, most of the bacteria die, though some either remain in the form of spores or single individuals with a low metabolism. However, such a scenario is unlikely, even though bacteria have factors that limit growth, waste products of cells that are toxic to others or bacteriophages (bacteria viruses). When humans completely overcame their natural enemies, including bacteria, it would be a viral infection that was most likely to serve as a limiting factor. Over the

past 30 years, humanity has been anticipating an airborne virus with a mortality rate of 98–99.5% (pessimistic forecast), with good reason as to why not even the worst predictions reached 100%. This as a virus is unlikely to be the cause of the Homo Sapiens' complete extinction. A virus is an intracellular parasite, and as for any parasite, the disappearance of the host threatens the parasite itself; if there is no person to use, the parasite dies. Despite the fact that viruses are an extremely distinct group, they obey this rule. Now, subpopulations of people not susceptible to HIV have already been distinguished; there are even those immune to COVID-19.

Taking into consideration the framework of modern biopolitics and the age of development of biotechnology, it can be concluded that modern medicine has gained a new purpose—not only to heal, but also to spread ideas about a healthy society. Medicine, to some extent, "controls" the human body in order to impose ideas about the parameters of life— that is, in fact, biopower "endowed" medicine with compulsory and disciplinary functions. It is obvious that one of the urgent problems of modern political science should be the management of risks in the field of human security directly arising from the accelerated development of biotechnology.

Artificial or natural origin of the biological threat.

Where do new viruses come from? Viruses have an extremely high rate of evolution, especially those with a genome that is represented by RNA (e.g., COVID-19). Having a very small replication cycle (from several hours), any mutations undergo natural selection within weeks, sometimes even days, so new viruses appear constantly. The very fact that man has acquired lifelong flu immunity but nevertheless gets flu every year is a clear example of the evolution of viruses. That is, every year a new strain of influenza appears, which again affects the entire population of the Earth. The flu, however, is far from the fastest evolving virus. Human Immunodeficiency Viruses are considered the record holder—this is the main reason why an HIV vaccine has not been developed yet. COVID-19 has a much slower mutation rate than the flu virus.

Today, the COVID-19 genome has been completely decoded. It has been officially transcribed by about 1200 laboratories around the world. None of the laboratories has said that the virus was genetically engineered or given facts indicating its artificial origin. All the data obtained were collected in a single database to assess the rate of mutation and the possibility of creating a vaccine. There is no official information that in

even the most minor way testified to the artificial origin of COVID-19. The most important reason for this is the following: coronaviruses rarely spread from human to human. There is no sense in creating biological weapons with such a low lethal potential. The first strain of COVID-19, which caused widespread lockdowns, affected, according to official estimates, from 2 to 3% of the world's population, and the mortality rate was about 1% of the number of cases. The epidemic threshold for influenza is usually set at 5% (the start point of the epidemic). The media often state that COVID-19 is highly contagious, but it must be remembered that it is highly contagious for coronaviruses; that is, for representatives of this group, it is indeed extremely contagious, but nevertheless it is less contagious than the same influenza virus. All this indicates that COVID-19 cannot be considered as a biological weapon. However, this cannot be proof that the virus is of natural origin. After all, it could have been created not as a weapon, but as a demonstration of a possible biological threat. In addition, it has now been revealed that COVID-19 has 2 targets on the cell surface: receptors ACE2 and CD147. Initially, the interaction between COVID-19 and ACE2 was described: the virus recognizes this protein on the surface of human cells and interacts with it to enter the cell; all representatives of this group of viruses interact with this receptor. ACE2 is expressed by cells of the lower respiratory tract, heart, kidney, and germ cells. Hence, the virus provokes pneumonia. The second receptor was discovered later, and it is most likely specific only to COVID-19. CD147 is also a target of malarial plasmodium, which is why the policy of using antimalarial drugs for treating COVID-19 is so widespread.

Analyzing the situation that has developed in connection with the current pandemic, the following areas of risk management in the field of human security associated with the development of biotechnology can be distinguished:

– Control over the quality of products manufactured using modern biotechnology. It is important to maintain an institutional control system that guarantees the safety of people consuming these products (both nationally and globally);
– Technologies of social management. Since the use of modern biotechnologies (e.g., in medicine) is often elite in nature and is not accessible to all segments of the population, the stratification of society according to the principle of the consumption of

biotechnology products will require special strategies and practices for managing such a society;

– Safety of laboratory and scientific research. An effective set of measures should be developed to ensure the safety of those research institutions that deal with biotechnology. Since many of them are part of private corporations, universities, and laboratories, it should be borne in mind that the state's capabilities may be limited;

– Ecological problems. Testing of products manufactured using biotechnology can have certain negative consequences for the environment. Waste storage and disposal are of particular concern.

An important aspect of modern world politics is the study and management of the attitude of society to biorevolution (Itogi, 2010). Fears and phobias of the further development of biotechnology, as well as unjustified high expectations, contribute to the tension in society.

Despite the fact that most experts are skeptical about the strategic and tactical effectiveness of biological weapons, there are risks of their any elements falling into the hands of terrorists or organized criminal groups. The active use of rumors and speculation about the artificial and deliberate nature of a particular virus will contribute to international conflicts.

Fighting the virus or "fighting" society. Canonical methods and steps and what we can see in reality. How this affect social and political relations.

The number of people infected with COVID-19 currently exceeds 250 million people, and the death toll is 5 million people. From any perspective, this is a large, possibly threatening figure. Many countries report that the situation is already under control and the number of cases is growing slower. However, every year, flu claims 650 thousand lives completely unnoticed. Such severe strains as "bird flu" or "swine flu" had up to 1 million casualties, while the "Spanish flu" killed 20 times more people than COVID-19. However, no one has ever provoked quarantine of this scale. We can say that but for quarantine, the healthcare system would have been overloaded with the ill and stopped functioning at one moment, with the mortality rate not being 6–7% (in the general population, in relation to diagnosed cases) but much higher. In this situation, the Swedish experience is unique (analysis of mortality from the alpha strain): they did not introduce special quarantine measures and did not see an

increase in the number of cases, or an increase in mortality compared to the European situation.

Of greatest interest are data on the absence of a system of epidemiological control in Italy and some other European countries. That is, despite a more developed healthcare system in many countries, there is simply no system for dealing with infectious diseases. In this sense, Russia is unique, as this country maintains a very strict system of epidemiological surveillance (Obzhestvo i pandemic, 2020).

Attention is drawn to the fact that, in March 2020, Europe recorded the lowest mortality rate over the past 10 years. This fact is undoubtedly associated with a decrease in the number of road accidents and deaths from accidents. On a population scale, COVID-19 will not cause any significant fluctuations in numbers and may lead to a surge in fertility in countries with quarantine measures in December 2020–January 2021. At the same time, the healthcare system in many countries has been completely reformatted. Many planned activities have been postponed or canceled. This will definitely adversely affect health-saving technologies, as well as general life expectancy.

Can we consider the state to be the winner? Or maybe a doctor? Or society?

Humanity does not know how to fight viruses; this is the only real enemy that we have not defeated. All recommended drugs are not in the conventional sense antiviral—they either stimulate immunity, help the body to cope with the disease itself, or (recent advances) inhibit the virus' replication preventing it from multiplying and harming human cells (reverse transcriptase inhibitors in HIV infection). Therefore, we can clearly say that modern science cannot defeat the virus. The vaccine is not associated with the fight against this particular strain, since more than 3 weeks of relative immunological rest are required for full-fledged immunity to develop. Doctors are undoubtedly struggling with complications caused by the virus, and indeed, this is a fairly new situation for us since influenza affects vascular endothelial cells and most of the complications are associated with microbleeds in various organs and tissues as well as secondary bacterial infection. COVID-19 targets the cells that carry the ACE2 receptor, in particular the respiratory system, and a large number of the complications after pneumonia. It is difficult to say whether such strict quarantine measures are necessary as they bring huge economic and personal losses with such a dubious threat. Therefore, it is clear that this

epidemic, without exceeding the epidemic threshold, can only be defeated by leaders of the world community who have the appropriate reputation.

Recommendations

Thus, the general conceptual approach to risk management in the context of the further development of biotechnology is to analyze the following: the main factors of the impact of biotechnology on society and the world community; measures to reduce damage from the negative factors including unaccounted risks or unforeseen circumstances; and the implementation of a system to help the population adapt to risks, with the help of which it is not only possible to neutralize or compensate for negative consequences but also to maximize the chances to ensure citizens' safety.

Technogenic culture has two main ways of dealing with a person—either to scare them, or to seduce them. In this regard, a person seems to be a perfect biorobot, whose brain will be fully understood in the near future and turned into an element of the soulless material world. Here comes the ethics, which explains our behavior by base things, suppressed by instincts—everything that has long been so heatedly discussed in Europe.

Based on the above, we can conclude that there are objective sources and threats to security, taking into account the biopolitical factor. The problems of preventing threats should be recognized as one of the priority areas in the activities of international organizations, the state, civil society institutions, and private businesses. The general conceptual approach to risk management in the context of the further biotechnological development is: to analyze the main factors affecting the impact of such technologies on society; the development of measures to reduce damage from the impact of negative factors, including up to the end of unaccounted for risks, unforeseen circumstances; and the implementation of a system which will help people to adapt to risks, with the help of which not only possible negative consequences can be neutralized or compensated but also the chances to ensure a high level of safety will be used (Teich, 1981; Rykhtik, 2011).

Thus, the state today has to manage risks taking into account the biopolitical factor.

We believe that the role of political factors in stably developing democracies is being minimized, giving way to legal and moral mechanisms for regulating social interaction, self-organization, and self-government.

However, the peculiarity of the modern political system lies in the dominant role of the state. Countries with different types of political regimes are currently following this path. Therefore, at this stage, the initiative to improve the biorisk management system should, obviously, come from political institutions: not only the state, but also public organizations, political elites, and, of course, political parties representing the interests of different social groups.

Speaking about biopolitics, it is necessary to recognize the fact that the system can be improved not through local departmental reforms, but only after improving the quality of life and forming individuals' attitudes toward self-preserving behavior, both when it comes to themselves and to others. Educational institutions will play a special role in this process. They will have to get rid of the red tape.

However, there is also a downside to this. The same processes that increase well-being can destabilize the results for both the society and its specific groups. Crises in some countries cause crises in other countries.

Applying a biopolitical risk management framework goes beyond social policy, as many government actions—such as macroeconomic policies, migration controls, good governance, and access to basic education and health services—contribute to reducing or mitigating socio-political risk, and, accordingly, vulnerabilities.

The main elements of the socio-political and biopolitical risk management model include:

- Risk management strategies (reducing the likelihood of a risky event, mitigating the impact of risk, and overcoming the consequences);
- Risk management provisions according to their formality (informal, market-based, state-based, or mandatory); and
- "Actors" in the risk management process (from individuals, communities, non-governmental organizations, market institutions, governments to international organizations, and the global community as a whole). When developing federal and regional strategies for neutralizing biopolitical risks, one should take into account the specifics of innovative risks.

As rightly noted by Beck, these risks are currently perceived and understood primarily through knowledge (Beck, 2000). The focus should be on information strategies and educational technologies. Biopolitical risks are

not limited in time and space. Given the virulence criterion, the public should be seriously concerned about the consequences of a control loss, such as the safety of laboratory research or the safety of waste from the biotech chain. The risks are not compensable. Biopolitical risks have a large number of potential culprits (or none at all). Thus, the problem of objectivity arises: should a strategy avoid or neutralize such risks target? Risk, therefore, creates new communities whose values are based on their attitude to security (those who benefit from risks and those who are exposed to them; those who know about risks and those who do not).

What tools does the state have to prevent and minimize the consequences of biopolitical risks?

The program can include organizing broad international cooperation in this area of knowledge, which will manifest itself as follows:

- Firstly, funded orders for research and development will be implemented, which would enable: (1) consolidating the scattered scientific groups; (2) understanding the global industry requirements for biotechnology; and (3) gaining experience of parity communication with the foreign scientific community.
- Secondly, a decent level of information support will be achieved. It is important to establish direct contacts with companies and investors and to create a powerful investment base for this scientific and technical area.
- Thirdly, work in the field of Russian biotechnology will be significantly accelerated, which will provide us with the following opportunities:
    - To participate in international investment programs, for which, as a rule, foreign partners are needed;
    - To develop Russian educational institutions in order to train a significant number of highly qualified specialists and a new generation of employees;
    - To entrust the program for the development of the domestic bioindustry in the medium term to a group of specialists. Thus, it will not be subject to departmental affiliation and management by officials.

The above measures, among other things, will make it possible to significantly intensify and consolidate the activities of specialists and real

carriers of modern technologies, remove many bureaucratic obstacles, and make a significant contribution to ensuring international security.

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The COVID-19 Health Scare and Its Impact on the US Politics and Society

Andrei Korobkov

The impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic is being felt all over the world, serving as an illustration to the sway of the globalization processes of the post-Cold War era. The pandemic is exerting a significant destabilizing influence on the national healthcare systems, economies, and politics worldwide. Ironically, while generally proving the power of globalization, the pandemic also demonstrated the depth of the crisis of the liberal global order, enhancing the positions of those who reject many aspects of liberal globalization.

The current situation in the United States is quite illustrative of these global processes. In many respects, the ongoing healthcare calamity turned out to be deeper in the United States than in most other countries and regions of the world, since it overlaps both with significant political and societal crises that the country has been facing in recent years, and also with President Donald Trump's attempts to reconfigure many

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aspects of the domestic political system and the basic principles on which the international economic and political order was founded during the Cold War and the thirty year period that has followed it. The following chapter concentrates on the initial US response to the pandemic and its socio-economic and political consequences.

Not only Democratic Party elites, but many groups within the American establishment, have viewed Donald Trump as a threat to existing political arrangements and power balance ever since he announced his bid for the presidency in 2015. Indeed, Trump's reform proposals and ideas he stood for were designed to completely reshape many fundamental principles which underpinned the US domestic and foreign policy in the second half of the twentieth century and at the start of the current century. Thus, the medical debacle of 2020 overlapped with the deep socio-economic and political crises the United States has been going through.

Respectively, the healthcare crisis had a direct impact on the outcome of the 2020 US presidential election, the evolution of the country's political system, the state of the United States and world economy and politics, and the future of America's role in the world.

The Earlier Discussions of Pandemics' Potential Impact

The possibility of a catastrophic worldwide pandemic and furthermore the potential scale of its impact on the international and US economies, healthcare systems, and societies have been widely discussed in academic literature—by both healthcare experts and social scientists. Of particular interest to researchers were the scale and the societal impact of the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, which came in the footsteps of World War I and the great social upheavals that followed it. In contrast to many earlier cases, such as the Justinian or the Medieval Black Death pandemics, this case offered a significant amount of statistical data to work with (Taubenberger & Morens, 2006). The same could be said of the 1957 and 1968 Influenza pandemics (Kilbourne, 2006) as well as the regional epidemics, including those related to SARS, Ebola, Swine Flu, Anthrax, or AIDS (Boffey, 1976; Cole, 1996; Horimoto & Kawaoka, 2005). Studies tackled the methods to contain the spread of the virus, the potential preventive measures, including the role of vaccinations and the universal healthcare systems (or absence thereof), and the impact of such catastrophic

phenomena on the economic and political systems and societies of particular countries (Campbell & Rumley, 1997; Langmuir, 1963; Schoenbaum et al., 1976).

Attempts were undertaken to forecast the potential effect of such a pandemic. In particular, the article published in 1999 by Meltzer, Cox, and Fikuda evaluated the possible impact of a future influenza pandemic on the United States. The authors analyzed its potential economic effect and evaluated the role of the vaccine-based interventions in lowering pandemic's human, societal, and financial costs. Relying on the death rates, hospitalization data, and outpatient visits, they estimated the potential toll at 89,000–207,000 deaths; 314,000–734,000 hospitalizations; 18–42 million outpatient visits; and 20–47 million additional illnesses. High risk patients (roughly 15% of the population) could account for approximately 84% of all deaths. The economic losses were estimated at $71.3 billion to $166.5 billion (at 1999 price rates), excluding the disruptions to commerce and society. The authors concluded that vaccinating 60% of the population would generate the highest economic returns but may not be possible within the time required for vaccine effectiveness, especially in cases when two doses of vaccine were required (Meltzer et al., 1999).

With the end of the Cold War and the increasing emphasis on the international issues outside the domains of security, the research expanded into the related areas of social and economic costs associated with the potential consequences of technogenic and environmental catastrophes, climate changes, large-scale terrorist acts, and massive refugee flows (Cole, 1996; Kaufmann et al., 1997). Statistical models were developing, enabling the quantitative study and effective forecasting of the spread of particular infections as well as their economic and societal impact (Cliff & Hagget, 1993; Epstein, 2009).

And still, it turned out that neither the American political establishment nor academia nor healthcare providers were fully prepared for the pandemic ravaging the United States in 2020–22, including its political and socio-economic consequences.

The Healthcare Shock

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) data, on May 6, 2020, the United States accounted for 32.6% of the COVID-19 cases registered worldwide (1,171,185 of 3,588,773), resulting in 25.3% deaths

Table 11.1
COVID-19 dynamics in
the United States and
worldwide, May–July
2020

	6 May	26 May	1 July
Cases			
US	1,171,185	1,618,757	2,573,393
World	3,588,773	5,370,375	10,357,662
US Share, %	32.6	0.1	24.8
Deaths			
US	62,698	96,909	126,573
World	247,503	344,454	508,055
US Share, %	25.3	28.1	24.9

Sources WHO (2020, 6 May; 2020, 26 May; 2020, 1 July)

(62,698 of 247,503) (WHO, 2020, 6 May). Within just twenty days, by May 26, the official WHO figures have grown to 1,618,757 cases (out of 5,370,375 worldwide, or 30.1%) and 96,909 deaths (out of 344,454 worldwide, or 28.1%) (WHO, 2020, 26 May).[1] By July 1, 2020, there were 2,573,393 COVID-19 cases (out of 10,357,662 worldwide, or 24.8%) and 126,573 deaths registered in the United States (24.9% of the 508,055 worldwide) (WHO, 2020, 1 July) (see Table 11.1). Even though the US share of the pandemic-related cases and deaths is slowly declining, it still remains disproportionally high: as of February 8, 2022, there were 75,890,112 registered COVID-19 cases and 895,389 deaths in the United States (they accounted respectively for 19.1% and 15.6% of the 396,558,014 COVID-19 cases and 5,745,032 deaths worldwide [WHO, 2022, 9 February]), indicating that the richest country of the modern world has been disproportionally severely affected by the pandemic.

Regardless of the fact that the US death ratio was somewhat lower than the world average (5.4% v. 6.9% on May 6, 6.0% v. 6.4% on May 26, and 4.9% in both cases on July 1[2]), these figures have articulated numerous problems related to the archaic state of the US medical sphere. Those include: the de facto absence of a nationwide public healthcare system, the domination of for-profit private medicine, the Medieval-style

[1] These figures were lower somewhat than those reported within the US. For instance, the US Centers for Disease Control reported 1,637,456 cases and 97,669 deaths as of May 25, 2020 (CDC, 2020, 26 May). On July 2, the respective figures were 2,679,230 and 128,024 (CDC, 2020, 2 July).

[2] As of 8 February 2022, the respective ratios for the US and the world were lowered to 1.2% and 1.4% (WHO, 2022, 9 February).

corporate structure of the medical profession, the heavy reliance on the immigrant labor (in general and in the medical sphere in particular[3]), the tremendous number of private health insurance carriers and plans with the resulting, absurdly high, medical costs, and the complexity of formulating and enforcing any coherent nationwide healthcare policies.

The situation is being further aggravated by the current political deadlock and deep conceptual disagreements in regard to the direction of future healthcare reforms both between and within the dominant Democratic and Republican parties. While the United States healthcare expenditures are huge—reaching \$3.6 trillion in 2018, or \$11,172 per person, health spending accounted for 17.7% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—a significant share of the population remains uninsured: even after the introduction of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (so-called "Obamacare") in March 2010, the number of the uninsured remained 30.1 million in 2018 (11.1%, compared to 48.2 million or 18.2%, in 2010) (Cohen et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the Trump administration planned initially to dismantle even this legislative initiative, limited in its scale and healthcare impact though it is.

An additional complicating factor represents the existence of significant social, ethnic, and racial disparities in terms of healthcare accessibility, frequency of infections, and death ratios. The report by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), for example, has shown that African Americans, comprising just 13% of the US population, accounted for 33% of those hospitalized with the coronavirus infection, "suggesting that black populations could be disproportionately affected by COVID-19." Whites accounted for 45% of the infected; 8% were Hispanics. The coronavirus-related mortality statistics showed an even greater contrast: African Americans accounted for 70% of coronavirus deaths in Milwaukee, even though their share in the city's population is less than 1/3. Similarly, in Chicago, African Americans comprised 30% of the population, but accounted for 69% of all coronavirus deaths; and in Louisiana, their share in the population was 32%, but they accounted for 70% of coronavirus deaths. In New York City, Hispanics made up 34% of deaths despite being 29% of the population, while African Americans accounted

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[3] At the beginning of 2020, foreign born employees comprised 16.4% of the US healthcare workers (2.8 million). In California, their share was 31.6%, and in New York state, 34.3%. The share of immigrant labor among nurses was 15.3%; medical aides, 25.3%; and physicians and surgeons, 28.2% (New American Economy Research Fund, 2020).

for 28% of deaths, compared with their population share of 22% (White, 2020). These contrasting figures have quickly turned the medical emergency into a significant political crisis that went way beyond the usual left–right divide in regard to the healthcare reform in the United States vision.

The Economic Consequences

Donald Trump always expected that the excellent state of the American economy would enable him to consolidate support from those groups that backed him in the 2016 election—first and foremost the representatives of big business in the real sector of the economy, but also the manufacturing and agriculture spheres, the owners of small and medium-size businesses, most of the White middle class, the military, and law enforcement servicemen. He also hoped that the quick economic growth could add to his coalition many members of those racial and ethnic minorities whose economic situation had improved significantly as a result of the economic boom and the protectionist foreign trade measures. Indeed, the US GDP (in market prices) grew by 1.6% in 2016, 2.2% in 2017, 2.9% in 2018, and 2.7% in 2019. Quickly declining were the unemployment rates: from 4.9% in 2016 (the last year of Obama's presidency) to 4.3% in 2017, 3.9% in 2018, and 3.5% in 2019 (OECD, 2020).

As long as the economic growth continued, Trump looked essentially invincible. His position was further enhanced by a weak field of contenders for the Democratic Party nomination and the leading position within it of Obama's former Vice President, the 77-year-old Joseph (Joe) Biden—a figure viewed initially as a dream opponent for Trump. In effect, the economic crisis was the only miracle that could change the political balance and save the Democrats: instead of getting credit for the economic expansion of 2017–2019, the President would be hurt by the economic collapse. Thus, the pandemic and its economic consequences were expected to weaken the position of the President, giving the Democrats some hope for the victory in November 2020.

To be sure, during the last two weeks of March, the Dow Jones, NASDAQ, and S&P indices lost all of the gains they made during the previous three years of Trump's presidency and returned to their late 2016 levels, declining by more than 35% overall. GDP production in the first quarter of 2020 was 5% lower than in the same period the previous year (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020, 26 June). Personal income in

March 2020 has fallen by 2% and the international trade volume by $44.4 billion (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020).

The situation was further aggravated by a recent oil price war: in mid-March 2020, before the impact of the pandemic started to be felt, Oxford Economics predicted that the scaling back of the capital expenditure and investment resulting from the oil crisis could lead to a GDP decline of 0.3 percentage point in the United States (Brennan, 2020).

The International Monetary Fund's April, 2020 forecast projected the US economy to shrink by 5.9% in 2020. Even though this was relatively better than the expected EU average (7.5%[4]), it was clear that such an economic blow could carry with it significant social and political consequences.

Meanwhile, the latter developments increased the controversy: following the adoption of a massive stabilization package in March, personal income had grown by 10.8% in April, but declined by 4.2% in May (even though consumer spending increased that month by 8.2%) (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020, 26 June).

The touchiest issue politically was that of employment. In April, the unemployment rate increased by 10.3 percentage points to 14.7%. This was the highest rate and the largest over-the-month increase since the start of the Great Depression in 1929. The number of the unemployed rose by 15.9 million, reaching 23.1 million in April. The unemployment rates increased sharply among all major worker groups, reaching 13.0% for adult men, 15.5% for adult women, 31.9% for teenagers, 14.2% for Whites, 16.7% for Blacks, 14.5% for Asians, and 18.9% for Hispanics (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020, 8 May). The overall number of people filing for unemployment benefits exceeded 30 million. Goldman Sachs expected the share of the unemployed in the economically active population to reach 25%, repeating the record indicators of the Great Depression era (24.9% in 1933). Taking into account the underemployed and those who gave up on a job search, the real figure could reach 35% (Egan, 2020), raising fears of escalating social tensions and conflicts.

Nevertheless, even following the riots of May–June 2020, the economy started to open up, exerting a positive impact on the employment sphere: in May, the national unemployment rate declined by 1.4 percentage points over the month to 13.3%, although still was 9.7 points higher

[4] The IMF expected the US economy to grow by 4.7% in 2021 (IMF, 2020).

than in May 2019 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020, 19 June). The unemployment rate further declined by 2.2 percentage points to 11.1% in June, and the number of unemployed people fell by 3.2 million to 17.8 million. Still, even though unemployment fell in May and June, the jobless rate and the number of unemployed remained up by 7.6 percentage points and 12.0 million people, respectively, compared to February 2020. Among the major work groups, the unemployment rates declined in June for adult men (10.2%), adult women (11.2%), teenagers (23.2%), Whites (10.1%), Blacks (15.4%), and Hispanics (14.5%). The jobless rate for Asians (13.8%) remained essentially unchanged (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020, 2 July).

Following the initial shock, many stock indexes also regained their positions. Dow Jones, for instance, has regained more than 50% of the initial losses—25,827 on 2 July, compared to the February 12 record high of 29,551 (still, 12.6% lower) (*Wall Street Journal*, 2020, 2 July). NASDAQ regained all of its losses, closing at 10,208 on July 2, 2020 (Yahoo Finance, 2020, 2 July). A number of economic forecasts in June-July also predicted the stabilization and the resumption of economic growth already in the third quarter of 2020.[5]

Thus, both the economic dynamics and their potential impact on the political situation in the country remained unclear—and the situation was further complicated by the expectation of the second wave of the pandemic and the continuation of political tensions in the country.

The Political Dimension

For Trump's opponents, the pandemic created clear political opportunities both because the President lost his ability to claim credit for the economic growth of recent years and because he could be easily accused of ineffective leadership in dealing with the healthcare crisis. The coronavirus scare could also strengthen the Left's hand in its drive to create a first truly nationwide public healthcare system. Finally, the crisis gave the Democratic Party officials an opportunity to circumvent the primaries' procedures, railroading to victory the establishment's favorite—Joe Biden.

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[5] See, for instance, a surprising statement by Jason Furman, Harvard University Professor and Obama's former White House Council of Economic Advisors Chair (Lizza & Lippman, 2020).

Moreover, the intense pressure has been levied at Biden's main challenger, the left-wing Socialist senator, 78-year-old Bernie Sanders (whom the Party bosses were suspicious and afraid of no less than Trump), to immediately exit the race. The crisis was also offering them a chance to protect the elderly Biden from any live interaction with the electorate and the media.

While many of these expectations seemed to be quite logical and led indeed to a relative decline in the President's ratings, the reality turned out to be more nuanced. In particular, Donald Trump has again demonstrated his ability to get mobilized and change his behavior during moments of crisis. The President, who had an adversarial relationship with the mainstream media and ignored its representatives for years, started to have daily news conferences, interacting with journalists for hours, traveling around the country, meeting with state officials and business and societal leaders, and demonstrating that he was in charge and was willing to take responsibility upon himself—all this in a sharp contrast with Biden's behavior: the latter preferred to stay for three months in his Delaware home, avoiding any direct contact with the outside world. Biden's behavior sharply contrasted not only with that of Trump—it also differed from the actions of several other politicians, including many members of Congress, Governors, and Mayors, among whom were the Democratic Governors of New York Andrew Cuomo and California's Gavin Newsom.

The initial pandemic era surveys indicated that Trump was relatively successful in pursuing this new approach. The April 14–28, 2020, Gallup poll has shown that his activity as President was generally approved by 49% of respondents (compared to 44% two weeks earlier), including 93% of Republicans, 47% of Independents, and 8% of Democrats (Gallup, 2020). The dynamics of public approval of the President's actions in dealing specifically with the pandemic was more controversial: on March 13–22, 60% of respondents approved of the President's actions amid the crisis (only 43% approved of his actions two weeks before that). Among them were even some senior representatives of the Democratic Party, including a number of Governors, who recognized the effectiveness of the White House actions. Overall, Trump's work was approved by 94% of Republicans, 60% of independent voters, and even 27% of Democrats. Still, already the next poll has shown that support for the President's actions had slipped to 50% (respectively, 91%, 50%, and 11% among the Republicans, Independents, and Democrats) (Jones, 2020).

Meanwhile, the riots that started in the footsteps of George Floyd's killing by Derek Chauvin, a Minneapolis policeman, on May 25, 2020, have led to the further polarization of the electorate and public opinion and significantly lowered Trump's ratings. The explosion of public anger and the massive demonstrations, involving clashes with the police, riots, and numerous pogroms and acts of vandalism were the result of the extreme polarization of American society of the Trump years, the aggressive elite media campaign, the growing social gap, and the pattern of police brutality and the killings of African Americans in the United States. Simultaneously, these events were indicative of tensions resulting from the quarantine and social isolation, as well as the desperation of those losing jobs, incomes, and businesses. The riots also sent a strong signal to the elites regarding the potential political costs of the pandemic and the restrictive measures imposed on society. It was also expected that the overlap of the pandemic with the riots would further aggravate the economic situation, complicating the post-crisis recovery.[6]

This political dynamics also demonstrated the relative effectiveness of the Democratic Party's strategy of airbrushing Joe Biden's image and protecting him from any direct contact with either the electorate or the media. The national survey, conducted by Pew Research Center on June 16–22, 2020, among 4,708 adults, including 3,577 registered voters, indicated that Donald Trump faced a 10 percentage point deficit in his race against Joe Biden: 54% of registered voters said that if the election were held today, they would either support Biden or lean toward voting for him, while 44% supported Trump or leaned toward supporting the President. Very few voters—just 9%—considered Trump to be an average president; 37% said he was a good or great president; and a much larger share (53%) said he was poor or terrible, including 42% who thought he was a terrible president. Interestingly, fewer voters (28%) said Biden *would be* a good or great president. And, compared with Trump, many more (29%) said Biden would be an average president. 43% said Biden

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[6] The protests that followed took place in all 50 states, D.C., and US territories as well as many prisons and immigrant detention centers. In the course of the riots, at least 25 people were killed, and more than 14,000 were arrested (Olson, 2020, 27 June). Already by June 3, more than 200 cities introduced curfews, and in at least 27 states and Washington, DC, 62,000 National Guard members were activated (Sternlicht, 2020, 2 June). In Minneapolis-St. Paul alone, damages were expected to be in excess of $500 million. Damaged or destroyed were more than 400 businesses and in excess of 500 buildings (Meitrodt, 2020, 6 June).

would be poor or terrible, which was 10 percentage points lower than the share expressing such negative views about Trump as President (Pew Research Center, 2020).

Overall, while Trump's ratings declined, his supporters' enthusiasm for their candidate remained way above that of the Democrats. Indeed, the Republican electorate's attitudes stayed in a sharp contrast to the lukewarm attitude of the Democrats toward Joe Biden. In April, Emerson Poll found that Trump had a sizable 19-point advantage in the enthusiasm gap over Biden, 64%–45%. Some 36% of the President's supporters said they were "extremely excited" to vote for Trump, and 28% said they were "very excited." For Biden, those numbers were 22% and 23% (Bedard, 2020). The aforementioned Pew Research Center June poll has shown that about three-quarters of registered voters who supported Trump (76%) said they viewed their presidential ballot primarily as a vote *for* the President. By comparison, only 33% of Biden voters viewed their vote more as an expression of support for him; about twice as many (67%) viewed it as vote *against* Trump (Pew Research Center, 2020).

An even more dangerous trend for Biden consisted of many "progressives"—the left-wingers who supported Senator Bernie Sanders during the primary season—openly expressing their skepticism about the tentative Party nominee. The May polls showed that more than one in five Sanders' supporters wasn't planning to vote for Biden, while six out of ten said they were "not very excited" or "not excited at all" about his nomination (Vallejo, 2020).

Meanwhile, exactly the fact that about 20% of Sanders' supporters either did not vote for Hillary Clinton or voted for Donald Trump in the hotly contested areas of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania in 2016 has cost Hillary the election. Still, the growing polarization in the country, many moderates and independents turning away from Trump, and Biden's collaboration with the Left on the Party Platform have expanded the Democratic candidate's electoral base, bringing him to victory in November 2020.

The Policy Implications

For the Democrats, Trump's potential success, even if only relative, in dealing with the pandemic and the economic crisis associated with it could have very unpleasant political consequences. On the other hand, considering the extreme polarization of the country and the emotional

toll of the recent riots, the escalation of the crisis could lead to a further growth of political tensions, significantly complicating the formulation and execution of a coherent governmental policy in terms of dealing with the pandemic and its socio-economic consequences.

Besides the electoral considerations, the task of fighting the pandemic was further worsened by the constitutional disagreements in regard to the division of powers among the federal, state, and local governments (including their ability to use the federal funds). The conflict also had a purely ideological dimension—a conservative Republican President had to deal with a large number of liberal Democratic Governors and Mayors being in charge of states and large cities that turned out to be the most affected by the coronavirus, in particular, New York, California, Michigan, and Washington. In many cases, the same states and cities also became the major sites of the protests. These political leaders had very different views on the goals, methods, and role of government in resolving the crisis.

Regarding the first issue, following a month-long tag of war, the President agreed to transfer a substantial share of responsibility to state and local governments. This decision opened the door to a significant inter-governmental policy differentiation based on specific regional conditions and the ideological positions of the local governments—with time, this gap became even more visible and continued to widen under the Biden administration.

Ironically, regardless of the ideological differences between the White House and the Democrats, in a vein similar to the Great Depression era, the solutions offered up to this point and accepted by both sides of the political spectrum have led initially to a significant strengthening of the socio-economic role of the state. Government assistance for COVID-19 began with the passage of the $8.3 billion Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020, enacted into law on March 6, 2020.2 (U.S. Congress. H. R.6074, 2020). The $192 billion Families First Coronavirus Response Act came next, on March 18, 2020.3 (Congressional Budget Office. H. R. 6201, 2020).

They were followed by the CARES (the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act which was adopted by Congress and signed by the President. It went into effect on March 27, 2020, providing for the allocation of $2.2 trillion to deal with the pandemic and its consequences. The measures outlined in the legislative package could be assembled in three blocs:

Medical: a sharp increase in the production of ventilators, medical masks, and disinfectants; sponsoring medical and pharmaceutical research; the development of drugs and vaccines; and providing $100 billion for the construction of new, temporary, or existing but renovated/expanded hospitals;

Personal: the direct payments of $1,200 to all Americans earning up to $75,000 (or $150,000 for a family) and an additional $500 per child. Payments to higher earners (those with a personal annual income of up to $99,000) had to be prorated. The Act has substantially expanded the jobless aid, providing an additional 13 weeks and a four-month enhancement of benefits—a $600-per-week boost in unemployment insurance. It also extended payments for the first time to freelancers and gig workers—worth more than $500 billion overall; and

Business: This included $377 billion in federally guaranteed loans to small businesses; the establishment of a $500 billion government lending program for distressed companies suffering from the impact of the crisis. The Act also allowed the government to take equity stakes in airlines that received aid to help compensate the taxpayers (Cochrane & Fandos, 2020).

The adoption of this Act, along with a number of other measures (for instance, reaching an agreement to reduce oil production), has softened the pandemic's negative impact on the US economy and population. Still, the adoption of the bill involved significant conceptual disagreements between the Republicans and the Democrats, primarily in regard to who should be the primary recipients of assistance. In particular, the Republicans claimed that private businesses, as the creators of new value and jobs, had to receive the bulk of the aid. In their turn, the Democrats prioritized assistance to local governments and the less advantaged population groups. While both parties agreed on the need to support small businesses, the Democrats insisted that priority had to be given to minority business owners. They were able to put a number of their proposals in the final text of the bill.

In particular, the bill allocated $100 million in grants for additional rural broadband and $150 million for the arts and humanities—to bring cultural programming to Americans, including those stuck at home. It

increased funding for domestic violence shelters and hotlines, and set aside $425 million to deal with mental health and substance abuse disorders related to the pandemic. $400 million became available to "protect and expand voting for the 2020 election cycle." $3.5 billion were given to states to prop up child care facilities and allow universities to keep paying students in federal work-study jobs even if their academic terms have been cut short (ibid.).

The overall results of the bill's adoption were a significant expansion of the US federal debt and the further increase in both the federal and the local governments' involvement in the economic and social spheres. This trend was further enhanced by the invocation by the President of the 1950 Defence Production Act, allowing the federal government's interference into private business activities in cases of national emergencies, and strict limits introduced temporarily on immigration (including family-based and highly qualified migration as well as the admission of the refugees).

In the latter case, the pandemic-related limitations overlapped with the general Trump's line aimed at the tightening of immigration policy. In fact, Donald Trump was the first modern President to place the issue of immigration at the heart of his 2016 election campaign. His policies resulted in a 2.8-fold decline in the number of inbound refugees already before the start of the pandemic: from 84,998 in 2016 to 29,916 by 2019 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2020). Overall, Donald Trump issued more than 400 executive orders on migration policy in 2017–2021, with most of them designed to tighten regulations in this sphere. These policy shifts overlapped with a general rise of xenophobia in foreign and domestic policy, driven by the pandemic. After all, it was Trump who insisted on referring to COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus." The additional aggravating factors included the temporary closures of most of US consular offices and strict limitations on passenger air travel with other countries, as well as medical restrictions for people entering the United States. As a result, many of those who had already received work permits, study visas or had their family reunification, asylum, or other legitimate applications approved found themselves unable to come to the United States. In 2020, the number of immigrant visas dropped 45% compared to a year earlier, and the number of nonimmigrant visas issued decreased by 54% (Chisti & Bolter, 2020). Still, the President's decision to limit the number of H1B visas issued to skilled workers came as a surprise, since prior to that Trump had mostly focused on opposing the arrival of illegal

undocumented and unskilled migrants. The issuance of temporary H1B and H2B visas to non-agricultural workers was also suspended.

The further developments, including the activization of the electoral campaign, the nationwide protests, the growing political polarization of the country, and the escalating disagreements between the two parties in regard to the future ways of dealing with the crisis, have significantly complicated the negotiation and adoption of any follow-up measures. In particular, the more than 1,800-page-long HEROES (Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions) Act, passed by the Democratic majority of the House of Representatives in May 2020, got stuck in the Republican-dominated Senate. Having a price tag of more than $3 trillion, it was designed to provide $500 billion in direct assistance to state governments to counter the fiscal impact of the pandemic, $375 billion to assist local governments, $20 billion to tribal governments, and $20 billion to US territories.

If adopted, the bill would have established a $200 billion "Heroes' Fund" to ensure that essential workers receive hazard pay. Their employers would be able to apply for grants to provide a $13 per hour premium pay for their workers on top of regular wages. These employers would be eligible for grants of $10,000 per worker, or $5,000 for highly compensated essential workers. Another provision of the bill would appropriate $850 million for states to provide child and family care for essential workers. The bill would also offer funding for personal protective equipment for emergency healthcare and essential workers. The proposal would extend a $600-per-week boost in unemployment insurance established under the CARES Act until January 2021 to help millions who have lost jobs during the pandemic. The legislation would extend the existing student loan payment plans established in the CARES Act, which did not cover private loan borrowers. It would provide up to $10,000 in debt relief to be applied to a private student loan, to be paid in monthly installments by the Treasury Department until September 2021. The proposal called for an additional $75 billion for coronavirus testing, contact tracing, and isolation measures. It also intended to ensure that all Americans could receive free coronavirus treatment. The bill would provide $50 million in assistance to farmers, farmers markets, and local food outlets affected by market disruptions, as well as another $50 million to beginning farmers and ranchers. It would also provide $16.5 billion in direct payments to agricultural producers. The Act designated $100 billion in emergency assistance to low-income renters to help them avoid

eviction. It would also provide $75 billion to states, territories, and tribes to help homeowners with direct assistance with mortgage payments and other housing costs. The bill would implement a second round of direct payments to Americans to assist with the fallout of the pandemic. It would provide $1,200 to every family member, including children, up to $6,000 per household. The HEROES Act was designed to give $25 billion in assistance to the Postal Service, which was expected to run out of money by late September without congressional assistance. The bill allocated $3.6 billion in grants to states for planning and preparation of elections, as well as to bolster election security (S.3548—116th; Segers, 2020).

Meanwhile, the bill was essentially already dead upon its arrival in the Senate. On the one hand, the President's and Republicans' growing opposition to it was related to the economic and fiscal consequences of the crisis, foremostly the escalating public debt. Indeed, the total US public debt has increased from $23.2 trillion on December 31, 2019, to $27.8 trillion on January 20, 2021, the last day of the Trump Presidency (i.e., by $4.6 Trillion, or by 19.6%[7]) (US Treasury, 2022, 9 February).

The Republicans increasingly supported the policies of economic reopening and lifting the limits on public life, frequently ignoring the health experts' recommendations. Besides that, Trump was looking back at the socio-economic and political lessons of May–June 2020. In particular, he seemed to have concluded that a situation when millions of people lost their jobs and stayed home under the quarantine, receiving significant financial aid from the government, became one of the major triggers of the riots. Respectively, the White House and the Republicans were very skeptical about the extension of the $600-per-week unemployment benefit until January 2021, suggested in the Democratic bill proposal. Mitch McConnell, at that time the Republican majority leader in the Senate, claimed that "to pay people a bonus not to go back to work…was a mistake" (Kapur, 2020), implying that since that moment benefits had

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[7] It is worth noting that the same reckless spending policies continued under Biden, resulting in the further increase of the national public debt by $2.3 trillion in the first year of his presidency. Overall, in the period between December 31, 2019, and February 8, 2022, US public debt has increased by $6.8 trillion, or by 29.5% (US Treasury, 2022, 9 February). The influx of the huge amounts of money, along with the labor market and supply chains disruptions, played the major role in the quickly growing inflationary pressures: during 2021, Consumer Price Index increased by 7%, the highest increase recorded in forty years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022, 9 February).

to be offered to those returning to work, rather than to those remaining at home. Keeping in mind the importance of this issue for the Democrats and their electoral base, the achievement of the stated goal of adopting a new relief package by the end of July 2020 became highly complicated.

Still, at least theoretically, there could be some other potential areas of legislative collaboration. Ironically, in some cases, they also came from the Keynesian economic vocabulary and could lead to the further strengthening of the government's role in both the economic and the socio-political spheres. In particular, a return to the idea of two years ago was becoming possible, when the President offered the Democrats the adoption of a program for the development of transport infrastructure with a total price tag of more than $1.5 trillion. At that time, the proposal was blocked due to both the conceptual disagreements and the Democrats' unwillingness to support any initiative that could increase Trump's ratings and enhance his position on the eve of impeachment hearings. This project, however, could be capable of stimulating the economy on the basis of state-generated demand and creating millions of jobs. Sabotaging it could bring very painful political consequences for either side. Nevertheless, it was adopted only under the Biden administration and the democrat-controlled Congress, with spending priorities shifting significantly.

In the long run, the urgency of the situation and the upcoming elections in November 2020 have pushed the opposing parties toward some compromises. In particular, in December 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, was passed, adding another $900 billion in economic relief (U.S. Congress. H.R.133—Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021). This action, however, could not save Trump or the Republican Party, who already lost the November 2020 election and control of the White House and both chambers of Congress.

The Long-Term Consequences?

Trump losing the 2020 election was one of the most notable political consequences of the pandemic. Contrary to many expectations, COVID-19 does not go away, creating numerous hurdles to the new, Biden, administration. Regardless of the future dynamics of the pandemic, it looks like some of the phenomena that were related to it—or were at least articulated and further enhanced by it—are here to stay. Some of those

cause significant apprehension on the part of the academic community and social activists. These include, among others:

> The intensification of governmental attempts to regulate various spheres of public and private life, relying, in particular, on the *Internet,* the use of drones, face recognition techniques, smart phones, and other modern means of technology. In a number of instances, such attempts by the local governments have caused significant tensions and public protests, including those of armed citizens. Governments at all levels took note of that, being increasingly careful when considering the imposition of limits on economic activity and social interactions;
> The temporary transfer of school and university education to an online format. While many school systems have returned to the conventional format, the impact of the pandemic on the educational sphere might be significant and permanent, leading to the expansion of education, the weakening of the university tenure system, the introduction of budgetary limits on academic travel and research, and the general lowering of the educational and research standards and quality;
> The increasing market share of the online retail and services and the quick expansion of the number of businesses and employees working from home. These trends have led to a significant restructuring of the labor market[8] and a large wave of bankruptcies of retail, service, and other business entities. Small and medium businesses seem to be especially vulnerable;
> The further strengthening of political trends toward the establishment of direct democracy on the basis of voting via the *Internet* and the direct interaction of political leaders with the electorate, resulting, in particular, in the increasingly populist character of American (and not only) politics; and
> A similar populist trend resulting from the growing political polarization and the newly emerging ad hoc mass protest movements,

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[8] The Gallup poll, conducted in September 2021, has shown that 45% of the US labor force worked from home either all (25%) or part of the time (20%). For the white-collar workers, the respective figures were 67%, 41%, and 26%, with one-third of such white-collar employees stating that they would change their jobs if employers try to return them to the office full-time (Saad & Wigert, 2021, 13 October).

increasingly involving protesters prone to violence and/or openly carrying arms.

Foreign Policy Implications

Three more trends associated with the pandemic lie in the foreign policy domain. Initially, they fully corresponded to Donald Trump's worldview and essentially enhanced the policies he's been pursuing during his White House tenure:

The tightening of controls in the immigration sphere with a consistent shift toward the preferential treatment given to the elite immigrants (academic personnel, other highly qualified migrants in select professional fields, students, and "investment" migrants) on a par with a crackdown on the low-qualified and undocumented migrants (the latter's number is estimated currently at around 11 million [Pasel & Cohn, 2017]), family-based migration, and even the admission of refugees;

The enhancement of the anti-globalist trends of recent years, the return to a literal understanding of the US state sovereignty, and the strengthening of the autarchic economic tendencies, including an increasingly skeptical approach to the existing international legal regimes and many intergovernmental organizations. From the very start, Trump declared the "America First" principle, relying on the increasingly negative view on the role of the major international organizations, including the UN, WTO, and NATO, as well as such functional organizations as WHO.[9] In particular, the President's advisors considered the globalization system, which was incrementally built in the initial post-Cold War period on the basis of such mechanisms as the World Trade Organization and was designed to create economic advantages for the largest and (presumed at that

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[9] The latest expression of this trend was Donald Trump's sharp criticism of the World Health Organization's reaction to the pandemic, with him implying that WHO was acting under pressure from China and threatening to withhold $118 million of the US membership dues—in addition to the more than $90 million the country already owed the organization from the previous year. Meanwhile, US dues account for about a quarter of the annual fees the WHO assesses to all 194 of its member states (Welna, 2020; WHO, 2020, 31 January).

time to be) the most effective economy (the American economy), to have become more of a liability than an advantage for the United States. The President wanted to protect the American industry and agriculture from what he considered as unfair competition by rebuilding the economic protectionist barriers;

The escalation of tensions with China, increasingly perceived as a challenger to the United States within the international system.

Considering China as the major threat to US interests, Trump was willing to destroy or at least significantly weaken those global institutions that were formed or expanded during the last thirty years. In his view, these agreements and structures, designed initially to give advantage to the United States, in reality favored China and a number of other countries. For Trump and his allies, the pandemic served as a proof of his vision's correctness and an opportune moment for raising tensions with China in order to block its further development through some kind of a new "containment" policy, slowing down that country's advancement in the economic, political, and military spheres. Thus, both the President and other members of his administration repeatedly accused China of taking an ineffective response to the pandemic, withholding the relevant information, conducting secret biological experiments, and so on. This was a risky strategy, leading to an angry Chinese reaction which could result potentially in a new Cold War and an arms race with a much stronger economically opponent than the USSR ever was.

The Post-Pandemic Future: Are the Changes to Stay?

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the United States at a moment when that country was entering a deep system-wide crisis—the very election of Donald Trump to the White House was quite indicative of that. Globalization, a technological revolution, and social and demographic changes in American society played a major role in his ascendance to power in 2016. The importance of these factors in the US political and social life has kept growing ever since, even in the aftermath of Trump's electoral defeat in November 2020.

While the former President was trying to offer his vision of systemic reforms, from the very start both his personality and policies were viewed

with suspicion by significant segments of the US political establishment and society in general. The growing social, political, and ideological polarization in the country continues to serve as a significant obstacle for the achievement of consensus in regard to the method and means of dealing with the pandemic-related crisis and creating the mechanisms designed to prevent its repetition in future. More than that, the healthcare crisis exerted a devastating impact on the US economy and socio-political stability.

Nevertheless, the developments of the last two years have also created opportunities for cooperation. Stabilization packages adopted during the pandemic and the ongoing expansion of the government's redistributive role in the socio-economic sphere show that reaching consensus, at least on a limited scale, is possible. In a number of decisive moments in US history, including Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s and Johnson's Great Society in the 1960s, the country's elites were able to compromise in order to stabilize the country and protect the existing political system. Time will tell if American history repeats itself in the current century, leading to significant systemic reforms, or the petty political considerations and the logic of electoral politics prevent it from happening. In the latter case, the current healthcare calamity could have truly catastrophic socio-economic and political consequences.

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Spatial Development, Regional Policy, and Contemporary World Politics

Leonid E. Kozlov

As a factor of foreign policy and world politics, the territory of the state is only on the periphery of the theory of international relations. By default, this question refers to geopolitics, while the traditional theory of international relations is more focused on such factors as military power, economics, diplomacy, culture, and ideology. Geopolitics bypasses the socio-economic development of the state, paying more attention to the physical characteristics of the territory, the location of basic infrastructure elements, military bases, and so on. Meanwhile, a simple yet unclear question remains: whether or not the state requires the uniform socio-economic development of its territory to succeed in international politics, or, when solving foreign policy problems, regional disparities can be ignored, which inevitably leads to an open economy.

Our hypothesis is that some problems of regional policy have a very indirect impact on a state's international position, which is hardly taken

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into account when making appropriate state decisions, while others, on the contrary, have a direct and significant impact which, in some states, lasts for centuries. We also believe that the development of some sub-regions can influence the policy of neighbouring countries, thus generating various consequences for international relations. In our opinion, state regulation of territorial development has become so internationalized that it is time to include it in the theory of complex interdependence. Based on empirical material from East Asia and the East of Russia (from Lake Baikal to the Pacific Ocean), we will consider the influence of international situations on regional development, state actions for the development of regions as a response to international situations, and the influence of one country's regional development on the other countries' policies.

METHODOLOGY

Firstly, this approach relies on the theory of complex interdependence, developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, which formulates three key trends in modern international relations: firstly, societies are connected by multiple channels, including intergovernmental, trans-governmental, and transnational; secondly, issues on the international agenda do not form a clear and stable hierarchy; and thirdly, military power loses its importance but retains purpose in relations between the countries lying in different macroregions or in solving a narrow range of issues. Many international issues are arising today in those areas that were previously considered purely domestic, as a result of which the barrier between domestic and foreign policies is blurring (Keohane & Nye, 2011).

Secondly, we turn to the geopolitical sociology of Randall Collins, which considers it natural for large states with large populations and resources to expand by military force at the expense of smaller and poorer states. Initially, geopolitical expansion requires effective mobilization of internal resources, but, if successful, the government will have even more resources at its disposal and can continue to expand further. However, expansion cannot last indefinitely: overexpansion, which is only revealed in practice, leads to the depletion of resources and the disintegration of the state, due to an increase in military spending (Collins, 1995).

There has been a long discussion about the content of the term "regional policy". This term refers to a set of concepts, normative legal

acts, and practical measures developed and implemented by public authorities in order to form a certain territorial structure of society. At the same time, here we refer to regional policy not only as social and economic measures but also as personnel, electoral, defensive, diplomatic, and other such measures, if these are directly aimed at forming the territorial structure of their country.

The powers that claim for leadership (if not globally then at least regionally) are trying to work out a comprehensive plan for developing the entire territory of their country; the exception is the United States, where, paradoxically, high-ranking Regional Sciences and the absence of centralized territorial planning are combined. Such plans are aimed at creating a certain structure of the state territory (by and large, the *Christaller's net*, where a more or less evenly distributed population would be engaged in productive work in enterprises that are competitive in the world economy). The instruments of these plans, as a rule, are direct government investments in infrastructure (social overhead capital, tax and administrative benefits, subsidies for social needs or new business projects). Defence and security issues, diplomacy, elections to government bodies, and other such matters are bypassed, although in reality they constitute a single conglomerate of problems between the centre and the regions.

Results

International Relations as an Incentive for Regional Policy

The cause-and-effect relationship between uneven territory or foreign policy developments and between some socio-economic problems is hard to trace. Factors in this regard are, for example, social polarization, mass and spontaneous migration from poor regions to the rich ones, migrants' marginalization, the excessive costs for utilities, transport, and ecology in agglomerations, and many more. Of course, these problems to some extent undermine the economic and social foundation of foreign policy, but, on the other hand, income from the developing agglomerations can more than compensate for them. Finance ministers have long complained that supporting weak regions is a waste of budget funds (Stilianos, 2018). In their opinion, it makes sense to support not the weak, but the strong: i.e. global cities, the main generators of innovation, and global gross product.

Natalia Zubarevich describes three possible priorities for regional policy: stimulating, levelling, and geopolitical. The last of these implies that the government pursues as its main goal the preservation of the country's territorial integrity, strengthening the socio-economic and socio-political ties of the problematic regions with the core of the state. This is the costliest and least cost-effective type of regional policy (Zubarevich, 2015). It is here, in our opinion, that a specific correlation of territorial development and regional policy with international relations and foreign political processes is revealed.

Population in depressed territory does not disappear overnight. A region can be a very inert object, the development of which is difficult to deploy; as such, those residents who stay there during a difficult period, less loyal to the centre, lead to a worsening of the territory. In such a situation, separatist sentiments intensify, as was the case during the collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia. These can be further aggravated by the fact that a sovereign state is a linguistic and/or religious reference point for a depressed sub-region of another country, especially in the case of divided peoples. Political control over a region also weakens if the permanent population (the creator of statehood) is reduced there and is replaced by migrants who do not share national guidelines and values. It also happens that the socio-economic situation in the periphery is not bad, but is formed due to the orientation of economic ties to foreign countries, due to the weakened and ruptured national economic space.

The centre certainly cares about the state of affairs in the periphery, when there are long-standing historical claims and unresolved territorial disputes between neighbouring countries. However, even if it is simply the resident population of the border region that leaves or dies out, this generates a dangerous focus on terra nullis. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was considered normal that the land that was not regularly cultivated or not inhabited at all could be annexed by any government ready for development (the philosophical and legal rationale for this was developed by John Locke and Emer de Vattel). Today, similar discussions are actually ongoing regarding Antarctica, the Moon, and Mars. If there is no external threat, or if a large state borders on weaker neighbours or has no neighbours at all, the centre may well neglect the development of the periphery.

The desire of the centre to bring natural resources or transit possibilities of the periphery into circulation is somehow connected with the conjuncture of the world economy and the state of foreign markets.

Usually, these are some kind of technically complex projects, because all superficial resources have already been exhausted. Complex projects often require foreign technologies, long-term financing, and foreign sales markets.

Support from the centre is required for any regions that have experienced natural or man-made disasters. If a disaster occurs in transboundary landscapes, coordination of intergovernmental efforts is usually required. In East Asia, such an example is the Amur River basin. Intergovernmental coordination between Russia, China, and Japan began there in the 2000s on the issue of chemical pollution. In 2013, a catastrophic flood occurred on the Amur and its tributaries. To prevent this kind of incident in the future, it is necessary to build complex hydraulic structures both in Russia and in China.

A special case of regional policy internationalization is presented by the European Union, where the so-called "cohesion policy" is carried out according to a single plan across the entire supranational organization and receives about a third of the budget, mainly to subsidize new infrastructure and new enterprises in lagging regions (Braun, 2018). This policy, in addition to socio-economic tasks, is also aimed at political cohesion amongst the 27 EU members, not only at the government but also at the regional level. Of course, there are always more development projects than funds in the general budget, so the issues of regional development make the already tangled relations European governments have with each other and with the EU bureaucracy even more complicated. The cohesion policy is quite effective and becomes, in a way, an element of the EU's soft power used in relations with China, Brazil, and other countries (Dąbrowski et al., 2018).

East of Russia

In 1858–1860, taking advantage of China's foreign policy problems due to the Opium wars, Russia acquired the left bank of the Amur River and the Ussuri region. By the twentieth century, the population of the East of Russia exceeded 1 million people, and its own production and sea trade grew so much that the free port regime was abolished. The expansion of the internal market of the East of Russia made it very attractive for labour migrants from China, Japan, and Korea, who made up about a third of the local population. Chinese immigrants were the most suspicious of the Russian authorities, while Korean migrants who fled hunger

at home were in good standing in Russia (Chang, 2016). Despite the Chinese and Japanese anti-Russian agitation, Korea formed a strong pro-Russian party headed by King Gojong at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

At the same time, the centre financed the development of its own territory much less than temporary holdings in Manchuria (Larin, 2013). The first successes of the colonial race in the Far East turned the head of the Russian elite and led to an unsuccessful war with Japan. After that, the Russian government recognized the entire previous policy in the Far East as erroneous and embarked on a course of cooperation with Japan, but huge allocations were directed to construct the Vladivostok fortress and other military fortifications on the Pacific Ocean, as well as the Trans-Siberian Railway, and to stimulate peasant migration.

Outer Mongolia and Tuva, as well as other regions of the Qing Dynasty, tied very strong trade links with the Baikal region of Russia, where many permanently settled Russian residents, Russian consuls, and *Cossacks* ensured the functioning of the trade routes between Russia and China. Therefore, when the monarchical regime fell in China in 1911, Russia supported the independence of these regions. In 1920–1930, against the backdrop of China's claims to Mongolia and Japan's plans to create a puppet Mongolian state, Outer Mongolia and the Baikal region actually formed a united military grouping, and Irkutsk became a training centre for the Mongolian political elite.

In the 1920s, due to a shortage of funds, the Bolshevik government granted the East of Russia expanded freedom of trade, but after the Japanese expansion in Manchuria, Russia's borders in the Amur basin were closed again, and the East Asian diasporas were deported: the Chinese to China, and the Koreans to Central Asia. The Japanese, for the most part, left Russia before that. In the East of Russia at this time, new fortified areas and military factories were quickly created, geological prospecting and extraction of mineral resources expanded. Gulag prisoners and exiled peasants were sent en masse to do this work. During World War II, a second Lend-Lease hub is formed in the East of Russia: by sea through Vladivostok and by air through Yakutsk. This stimulated the development of all types of transport in the region (Larin, 2013).

In the 1950s-1960s, the militarization of the East of Russia continued: first against the background of the confrontation with the United States and then against that with China. Strategic weapons and auxiliary military units were located here, which is why regions with extreme climates

were mastered and settled by permanent residents. The number of the military grouping here reached 1 million people. The Baikal-Amur Mainline was built as a reserve railroad in case of war with China. Because of the tensions with China, Japan, and South Korea, social ties with them were cut off, and paradoxically, the number one foreign language at local schools was German. The population of the East of Russia grew to about 13 million people, but the counties along Russia's land border were not well-populated, roads were not built there, and large enterprises were not created to hinder a possible invasion. The vast majority of supply chains connected the East of Russia with other regions of the USSR, and not with Asian neighbours.

In the 1980s, the USSR's relations with China and the United States were normalized. In the context of the economic crisis, post-Soviet Russia has significantly reduced its military grouping in the East. Most of the military installations were abandoned, as were many mining enterprises. As a result of the liberalization of foreign trade, economically inexpedient production chains collapsed, and the neighbouring countries of East Asia took a dominant position in the foreign trade of the East of Russia. In the 1990s, international trade became the main source of survival in the East of Russia and created independent political and criminal elites here (Davis, 2003).

In the 2000s, the Putin government, with a rich oil and gas budget, tried to control the local elite, suppress opposition, and turn Vladivostok into a showcase for Russian diplomacy in Asia. As part of the "Turn to the East", Russia has allocated huge funds for the APEC-2012 summit, including the construction of a new campus for the Far Eastern University, three bridges, and a new airport. Subsequently, the EEF (the Eastern Economic Forum) has been held annually on the same site. Three new pipelines were laid through the East of Russia for export to Asia and the United States. The centre developed two strategies and more than 30 new laws, as well as creating a special ministry for developing the East and the Arctic regions. The largest public investment per capita was made in the Kuril Islands in response to Japan's territorial claims. Nevertheless, the main problems—housing and quality jobs—have not been eliminated; as such, the resident population is slowly but surely leaving, and private businesses are increasingly switching to rotational work. Therefore, Moscow's concerns about terra nullis in the East remain (Lee & Lukin, 2016).

Japan

In the history of Japan, the relationship of regional policy and international relations was especially pronounced during the Meiji and imperialism. What was common in the Japanese policy of developing the periphery was that it began with the military and was accompanied (with the exception of Sakhalin and Hokkaido) by intensive Japaneseization: this entailed the compulsory introduction of the Japanese language into local use, the replacement of local names with Japanese ones, and the restriction of the outskirts' local language, culture, press, and political activity. Everywhere the Japanese carried out a large-scale construction of all types of transport communications, postal communications, schools, and hospitals, which had a very beneficial effect on the socio-economic situation of local residents. The ultimate goal of this was to build a state rich in natural resources, with a controlled, almost planned, economy and a loyal population—the source of the army's human resources.

The purposeful development of the periphery began with Hokkaido, which had to be protected from Russian claims. In the mid-nineteenth century, very few Japanese people lived there, and the economy was in a primitive state. The Hokkaido colonization administration, taking the Russian *Cossacks* as a model, created a network of military settlements, which were endowed with plots for farming. Opposition *samurai* were also exiled to Hokkaido and given land plots, from whom their possessions in the central part of Japan were confiscated (Larin, 2013).

Japanese rule in Korea 1905–1945 was accompanied by a significant rise in the economy and demography, but material successes could not compensate for the feeling of national inferiority of the Koreans, so the regional political process was constantly accompanied by protests, guerrilla warfare, terrorist attacks, and anti-Japanese propaganda by emigrants who settled in Russia, the United States, and China. The Japanese authorities had certain plans to develop the Korean economy: they wanted to specialize in agriculture and the extraction of mineral resources, non-Japanese investments in Korea were curtailed, and the investments of Korean businessmen in production with high added value were held back. During World War II, Korea was initially only a rear base, but the successful Japaneseization made it possible to recruit a number of Koreans into the ranks of the imperial army (Dudden, 2004).

The Ryukyu Kingdom had previously been a vassal to China and Japan at the same time. After its annexation, local political and legal

traditions long persisted, which increased the gap between Ryukyu and the Japanese economy. In general, Tokyo's policy towards Ryukyu was exploitative. The situation in the local economy was difficult, and a mono-cultural specialization in the production of sugar cane was formed. The indigenous population emigrated en masse in search of a better life on the island of Honshu and abroad. During World War II, the Japanese government did not trust the locals and evacuated most of them to more controlled regions. Taiwan, in contrast, became a showcase for Japanese regional politics. More flexible political governance and public investment in infrastructure and social services created a diversified and prosperous economy in Taiwan (Ka, 1998).

The development of South Sakhalin and the Kuriles was carried out by the Japanese without resistance from the locals, since after 1905 the Russians evacuated from there, and the indigenous Ainu almost all died out. The main task at the beginning was to form a permanent population, which eventually exceeded 0.3 million people. The rate in the development of the economy here was made on the timber and fishing industries. During World War II, South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands became the base of hostilities against the United States in the Northern Pacific. After the war, the Japanese were evacuated from Korea, Taiwan, and Sakhalin to Japan (Larin, 2013).

After the war, the international factor in Japan's regional policy remained expressed only in Ryukyu, where the main American military bases were located. The Americans constantly had friction with local residents; the military factor constrained local development opportunities, primarily in tourism, so the government in Tokyo had to manoeuvre between Americans and residents of Ryukyu (Kirk, 2013). According to modern Japanese plans for territorial development, the centre orients the peripheral regions to cooperate with various external forces; examples include cooperation between Ryukyu and Southeast Asia, or between the Sea of Japan prefecture and Russia. Japan often resorts to such an instrument of regional development as international mega-events such as the G7/8 summit or the Olympic Games.

China

China faced the threat of territorial disintegration back in the middle of the nineteenth century; however, limited resources and the shared management of this retardation did not allow the Qing Dynasty and

militarists to implement comprehensive countermeasures. The Chiang Kai-shek government, after stabilizing its position, prepared plans for the development of the periphery, but they were thwarted by Japanese intervention (Larin, 2013).

Communist China attentively tackled the problems of territorial development as economic reforms advanced at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By this time, two main blocks of problems had formed: socio-economic disparities between the coastal and continental regions, and separatist sentiments of the national outskirts. The international factor mainly influences the threat of separatism. This is complicated by the fact that many foreign governments, particularly in Europe and the United States, have criticized Beijing for violation of human rights in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong. Muslims in Xinjiang have support from non-governmental, including radical, Islamist organizations. Tibet's claims to restore independence are supported by India.

Beijing, in fact, is using harsh methods in the fight against separatism, primarily in Xinjiang, where all modern technical capabilities are used to spy on people, movement is tightly controlled even between urban areas, and the admission of foreigners to the region is limited. The indigenous people periodically undergo ideological education in special camps. Protests are immediately stopped. Despite the undeniable growth of Xinjiang's socio-economic indicators, underground opposition persists there, and terrorist attacks still occur (Anand, 2019).

Massive construction of transport, communications, and energy infrastructure is underway throughout the country, but on the national outskirts, its political effect is especially noticeable: social ties are becoming stronger, and the opportunities for the personal growth of residents of national outskirts within the framework of the Chinese state are expanding, so therefore new generations are less likely to link their future with an abstract idea of independence. The spread of the Chinese language and the migration of Han Chinese to the borderlands further strengthen these ties (Guo, 2016).

The northeast was the most industrialized region in China under Japanese rule, but gradually degraded by the twenty-first century. Today, its main international task is cooperation with Russia, including the transit of oil and gas through new pipelines, the import of other natural resources from Russia, and social and cultural ties which are convenient for reporting in annual programmes of intergovernmental cooperation. However, the Northeast is definitely not a base for "Chinese expansion"

into Russia, which many Russians are afraid of: Chinese investments in the East of Russia are surprisingly small, and businessmen in the Northeast are more interested in the markets of megacities in the centre and south of China (Zuenko et al., 2019).

A special case of the influence of international relations on China's regional policy is Hong Kong. When China restored its sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, it promised to preserve the local political and legal system for 50 years. In recent years, however, Hong Kong has been rocked by such radical and crowded protests, encouraged by the United States and Great Britain, that Beijing has decided to limit Hong Kong's autonomous rights and give more powers to the police and state security agencies.

The Republic of Korea

South Korea is pursuing regional policy almost more actively than Russia, Japan, and China, but the reasons for this are not entirely clear, given such a small territory. For example, North Korea is completely indifferent to regional levelling: this policy is reduced there to the minimum necessary to ensure their power generation and food. In South Korea, the external factor affects the development of the regions, primarily through the conjuncture of the world economy. Regions that thrived under South Korea's former specialization in metallurgy and heavy industry like Gangwon-do in the 1990s and 2000s have experienced a severe recession and a painful restructuring of their economy. Contrary to this, the economy is over-concentrated in Seoul, Incheon, and Busan, unless the central government prevents this. Diversified and generously funded assistance to the periphery today is mainly aimed at creating decent living conditions, increasing employment, and developing innovative business (Lee, 2009).

The factor of the border with North Korea slows down the development of border counties because South Korean laws impose restrictions on economic activity near military bases. On the other hand, this factor stimulates tourism in these counties, especially in Panmunjom, where the truce was signed in 1953 (Gelézeau, 2011). The Gangwon administration sees the potential for developing the North–South relationship and calls for a more active inter-Korean rapprochement in its strategy (Gangwon Vision, 2017). The South Korean authorities willingly use international mega-events as a tool for regional development. The greatest effect here

was the Winter Olympics in 2018 in Pyeongchang, the population of which now hopes to use the Olympic infrastructure not only for sport and recreation but also for high-level international negotiations.

South Korea's relations with China are noticeably affecting Jeju. To develop this backward region, the centre has established preferential treatment for investors there, and the Chinese, who loved Jeju's mild climate and clean air, willingly invested in local real estate and recreation. The influx of Chinese people eventually became so large that local residents—already historically opposed to the centre—began to resent the behaviour of the Chinese and fear Chinese expansion. In addition, Jeju residents are concerned about the deployment of military installations on the island, given the tensions between China and the United States, with which South Korea is in a military alliance (Kirk, 2013). In 2016, the Jeju Civilian-Military Complex Port became operational despite numerous public protests in previous years.

Conclusions/Recommendations

In our article, we counted at least seven important factors of regional policy that are of an international nature: separatism and irredentism; territorial claims; international ethnocultural ties; the disintegration of the national economic space and terra nullis; the expansion of exports and international freight transit; natural and man-made catastrophes in transnational landscapes; and cohesion of the supranational organization. These factors more often affect border regions, but may affect everyone else as well.

The international aspects of the regional policy are more pronounced in countries with large territories, where interregional differences are more pronounced. History shows that a certain minimum level of peripheral development is necessary. If the centre is removed from the regulation of negative socio-economic processes, this leads to political disloyalty and/or the periphery's dependence on foreign countries, or at least attracts the attention of foreign countries to terra nullis. Purely economic disparities are not as dangerous for the state as when combined with ethnocultural contradictions.

Until World War II, the development of the transport and food base of the periphery was given great importance in plans for military-political expansion. With the advent of nuclear missile technologies and military methods of local action, this factor has lost its relevance. National borders

have changed much less radically over the past 70 years than in previous historical eras, and borders in East Asia have generally been very stable, despite the extreme mutual suspicion the region's countries seem to have for each other. It seems that today, in order for territorial development to become the basis of external expansion, coincidental long-term processes in very inert regional systems is required, which cannot be controlled and which is difficult to predict: this may mean that on the one side of the border the situation is very good, while on the other it is very bad. Moreover, modern politicians are not ready to wait decades for the result. However, it is obvious that a state that has a developed periphery with high effective demand will attract neighbouring foreign regions: first in the economic sense and then in the socio-political sense. Subsequently, it can gradually weaken the ties between the centre and the periphery of undeveloped neighbours, form a regional quinta columna there if necessary, lead things to the collapse of a neighbouring state, and ultimately build an international buffer there.

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Alternative Für Deutschland and the Origins of the German Sonderweg

Andrea Giannotti

BACK IN THE FUTURE? THE EU AND THE NEW NATIONALIST TENDENCIES

The second half of the twentieth century was an almost unprecedented geopolitical phase for Central and Western Europe. It was a peculiar interweaving that saw a progressive and constant effort of integration that, in a certain sense, recovered the universalistic ambition that had characterized medieval Europe, but did not undo the great experience of the national states that emerged from the fourteenth century that was definitively consolidated between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

In other words, the States remained the fundamental players, but they agreed to delegate an increasing number of functions and sovereignty to a

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supranational level, which, in successive stages, came to include almost the entire European continent on the western borders of the Russian Federation. Delegations included, firstly, coal, steel and atomic energy, then close economic and customs cooperation, and finally developed up to the free movement of goods, people, capital, and even the monetary unit—although this last feature has not extended (not yet, at least) to the whole European Union.

The reference to the Middle Ages and Carolingian European unity is echoed also in the "Charlemagne Prize," awarded to those personalities who have particularly contributed to European integration and union. It is no coincidence that the seat of this prize is in the German city of Aachen, the symbolic capital of the Holy Roman Empire.

It is not, however, a completely univocal path, and even in this case, the last decade seems to confirm the words of the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668–1744): "*Historia se repetit,*" according to which man is always equal to himself and cyclically the fundamental determinants of history repeat in courses and appeals, albeit inhabiting the different characteristics of each era (Vico, 1971). Thus, in the last fifteen years and, above all, after the financial crisis of 2008, a growing Eurosceptic sentiment with pseudo-nationalistic hues has been affirmed in various European countries (Arbatova, 2017), which in many cases has been grafted onto the widespread discontent of large strata of the population toward political classes perceived as incapable of facing economic problems, self-referential, and even "parasitic." Every national reality has its own peculiarities, but these movements defined as "populist" have in common a very critical attitude toward European integration, demanding the recovery of full sovereignty at national level (Badaeva, 2018).

The references to the alarming analogies with what happened in the 1920s and 1930s seem exaggerated. It must also be acknowledged that the EU mechanisms have shown serious shortcomings. While, on the one hand, they have been an important factor in legal and social progress, on the other, over the last twenty years, they have taken on the nature of a serious bureaucratic burden, in addition to the national bureaucracies, negatively affecting the perception that many Europeans have of the Union.

It should be stressed that, in any case, the various forms of Euroscepticism and populism should be analyzed in light of each individual national experience; traits they have in common must not lead to the historical,

political, and social specificities of each country being neglected (Podvintsev & Sulimov, 2017). Thus, the characteristics of populism in Poland or Hungary are different from those in Britain or Italy. The demographic dynamics, the role of the religious dimension, the *Weltanschauung*, and the circumstances in which national unity was achieved or lost are all factors that deeply influence internal political dynamics and, consequently, the relations with the Union.

As has been observed, in practically all European countries conservative and patriotic formations exist. They tend to be critical of the integration process, advocate a tough approach to immigration (both from European states and, above all, from outside the Union), and propose themselves as alternative forces to the parties that have been traditionally in power after 1945: socialist or social democratic, liberal and Christiandemocratic. Between 2018 and 2019, these conservative and Eurosceptic parties achieved very significant results in almost all regional, parliamentary, and European elections (Zonova, 2019). In some cases, despite the differences, it was possible to form coalitions with the center-right parties, such as in Andalusia (Vox and Popular Party) and numerous Italian regions (Lega, Fratelli d'Italia and Forza Italia). In others, there is a hard *conventio ad excludendum* whereby *Front national* and *Alternative für Deutschland*, respectively, in France and Germany, are strictly excluded from any alliance.[1]

The German Case: Alternative Für Deutschland

In the European framework, a very special position is occupied by Germany. Not a day goes by without Italian and European media talking about the austerity imposed on the European Union by Germany, the vetoes Germany enacts on economic aid to Greece, pressure from the *Bundesbank* on the European Central Bank, or German hostility or goodwill toward assorted foreign governments. It is no coincidence that the supporters of the so-called Brexit have blamed the leaving of London on the impossibility of remaining in a Berlin-led Europe (Todd, 2016). Even

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[1] In the Land of Thuringia, after the elections of 27 October 2019, a tacit alliance between CDU (*Christlich Demokratischen Union Deutschlands*), FPD (*Freie Demokratische Partei*), and AfD was formed at regional level in support of the liberal candidate Thomas Kemmerich. This agreement was, however, much criticized by national leaders, contrary to any agreement with AfD and after only 28 days the Kemmerich cabinet resigned.

a careful commentator such as the Italian academic Ernesto Galli della Loggia spoke in an article published by Corriere della Sera of a "European Union in the hands of Germany and France [where] in reality Berlin [is] the real ruler and Paris its vassal" (Galli della Loggia, 2020). Even in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the uncertain and contested efforts of Brussels for a common management of the crisis by the granting of extraordinary credits have plummeted the judgment of the *Bundesverfassungsgericht*, the German Constitutional Court, which has judged the EU aid as unconstitutional (Prantl, 2020).[2]

This centrality of Germany is, however, nothing new. In the long history of Europe and the succession of wars and radical changes in regimes and territorial structures, no issue has therefore remained as present on the continent's political agenda as Germany has. Situated in a central geographic location and being the first demographic and economic force in Europe have meant that Germany, *rectius* the German world (*deutsche Welt*), has been a topic with which the great powers have had to deal almost permanently since the sixteenth century. Even today, on the threshold of the third decade of the twenty-first century, no reflection on the future of the European Union as a whole or of any particular individual member state seems to be able to ignore Berlin's position.

In this perspective, the birth and progressive strengthening in the German political scene of a movement such as *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany—AfD) is particularly significant.

Born in 2013 on the initiative of Bernd Lucke, professor of macroeconomics at the University of Hamburg, this movement had a vaguely conservative and Eurosceptic agenda, but above all focused on economic aspects and the Euro. Skepticism about the common currency, which had long snaked through the economy and among the population, reached its peak when the European Mechanism of Stability (MES) was approved. While Chancellor Angela Merkel presented these policies as the only possible choice, discontent grew in the CDU-CSU with her choices. Some of the conservatives didn't feel more programmatically at home within the Union and started to move toward Lucke's formation. In other words, the foundation of AfD as a structured political party is linked not simply to the public discussions and assemblies against Euro, but even

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[2] It must be said that both Angela Merkel and Ursula von der Leyen have criticized this decision and expressed the will of going on with the aid-plan.

more to the entering of personalities, who saw in it a possible solution to the lack of representation of conservative and national issues.

The essence of such an evolution emerged in 2016. During the party Congress in Stuttgart, the economist and academician Jörg Meuthen, considered an exponent of the moderate faction, did not speak only about financial crisis and weaknesses of EU action, but asked for a clear disassociation of Germany from the'68 spirit, heavily dominated by the red-green left (Heidlberger, 2019). This speech marked a significant change in AfD's program, revealing a hard opposition to the values of cosmopolitan universalism, to mass migrations, and to Islam. This way the party presented itself definitively as an option for conservative and patriotic electorate.

Gathering numerous former members of the CDU-CSU Union, AfD began to grow, and soon became the second largest party in all the former GDR Länder (with the exception of Berlin), also achieving double-digit results in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hessen, and Rheinland-Pfalz, eventually becoming the third largest parliamentary group in the Bundestag after the 2017 federal elections.

It must be said that, in comparison with other conservative forces such as the British Tories, AfD devoted much attention to social problems too. The neoliberal inspiration of the original program progressively ceded to issues of social justice. These issues, however, have been linked to a nationalist model of welfare state. Harshly critical of the Merkel Cabinet's migration and social policies, AfD pointed out that every euro spent on refugees is one euro missing from the budget of a social policy aimed at the Germans. Such a reasoning made AfD attractive not only for traditional right-wing electorate of conservatives and nationalists, but also for many people of socialist and communist orientation, as the elections in former East Germany *Länder* have demonstrated.

This "genetic transformation" led to the exit of many of the founders, including the same Bernd Lucke. The result was not a monolithic party; nowadays, it is possible to identify different factions. First of all, the national-moderate conservative one, that aims to become a right-wing alternative to CDU-CSU. Protagonists of this informal current are the MEP and party co-leader Jörg Meuthen and the spokesman of the delegation in Bundestag Alexander Gauland. Secondly, there is an area that ranges from conservative nationalists to those supports more radical positions, called "*der Flügel*" (the wing), which was eventually accused of right extremism by the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* (the German

domestic security service) and formally disbanded in March 2020. Its members support a radical opposition strategy and keep in touch with the movement identity. Its major exponents are Björn Höcke and Hans-Thomas Tillschneider, expert of Islamic studies and member of the Saxony-Anhalt regional parliament. This faction has very close ties with the party's youth organization, *Junge Alternative,* and achieves support also in some extreme right circles. A third faction is the so-called pragmatic one: it was initially represented by the then spokesperson Frauke Petry and her new husband and former FDP Marcus Pretzell, but after their exit (being at odds with the new party line) was led by Alice Weidel, party leader in Baden-Württemberg and (together with Gauland) spokesperson in the Bundestag. The pragmatics seems to be open to the outside, but programmatically they support positions close to the Austrian FPÖ and UKIP, especially on migration policy. Another group, whose influence is rapidly growing, is the Christian (mainly Evangelic) *Christen in der AfD.* Ultra-conservative in the socio-political sphere and radical liberal in economic issues, its most prominent exponent is the MEP Beatrix von Storch.

Electoral flow experts disagree in identifying the social base of the party, due to the very fast changes that have affected both its program and its leadership. The AfD electorate generally shares a rejection of globalization and support for traditional values, while in economic matters, as aforementioned, there are different positions, from radical liberalism to statist centralism. However, it is possible to identify some well-defined groups, which, while voting AfD for different reasons, have in common an aversion to modernization. This cannot be simply reduced to a classic reaction of the "losers of modernization"; a significant amount of AfD voters are wealthy and successful citizens, with a strong socio-economic position, but who are extremely conservative, previously having voted for the Union. On the other hand, mass media devote great attention to a possible vocation of AfD as a workers' party, also in light of its considerable electoral successes in traditional social-democratic strongholds as Mannheim and Pforzheim, and among the working class of former communist Germany.

While calling for a protest vote, the AfD is not really a protest party. The basic points of its program—based on a rejection of immigration, Euroscepticism, and support of traditional values—are actually only the tip of an iceberg whose deep bases are directly linked to the self-awareness of the German society and the delicate dilemma of its identity. *Alternative*

für Deutschland barely represents the solution of this dilemma, but broke a vail of silence on the issue of political representation for some national issues.

Its rise is significant from two different points of view. The first is political: for the first time since the end of the Third Reich a party with an openly national-patriotic program is active and gaining high approval numbers. It has a program that could be summarized, as Gauland said during a meeting at the Kyffhäuser-Denkmal in Thuringia, with the motto "*Wir sind die Partei der Deutschen*" (We are the party of the Germans).[3] The second and no less interesting aspect is the historical-political and sociological dimension of AfD's success. The party has touched on issues that have only apparently disappeared from Berlin's political and social horizon, marking the failure, at least in part, of a policy that has brought economic success, but has done so at the expense of an identity dimension to the point of seeming to threat the self-consciousness of the German nation.

Since the 1960s, the Germans have in fact been educated to deal with *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) migratory waves by lessening the expressions of their own culture and national sentiment. This was done in order to allow the maximum expression of the identities of these new citizens, but at the same time this avoided offering them typically German models, values, customs, and traditions through which to recognize and possibly integrate themselves, encouraging instead the coexistence of different communities and cultures (Steinmann, 2016). This form of pushed multi-culturalism ended up generating a sense of insecurity and frustration in many Germans. In addition to this, there was the illusion that it was possible to reduce the history (and therefore the identity) of Germany to the period after 1945, with some—prudent—reference to the Middle Ages or the Enlightenment.

After the National Socialist drama, the fear of national pride is understandable, even in a purely historical key, but its exclusion from public debate ended up producing the opposite effect. AfD tries to interpret these feelings. When the party leader in Thuringia Björn Höcke claims to be "a Prussian defending German identity" (Steinmann, 2018) and Gauland in Kyffhäuser argues that without the German language a

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[3] On the Kyffhäuser meeting of 14 September 2017 see https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article168663338/Gauland-fordert-Recht-stolz-zu-sein-auf-Leistungen-in-beiden-Weltkriegen.html (14 May 2020).

German culture is difficult to identify (Prantl, 2020) (quoting Luther, Goethe, and Schiller), they are linked to an historical framework that goes back a long way: a framework linked to the development of Germanic self-consciousness and the tormented process that led to national unification in 1870. As a result, an authentic understanding of the AfD phenomenon and the complex relationship between Germany and Europe are possible only by investigating the deep roots of the shaping of modern German identity.

Volksgeist and German Nation, an Open Question

At the origin of all this, we find the theme of the *Deutschtum* ("Germanicity"), a linguistic, cultural, and (especially since the late eighteenth century) spiritual dimension. It was very strong, but for a long time was incapable of translating itself into political unity for tens of millions of people divided into a number of state entities scattered over a vast territory between the Baltic Sea, the French border, and the Eastern Carpathians. As is well known, similarly to Italy, Germany became a unitary state only in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, despite the many parallels, the German case is characterized by elements that differentiate it from the Italian one, making it almost unique in the framework of the European national building processes.

A first peculiarity lies in the wide geographical distribution of populations of German culture. This was a legacy of the experience of the Holy Roman Empire: so strongly identified with the definition of the self-consciousness of the German peoples was the Empire that, in the eleventh century, it took on the name of the *Germanic* Holy Roman Empire, and whose crown, first with the Ottonians and then the Habsburgs, remained in German hands for almost a millennium (Scales, 2012).

A second crucial element is that in Germany (the stage of the Lutheran Reformation), the religious divisions stemming from this Reformation (producing bloody conflicts in large parts of Europe) were harder felt than in any other place and, above all, due to political fragmentation, did not end with a clear affirmation of one or the other faction. Martin Luther's work, starting with his translation of the Bible into German, soon became one of the pillars of national identity. The language set by him became an important unifying factor not only for Protestant Germans, but for the cultural elites in general, with a growing centrality of the evangelical component (Joachimesn, 1956).

The religious and pseudo-religious dimension, especially in the context of the Romantic movement with a rejection of positivist scientism of western origin, had a non-insignificant weight in the formation of the German *Weltanschauung*. From here descended, at least in part, the vocation to the unification of the Germanic peoples, the ambition to dominate Central and Eastern Europe, and a certain distrust among large swathes of the German population toward the socio-political and economic model of the West judged in many ways extraneous to the *Sonderweg* (literally, "specific way") of the Germans.

The third important element that has long hindered the translation of the German national identity into a unitary state entity was the coexistence in a myriad of small states of the two giants Prussia and Austria. The primacy of Vienna had been accepted for centuries by German sovereigns, at least until, around the middle of the eighteenth century, a small kingdom in the central-eastern Baltic region began to grow and to become an insidious competitor for dominance over the Germanic orb: Prussia. Unlike the subjects of Vienna, the Prussian ones were almost all German-speaking, with the exception of the Masurians, who spoke a Polish dialect, but who, being Protestants, did not feel tied to the very Catholic Poland.

On December 13, 1700, Frederick III of Brandenburg obtained the consent of Leopold I of Habsburg to bear the title of king. On the military level, the conformation of the Prussian state, stretched out on an east–west axis with exclaves and distant offshoots, required a strong defensive capacity, and this was the monarch's greatest concern. The result was an army of eighty thousand very combative, disciplined, and well-equipped men, which absorbed a large part of the state budget but assured Prussia stability and peace as well as forging its "military" character (a trait that would remain strongly present in later centuries)[4] (Clark, 2008). The future German State was born, in short, with a strong East European propensity and with a clear socio-economic contrast that would last until 1945 between the eastern areas (i.e., the original Prussia) and the western ones, annexed in the following decades. The former were

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[4] The definition of Prussia given by Frederick II's aide-de-camp Georg Heinrich von Behrenhorst remained famous: *"Die preußische Monarchie bleibt immer—nicht ein Land, das eine Armee, sondern eine Armee, die ein Land hat, in welchem sie gleichsam nur einquartiert steht"* (The Prussian monarchy is not a country that has an army, but an army that has a country in which it is simply quartered).

mainly agricultural and essentially feudal, dominated by large landowners (the so-called *Junker*, the backbone of the Prussian monarchy), while the latter were more dynamic, open to industrialization, and characterized by the presence of a rich bourgeoisie.

A turning point was represented by the Napoleonic wars and the end of the Holy Roman Empire after the defeat of the Austro-Russian troops at Austerlitz on December 2, 1805. The shock was so strong that it led to a progressive overcoming of Germanic "cultural patriotism" and some commentators began to make open references not to Prussia or Austria, but to a "German nation." It is to this period that what can be considered the fundamental work for the transformation of German self-consciousness into modern nationalism dates back: the *Speeches to the German Nation* by Johann Gottlieb Fichte. This philosopher did not limit himself to exhorting emancipation from France,[5] but exalted the German people and its language, defined the only "pure" language since it remained unaffected by Latin contaminations and is capable of elaborating deep and complete reflections. Equally "pure" was, in his opinion, the Germanic population, which remained in its original territories and successfully opposed both Roman domination and then the papal yoke. Taking up concepts already expressed by Goethe, Novalis, Schiller, Schlegel, and many other writers and men of culture, Fichte invited all Germans to unite not in cultural but in state terms. He wandered through a state capable of carrying the legacy of a great history because "what in history is living strength is German strength"[6] (Gehlen, 1935; Heinz & Schäfer, 2010)—an autarkic state which, in order to ensure economic survival, should have to expand, if necessary by force, to its natural borders (*natürliche Grenzen des Reiches*) (Fichte, 2015). Once the nation state had been established and its needs assured, the Germans,

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[5] The issue of national redemption had also a vast literary echo. Among the most famous members of this movement were Heinrich von Kleist Berthold Auerbach, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, and Hermann Löns.

[6] The philosopher Arnold Gehlen, resuming Fichte, confirmed more than a century later the specialty of the German people, observing that: "*Sonderstellung und Einzigartigkeit des deutschen Volkes, dass es zufolge seiner Sprache die Bereitschaft und Fähigkeit hat, Ideen ins Leben zu übersetzen. Im Unterschied zur Weltanschauung des "toten Mechanismus" anderer Völker (…)*" (The special position and uniqueness of the German people derives from the fact that, thanks to its language, it has the readiness and ability to translate ideas into life. In contrast to the worldview of the "dead mechanism" of other peoples).

as a superior people, could have fulfilled the mission of "transforming mankind."

After the failure of the Russian campaign and in view of Napoleon's final defeat, Fichte addressed the crucial question of who should lead the unification process, and in *Aus dem Entwurfe zu einer politischen Schrift im Frühling 1813* (*Draft of a Political Writing in the Spring of 1813*). He concluded that this role could not be played by Austria, too closely linked to the interests of the Imperial Crown. In his view, only Prussia, a genuinely German state, was suitable on condition, however, that it was willing to outdo itself for the benefit of a Pan-Germanic Reich.

Ernst Moritz Arndt and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn were less well known than Fichte, but are still significant in the panorama of patriotic literature. One of Ardnt's works in particular deserves to be mentioned: the *Kurzer Katechismus für den deutschen Kriegs- und Wehrmann* (Short Catechism for the German fighter defending his homeland) of 1812 and, above all, the poem *Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?* (What is the homeland of the German?) of 1813; in this, when asked which is the true great homeland—whether Prussia, Bavaria, or Austria—he answered: "*So weit die deutsche Zunge klingt, Und Gott im Himmel Lieder singt.*" In other words, the homeland coincided with the German-speaking area. Consistent with this approach, according to Arndt, Alsace and parts of Lorraine were also part of the Germanic world, as were Switzerland, Luxembourg, and (albeit indirectly) parts of Holland and Scandinavia. There could be no doubt about the leading force of the unification movement: Prussia, the most German of the kingdoms. As for Jahn, in his *Deutsches Volkstum* (The character of the German people) of 1810 he took up themes such as the role of language in the formation of identity and the analogy between Germans and ancient Greeks as the only authentic interpreters of the concept of humanity. Following Fichte, Arndt exalted the mission of global redemption of the German people: "If Germany unifies it can develop, as a German community, its enormous strength never before used, it can be the founder of the perennial peace of Europe, the guardian angel of humanity."

Regardless, Napoleon's defeat did not led to a solution. The new European order established by the Congress of Vienna proved a bitter disappointment for the German nationalist demands, and the result was a continuation of the old fragmentation, albeit with a considerable

strengthening of Prussia. The only concession to the impressive coexistence of 41 independent German states was the creation of the *Deutscher Bund* (German Confederation) in 1815.

The reaction to the frustration of expectations for genuine unification was a proliferation of associations and fraternities, many of which formed by students, the so-called *Burschenschaften*. On the one hand, they insisted that Prussia take effective responsibility for the birth of a reunified Germany. On the other hand, they cultivated the myth of Germanism, interpreted in the sense of excluding and condemning everything perceived as alien to the *Deutscher Geist* (the "German spirit"),[7] which united all Germanic peoples, regardless of the contiguous political fragmentation[8] (Bering, 1999; Di Noi, 2016; Graf, 2015).

During the so-called *Vormärz*—the period between the Restoration and the Revolution of 1848—there was substantial continuity, with the constant political, economic, and industrial growth of Prussia, which in 1834 took the important step of promoting the birth of a customs union (*Zollverein*) of all German territories out of the Austrian Empire.

In this context, a comparison between the proponents of the so-called great-German solution and those of the small-German solution, i.e., the hypothesis of unification including Austria or not, took hold (Wandruszka, 1980). A clash between the two German powers thus became inevitable.

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[7] Compared to similar nationalistic developments in other European countries, the German one took on a very particular dimension also because of the specificity that the Romantic movement had in Germany. Once again, language played a central role in the cultural dimension. Studies in Germanic philology became very popular and no less important was the rediscovery of ancient Germanic law and popular traditions. As for philology and popular traditions, a very clear example was the works of the Brothers Grimm.

[8] Among the initiatives undertaken in defense of the "German spirit," there were several book-burnings, in which copies of the Napoleonic Civil Code regularly ended up in the flames. Another disturbing aspect concerned the growing manifestations of anti-Jewish hostility. Although not yet classifiable as racial but rather as social, it tended to identify in the Jew and their determination to safeguard their own traditions, both religious and linguistic and social, the quintessential alienation from the German community. Contrary to what was said a few decades later, however, during debates on the granting of legal equality, it was not forbidden that Jews could obtain it, if that they "stopped being Jews." In Germany, more than elsewhere, the fundamental question of assimilation for the Jewish people in Europe was beginning to arise on a large scale.

The decisive clash took place in Bohemia, in Königgrätz, on July 3, 1866, which saw a brilliant Prussian victory. This was followed by the dissolution of the Deutscher Bund and the birth of the Northern Confederation dominated by Prussia, which annexed Hesse, Nassau, Hannover, and Frankfurt. This was a fundamental but not yet decisive step. The German people, by far the largest people in Europe at the time at almost fifty million people, still lacked state unity.[9]

It was the victory in the war against France in 1870 that decided the fate of German unity. On January 18, 1871, in the hall of mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, William I of Prussia became Emperor of the German Reich.

German Identity and Neo-Romanticism

In those years, a large number of associations, leagues, and confraternities of a nationalist nature arose, such as the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein zur Erhaltung des Deutschtums im Auslande* (Pan-Germanic Association for the Maintenance of Germanism Abroad), founded in 1881, the *Alldeutsche Verband* (Pan-Germanic League) in 1891, the *Deutscher Ostmarkverein* (German Association for Austria) in 1894, and the *Germanenorden* (Germanic Order) in 1912. The various *völkisch*[10] organizations could be religious (mostly evangelical) or secular, pursuing social or cultural (literary, historical, geographical) aims, but they were generally characterized by a neoromantic *Weltanschauung* and a strong anti-Semitic component.

These two elements were in fact closely linked. Neo-Romanticism, a term coined in 1899 by the Thuringia publisher Eugen Diderichs (Niem, 2015), exalted a strictly German spirituality, dating back to the dawn of the ancient Germanic peoples and which placed the German people on a higher level than all the others in both a racial and metaphysical sense. German man drew his strength from nature and from the earth, the same in which the generations of his ancestors had taken root and which conformed their souls, inspirations, and gifts. The industrial and

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[9] In 1848, the German population was almost 46 million, while France, traditionally the demographic giant of the continent, had about 31 million inhabitants.

[10] Literally "popular," from the German term "*das Volk*" (people), but with a clear nationalistic and anti-Semitic political connotation, referring to all the associations or activities that referred to the spirit of the German people.

technological development of the late nineteenth century, however, was driving him away from his fields and forests and transplanting him into a materialistic and alienating urban context. Both urbanism and capitalist economic development were first and foremost identified with Judaism.

The Germans, a lineage inseparably linked to soil and nature, could only be mortally opposed to the "landless people" par excellence. According to this integration, the Jews had remained foreign elements and bearers of different values, irreconcilable with the Germans, and for this reason, they should have been kept under strict control or, more hopefully, removed so that they did not corrupt the racial and spiritual purity of the Germans. In this sense, much of the racist and anti-Semitic armamentarium of National Socialism was simply borrowed from an ideological context much older and already consolidated.

Another element common to the various *völkisch* associations was the support for the construction of a *Großdeutsches Reich*, that is the old "great-German solution": not only the annexation of the eastern territories, but also their systematic Germanization, progressively replacing the Slavic population with German immigrants (a plan later taken up by Hitler both for Poland and, in perspective, for the western territories of the Soviet Union). In these circles, the idea of *Lebensraum* (living space) and the need for the German people to seek spaces adapted to their demographic needs, food supply, and economic development were also affirmed. The Reich would have had sufficient resources to support its population only in the "great-German" variant and would therefore have to find them beyond its borders, especially in Eastern Europe.

We must not overlook a certain amount of Russophobia, then widespread throughout Western Europe, which suggested moving the borders as far east as possible to contain the Slavic danger. Last but not least, in the agricultural lands and virgin forests of the East there was something neo-Romantically "more beautiful and more German" than in the industrialized regions of West Germany.[11]

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[11] One of the most famous hymns of East Prussia, written by Königsberg composer Herbert Brust in the early 1930s, refers to it as "*Land der dunklen Wälder und kristall'nen Seen*" (Land of dark forests and crystal clear lakes). These images are in perfect neo-romantic style, stimulating a sense of *Sehnsucht*, of nostalgia, which after 1945 and the loss of the territories east of the Oder, would turn from a metaphysical fact into a concrete political fact.

It should be remembered that such programs were not the prerogative of some small circle of fanatics without influence. They were widespread in very respectable court circles, in high bureaucracy, in industry,[12] in the school and university system (where a weighty role was played by the *Burschenschaften* (brotherhoods)), in almost all *völkisch*, in the judicial system, in professional guilds, and in the armed forces. Also, the young party system was, with the partial exception of Social Democracy and the Catholic *Zentrum*, largely influenced by national-patriotic ideology, although with very different levels of intensity[13] (Mantelli, 2006).

Conclusion

All the aforementioned issues reappeared only half a century after unification. At the end of the First World War, the Treaty of Versailles not only confirmed the division of the Germans "of Germany" from those of Austria, but the Reich itself built by Bismarck was deprived of important territories both on the western and, above all, on the eastern border. The German frustration at the defeat and humiliation was compounded by the economic crisis and, as is well known, the outcome was Hitler's rise to power in 1933. The National Socialist experience lasted only twelve years, but it was so dramatic that it became an absorbing element of the whole German affair.

After the catastrophe of 1945 and the division of the Nation, history and national identity became a very sensitive issue. The logic of the Cold War progressively induced the West to favor Federal Germany's return to the international system, allowing Bonn an economic and even military rebirth, but the theme of German identity remained taboo. Something seemed to change with the *Historikerstreit* (historians' dispure) of the 1980s. It began with the intervention of Ernst Nolte's *Zwischen Geschichtslegende und Revisionismus* (Between Historical Legend and

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[12] Alfred Hugenberg, member of the Krupp board of directors, was one of the founders of the Pan-Germanic League.

[13] It should be remembered that, with the exception of the 1903 elections, after its birth and until 1912 the German Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) had no parliamentary weight proportional to its electoral strength. Further proof of the ideological atmosphere of those years was the massive membership of the *Deutsche Vaterlandspartei*, a patriotic formation founded in 1917 in support of the militarist line of Field Marshals Paul von Hindeburg and Erich von dem Ludendorff and which in less than a year exceeded one million members.

Revisionism), re-published in 1985. In it, the famous scholar ascribed to National Socialism not only the responsibility for the millions of deaths, but also that of having brought Germany into such disrepute that it prevented an objective historical debate (Nolte, 1987). Other well-known historians, including Michael Stürmer, then advisor to the Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and Andreas Hillgruber, supported Nolte. The sociologist Jürgen Habermas, an exponent of the Frankfurt School, cried out for revisionism and strongly opposed such positions (Habermas, 1986). The result was a debate involving a large part of the German academic world and the Association of German Historians (*Verband der Historiker Deutschlands*), as well as names such as Joachim Fest, Eberhard Jäckel, Henning Köhler, Horst Möller, Christian Meier, and Heinrich August Winkler (Evans, 1991). There was no definitive conclusion (as was to be expected) and there were moments of strong ideological tension. However, the *Historikerstreit* had the merit of raising a discussion that was not aimed at nor was capable of reducing the scope of the crimes of the National Socialists, but rather set out to place German society in a dilemma of identity.

The events of firstly the Reunification and then the economic successes made all this a secondary issue, but the question remained open. The economic crisis, the migratory wave following the so-called Arab Springs with the threat of progressive Islamization, and the persistent difficulties of the European Union to develop a common strategy deeply shook the citizens of the Old Continent; the result was a widespread affirmation of conservative movements. Germany was no exception, but here everything must be interpreted in relation to what has been said in this article: it must be seen in light of the twelve-year period 1933–1945, of course, but also as part of the complex national affair and the tormented relationship with it.

Alternative für Deutschland is one of the products of this dilemma and can be properly analyzed only in light of it.

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The Rise of Euroscepticism in Europe in Time of Crisis in World Politics

Ekaterina Shebalina and Maria Kotok

Over the past decade, changes in national party systems have been observed in the EU member states; in addition, new anti-system or extra-system forces are emerging that oppose European integration within the EU. The consequences of the 2009 global economic crisis and the Euro crisis, the EU migration policy and the refugee crisis of 2015, and the 2016 UK referendum on EU membership became the main reasons and triggers for the strengthening of Eurosceptic forces in modern Europe, all showing crisis trends in the state of and the dynamics of EU development. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, as a new external threat to the EU's security, is demonstrating at the moment some disunity among European countries, which may subsequently lead to serious transformations

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within the EU. An example is the Eurosceptic sentiments, both among the population and at the party level, felt in Italy and France, states that were the founders of the European integration project in 1951. In Italy, Eurosceptic parties emerged from the marginal category and took centre stage in the country's political life; the League, led by Matteo Salvini, and the Five Star Movement (D5Z), led by Luigi Di Maio, won the parliamentary elections in 2018 and formed a coalition government, but after the government crisis in September 2019 the League again went into opposition. Today, there are two very influential Eurosceptic parties in France, representing two opposite poles of political forces: the extreme right-wing party "National Rally" led by Marine Le Pen and the extreme left party "Unbowed France" led by Jean-Luc Mélechon. Le Pen was able to qualify for the second round of the presidential elections in 2017, and the National Association won the elections to the European Parliament in 2019, which acted as a kind of litmus test of trust in the existing government. Unbowed France is currently not showing significant electoral success, yet achieved fourth place in the first round of the 2017 presidential election, and the renewed face of the party opens up prospects for Unbowed France in the future. This balance of power in the two EU founding states confirms the existence of crisis phenomena in the EU. In this regard, it seems especially relevant to analyse the theoretical foundations of Euroscepticism in the EU and the reasons for its strengthening at the present stage.

Methodology

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study is represented by various theoretical approaches to the analysis of Euroscepticism, developed by Taggart, Szczerbiak, Rovny, Kopecký, Mudde, and Flood. The study also used the method of historical reconstruction and the statistical method, as well as general scientific research methods: analysis, synthesis, deduction, and induction. In turn, the systematic analysis enables comprehensive consideration of the reasons for the strengthening of Eurosceptic sentiments in the EU.

Results

Throughout its development and formation, the European Union has faced internal crises and lacked support from the population of its member

states on various integration issues. This was especially clearly manifested in situations when fateful decisions concerning the delegation of sovereign rights to EU supranational bodies have been submitted to referenda. After the global economic crisis of 2008, Eurosceptic sentiments among the population intensified in EU member states, and parties opposing deepening integration gained political weight. As a result, in countries where Euro-optimists traditionally prevailed, Eurosceptics at the present stage represent a serious political force, moving away from marginalization.

The term "Euroscepticism" appeared for the first time in the British press in 1986, in the newspaper "The Times", in relation to Margaret Thatcher, who pursued a policy of distancing herself from the European communities while simultaneously building a common European market (Biryukov & Kovalenko, 2014). Alexander Collier, in his article "Euroscepticism under Margaret Thatcher and David Cameron: From Theory to Practice", described the British Prime Minister as "the spiritual mother of Euroscepticism" (Collier, 2015).

Kopecký and Mudde developed a more specific classification of Eurosceptics, taking two parameters as the basis for the division: support for the idea of European integration and support for the European Union. This approach is more precise, since the concept of European integration is not limited to the European Union, which is just one of its forms. Within the first criterion, Europhiles and Europhobes are distinguished. Europhiles defend the political (common supranational institutions) and economic (common market) aspects of European integration. Europhiles include both federalists and supporters of an exclusively economic project (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002). Europhobes categorically deny the very possibility of European integration due to various national interests and other reasons. Within the framework of the second criterion, Kopecký and Mudde divide these people into two groups: EU optimists and EU pessimists. The former are satisfied with the progress of European integration in the EU format, although they can criticize certain politicians. The latter do not support the current state of the EU, although they may not oppose EU membership (Ibid). Based on this detailed classification of views on European integration and the EU, scientists have created a typology of parties' relations to Europe, identifying Euro-enthusiasts, Euro-pragmatists, Eurosceptics, and Euro-negatives.

According to the typology, which is based on the cause of Eurosceptic slogans emerging in the political programmes of parties, Rovny highlights ideological and strategic Euroscepticism (Rovny, 2004). Ideological

Euroscepticism presupposes the presence of a central topic of negative attitude towards and rejection of the EU in the party's programmes and speeches. Using this classification, Taggart and Szczerbiak noted the peculiarity that "some parties have an ideological predisposition to take a Eurosceptic position (for example, nationalist parties)" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008) and revealed the absence of a direct relationship between right and left parties and Euroscepticism. Strategic (or tactical-strategic) Euroscepticism involves the use of anti-EU rhetoric to achieve opportunistic goals in the political struggle within the country (Shibkova, 2016). Rovny developed a theoretical model of Eurosceptic space based on the above typology and classification of "soft"/"hard" Euroscepticism. Within this field, you can conditionally arrange Eurosceptic parties (Appendix).

An alternative approach to the study of Eurosceptics was proposed by Ray, the founder of the school for the study of Euroscepticism at the University of North Carolina (Shibkova, 2018). In 1999, the work "Measuring the positions of parties towards European integration: the results of an expert survey" (Ray, 1999) was published, in which the scientist conducted a comprehensive study using the expert survey method to assess the attitude of political parties to European integration since 1984 to 1996. As a result of the research, Ray established an increase in support among parties for European integration had been reached by 1996 (Ibid). Although Ray does not operate with the term "Euroscepticism" and does not give its definition, the value of Ray's contribution to the study of this phenomenon lies in the fact that he proposed a methodology for the comparative analysis of political parties in relation to the European project, ranking parties from "strongly opposing" to "strongly advocating" European integration.

Kutz from Johns Hopkins University offers the following definition of Euroscepticism: "Euroscepticism is an act against any form of supranational European institutions that threaten or may threaten national sovereignty and the traditional European state system" (Biryukov & Kovalenko, 2014). This definition is also broad because the forms and methods of such a speech are not specified (i.e. Euroscepticism can be popular and partisan), as well as imprecise, since there is no clear definition of the "traditional European state system".

The Russian scientist Oskolov offers the following definition of Euroscepticism: "a negative attitude to integration within the European

Union as an idea or to its individual aspects in the programs and rhetoric of political parties" (Oskolkov, 2019).

Flood (University of Surrey) made a significant contribution to the development of theoretical studies of Euroscepticism, questioning the correctness of the very term "Euroscepticism". He criticizes the incorrect terminology and proposes replacing "Euroscepticism" with EU-scepticism, as the theme refers primarily to opposition to the European Union as an institution and not to European cooperation in general. He also offers a broad definition of Euroscepticism: "Euroscepticism implies attitudes and opinions represented in speeches or behaviour (from participating in organized political action to voting in elections or referendums, participating in opinion polls) that express doubts about the appropriateness and/or benefits and/or long-term functioning of European and/or EU integration as a goal either in the general modern format or in some important aspects of institutional frameworks, processes and policies and/or it is assumed that this will happen in the future" (Flood, 2002). The value of Flood's contribution lies in the development of a more accurate and detailed classification of political forces that assume a Eurosceptic or Euro-optimistic position. The scientist singles out deniers (opposed to EU membership or certain policy), revisionists (advocating a return to the position before the main Treaties were revised), minimalists (accepting the status quo, but opposing further integration), gradualists (supporting further gradual integration), reformists (advocating constructive participation and improving the work of EU institutions), and maximalists (advocating deeper integration) (Ibid). This classification allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the parties' attitude to the European Union.

Eurosceptics are also divided according to the criterion of party affiliation: right or left leanings. The subject area of criticism of the left is the social component of EU policy, globalization, and free-market issues, while the right is in favour of protecting national interests and identity, as well as sovereignty. Euroscepticism is not a separate ideology of parties, but one of the components of other ideologies; therefore, right-wing and left-wing Eurosceptics differ significantly (Flood, 2002).

One of the main difficulties encountered in the process of studying a party attitude towards the EU is the lack of a methodology for measuring party Euroscepticism. The Eurobarometer (public opinion polls) has been used to measure the level of popular Euroscepticism since 1973. Basically, it is qualitative methods of analysing programme documents and

speeches of party members that have been used to analyse party Euroscepticism. Quantitative research methods are used by individual scientists, but a holistic, unified model for comparative analysis of Eurosceptic parties has not been developed. Taggart and Szczerbiak operate with the parameter of the share of party support in the parliamentary elections when measuring the level of party Euroscepticism in the country, but they have come to the conclusion that this parameter is not suitable for comparing Eurosceptic party sentiments in different countries for three reasons: the inability to determine to what extent Eurosceptic rhetoric is used in inter-party struggles; whether people vote for a party only because of EU criticism; and to what extent Eurosceptic rhetoric is present in the country as a whole (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008). Russian scientists Kaveshnikov and Domanov have developed the Index of Attitudes towards European Integration (IAEI), which is based on content analysis. IAEI is built on the measurement of the following parameters: "attitude to the general idea of integration, affective (diffuse) and instrumental (specific) support for the EU, its perception as an (un-)accountable organization" (Kaveshnikov & Domanov, 2018).

To date, thanks to foreign and domestic researchers, a theoretical basis for Euroscepticism has been developed: namely, definitions of this concept, its classification, and characteristic features have been given.

RATIO OF EUROSCEPTICISM AND POPULISM, NATIONALISM, RADICALISM

In modern political discourse, the concepts of Euroscepticism, populism, nationalism, and radicalism are often used in the same context and terminological range. Eurosceptics are referred to as populists and nationalists, nationalists are referred to as right-wing populists, and furthermore, radical nationalists are associated with Eurosceptics. For a more accurate and comprehensive analysis of the Euroscepticism phenomenon, it is necessary to distinguish between the above concepts and identify their similarities, differences, and interrelation.

In journals, scientific articles, or public statements, the term Euroscepticism is most often replaced by the concept of populism. There are two approaches to defining populism: some authors consider populism as an ideology, while others as a strategy. Mudde defined populism as "an ideology that considers society to be divided into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups: "clean people" and "corrupt elite", according

to which politics should be an expression of the common will of the people" (Mudde, 2004). However, populism is not a full-fledged complex ideology, since it reflects only part of the social relations between people and elite and can be combined with other traditional ideologies. Mudde defined populism as a point ideology, "ideology with a thin-centred ideology", aimed at a limited segment of society (Ibid). Musikhin developed the concept of populism as an ideology and proposed a definition of populism as an interpretational framework (Musikhin, 2009). According to this definition, populism is not an all-encompassing ideology, but manifests itself in certain established conditions and is combined with other ideologies. Thus, populism is a fragmentary situational ideology, in the conceptual core of which there is a confrontation between two social groups: the people and the elite.

Russian researchers Tevdoy-Burmuli *and* Oskolov are inclined to believe that populism is a strategy, an instrument for achieving political results. When analysing right-wing populism in Europe, Tevdoy-Burmuli and Oskolov use the following definition of populism: "a strategy of political struggle, implying anti-elitism, antipluralism (manifested in the idea of the people as a homogeneous group and the desire to exclude "violators" of homogeneity) and self-identification with the will of the people" (Oskolov & Tevdoy-Burmuli, 2018). Thus, being a strategy, populism is combined with ideologies, adding to them the rhetoric of opposing the ordinary people to the elite.

When analysing and comparing Euroscepticism and populism, several similarities between the two concepts come to light. Firstly, neither populism nor Euroscepticism are separate complex ideologies; they can be classified as fragmentary ideologies that explain only certain political phenomena and are combined with traditional ideologies (e.g. with nationalism). Secondly, there is a similarity in their conceptual core: populism is built on the dichotomy "people" or "elite", while Euroscepticism is based on the opposition between "people (or nation)" and "EU". Thirdly, Eurosceptic and populist rhetoric can be used as a strategy for achieving political goals; in these cases, the toolkit of the confrontation between supposed oppositional words ("we" vs "others", "people" vs "elite", "people or their nation" vs "EU") is used. Despite the above properties, it should be noted that populism is a broader ideology in comparison with Euroscepticism, because this fact explains more political phenomena. Euroscepticism and populism can be combined in two forms. In the first case, the "people" means the nation and national interests, and

the "elite" means the national elites who are ineffectively promoting the country's interests at the EU level. In the second case, the "people" are both the ordinary people and the elites, and the "elites" are European bureaucrats who discriminate against the nation-state.

Another concept that needs to be correlated with Euroscepticism is nationalism. Many works are devoted to the study of nationalism, since this phenomenon has been observed in the European political life since the nineteenth century. In the broadest sense of the word, nationalism is a political ideology centred on the nation seeking to gain political recognition and defend its national interests. We can trace the evolution of the nationalistic goals in a historical context: from creating national states (unifying Italy, Germany) to the conflict of national interests (the First and Second World Wars) and the collapse of colonies. Several classifications of nationalism have been developed. According to the classification of Snyder, there are four types of nationalism, characteristic of different historical stages: integrating (1845–1871), separating (1871–1890), aggressive (1900–1945), and modern (1945–present). Pozdnyakov distinguishes three types of nationalism: ethnic (struggle for national liberation), state-state (embodiment of national interests), and every day (Pozdnyakov, 1994). In EU countries, state nationalism is manifested there to one degree or another, and everyday nationalism is growing after the migration crisis.

Tevdoy-Burmuli and Oskolov believe that it is incorrect to associate modern nationalism with the problem of the national state, since nationalism can go beyond the national state and exist at the supranational, regional levels. They define nationalism as "the idea that a community, to which an individual considers himself, acquires an adequate political status" (Oskolov & Tevdoy-Burmuli, 2018). They also point to the duality of the nature of nationalism (ideology or sensation) and the activity of striving to form a cultural community as the most important feature of modern nationalism (Ibid).

When comparing Euroscepticism and nationalism, it is necessary to highlight the following. Nationalism is an overarching ideology, compared to Euroscepticism and Populism, and it also underlies the programmes of Eurosceptic parties. Eurosceptics chose nationalism as an ideological base, due to the fact that modern nationalism has shown itself to be a protective mechanism of accelerating globalization and integration. According to Uznarodov, it was social transformations and the high unemployment rate arising due to the transfer of industries to other

countries that contributed to the strengthening of modern nationalism (Uznarodov, 2015). Eurosceptics appeal to the national feelings of people pointing to EU institutions' infringing national interests on the part and Brussels' restricting economic and political freedom. Eurosceptics also advocate the protection of national identity, which is the foundation of the cultural community underlying the nationalistic ideology. The blurred national and European identities threaten the EU and EU member states.

According to the research of Halikiopoulou, Nanou, and Vasilopoulou, nationalism leads to the radicalization of parties, including Eurosceptics, since the sense of belonging and emotional criteria play a key role in it (Halikiopoulou et al., 2012). Depending on the ideology, two types of radical Euroscepticism are distinguished: based on ethnic or civic premises (Ibid). Left-wing radical parties oppose the EU from a civic standpoint, assessing EU policy as interference in the sovereign affairs of the state, while they equate the nation with the people. The European Union is perceived as an imperialist entity that exploits the state population. Right-wing radical parties are characterized by ethnic nationalism, and the nation is perceived as cultural homogeneity. Right-wing radicals a priori oppose the EU, as they defend the homogeneity of the nation and identify the nation with the state. The EU, in turn, is a heterogeneous union that interferes in the affairs of states, including migration and cultural policies. In promoting the idea of building a common European identity, the European Union pursues multicultural policy and promotes increased migration, which provokes the erosion of national borders and identity.

Thus, it can be stated that Euroscepticism has absorbed the main features and methods of populism, nationalism, and radicalism. By choosing nationalism as an ideological base, Eurosceptics can form a broad electoral base, as they appeal directly to the national feelings of voters who feel oppressed by EU policies. Moreover, they brought themselves as close as possible to the people, especially to those strata who suffer from economic integration. Nationalism's key element is the emotional factor which Eurosceptics skilfully operate but it can radicalize the party. Euroscepticism borrowed tactics from populism, namely the opposition of ordinary people to the elite.

Reasons for the Strengthening of Eurosceptic Positions in the EU at the Present Stage

Over the past decade, there has been a wave of criticism of the EU's policies, both at the party level and among the population. The main triggers of Euroscepticism include the following events: the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the vote on the EU Constitution in 2004, the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, the economic crisis of 2009, the consequences of the Arab Spring of 2011, and the migration crisis in Europe that has been ongoing since 2015. More fundamental factors, rather than the above-mentioned events and their consequences, are involved in forming assessment opinions about the EU.

The key factors that strengthen Eurosceptic sentiment can be divided into several groups: socio-economic, cultural, and institutional.

According to many researchers, *socio-economic factors* are considered key in explaining the reasons for the negative attitudes towards the EU. European integration is primarily seen as a project for the countries' economic integration and a tool for obtaining additional market advantages in conducting economic activities. The EU is an economic and monetary union, but there are significant shortcomings in its functioning that provoke the economic problems of individual countries and the EU as a whole. With a single monetary policy and a common euro currency (19 states), countries retain their national fiscal systems and budgets. "The countries of the Eurozone have been asked to adhere to a common course of financial policy, but at the same time, there is no common treasury to control the implementation of the chosen course" (Vasilenko & Boldyreva, 2016). To complete the full-fledged economic and monetary union, it is necessary to transfer budgets and tax policies to EU's supranational bodies, but the states are not ready to do this. In the current economic system, countries regulate the degree of intervention in the national economy themselves, and the consequences of such intervention may affect the economy of the entire European Union, which happened after 2008. The global economic crisis of 2008 and the subsequent crisis of the Euro zone caused by the deficit of the countries' balance of payments became fertile ground for strengthening the positions of Eurosceptics and strengthening anti-EU sentiments among the population. Considering the macroeconomic factors of the EU, both EU and Eurozone economies had been stagnating in 2008–2019. In 2008–2018, the average EU GDP growth rate was 0.9%, and the unemployment

rate was 10.4% (Real GDP growth rate, 2020). The population itself felt the deterioration of the economic situation and associated it with the inefficiency of supranational bodies.

Another socio-economic factor is the ageing of the EU population and displacement migration. EU countries belong to the modern type of population reproduction, which is characterized by a low birth rate, low mortality, and low natural growth. The demographic age and sex pyramid shows an increase in the number of people over 50 compared to 2020. Life expectancy in the EU has increased from 77.6 in 2002 to 81.0 in 2018 (Life Expectancy, 2020). At the same time, the natural increase rate decreased from 0.6 in 2007 to (−1.0) in 2018 (Population Change, 2020), while migration growth in 2018 was 2.6 (being 2.8 in 2007). Longer life expectancies and shrinking natural growth lead to a shrinking workforce and an increased burden on the pension system. One of the solutions to this economic problem is to attract economic migrants and increase replacement migration. "Replacement migration is the kind of flow of migrants a country needs to prevent declining and ageing populations due to low fertility and mortality rates" (UN, 2020). Multiculturalism policy and integrating migrants into European society show that they do not adopt the values and orders prevailing in European countries, and most often live in separate regions, preserving the traditional lifestyle. In addition, they compete with the local population on the labour market, which causes concern and discontent among Europeans. These socio-economic factors are interconnected with the cultural factors of the growth of Euroscepticism since replacement migration contributes to the erosion of national identity.

The group of cultural factors in the strengthening of Eurosceptics traditionally includes the erosion of both national and European identity. The topic of national identity has been present in European discourse since the European supranational integration project appeared. It was aimed at gradually constructing a united Europe without borders and creating a single European nation. There was an important document that consolidated the term "European identity" at the level of the European Communities, called the 1973 Declaration on European Identity. It expresses European identity through a commonality of interests and values, including the protection of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice, and the protection of human rights (Declaration on European Identity, 1973). Moreover, according to the 1973 Declaration, the common market, institutions, and policies are an integral part of

European identity (Ibid). Based on these provisions, it can be concluded that this concept is used in the EU discourse only in relation to the countries of the European Communities and the EU, although the concept of European identity is much broader. "It is the institutionalization of identity that becomes a tool for the formation of a single whole from Europe securing its subjectivity" (Berendeev, 2012).

Forming a European identity and strengthening solidarity amongst member states take a lot of time. The policy of imposing a supranational identity in the short term would generate rejection among the population of the member countries, where the concept of the nation-state has traditionally been cultivated. In this regard, at the legal level, two concepts (European and national identity) coexist in the main EU treaties. The text of the Maastricht Treaty contains the formulations both "strengthening European identity" and "respecting national identities" (Treaty on European Union, 1992). The Lisbon Treaty deals only with respect for national identity, and the lack of mention of European identity is explained by caution after the failed vote on the European Constitution.

Speaking about the legal and practical levels, the signing of the Schengen Agreement in 1985 and the introduction of EU citizenship prescribed in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty (Treaty on European Union, 1992) and established in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (Article 20) may be one of the more important such levels. The institution of EU citizenship does not abolish national citizenship, instead providing its holders with additional rights: free movement within the EU member states, electoral rights at the local level, the right to reside in any member state without restrictions, and other benefits provided by EU legislation. The Schengen Agreement and its incorporation into EU legislation have eroded national borders and stimulated intra-EU migration and economic ties. Based on the definition of the term "identity"—the presence of boundaries separating "us" from "others", "internal" from "external" (Junuzi, 2019)—we can say that these documents laid the foundation for European identity at the both administrative and legal levels.

It is possible to trace the sensitivity and significance of the loss of national identity using the statistics provided in the Eurobarometer. On average, about 12% of the population identify the EU with the loss of cultural identity (Standard Eurobarometer). Despite the fact that the indicator is not high, it does not decrease during the period under review (2005–2019). It is important to note that the Eurobarometer paid much attention to the public opinion poll on national and European identity

B:Что означает для Вас лично ЕС?
О: Потеря культурной идентичности

Fig. 14.1 Public opinion about the cultural identity loss. *East Standard Eurobarometer 63.67.69.76.84.88.92. Text: electronic//European Commission: official website. URL:* https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/index#p=1&instruments=STANDARD *(date accessed: 18.02.2020)*

until 2005. In 2005, one of the fears of Europeans was to lose cultural and national identity (37%) (Standard Eurobarometer 63). After 2005, polls on this topic were not conducted due to the failed vote on the European Constitution (Fig. 14.1).

The migration crisis caused by the destabilized situation in the Middle East had a dual impact on the problem of identity blur. First of all, it is necessary to define the migration crisis in Europe. The Western press and literature refer to the refugee crisis, although in addition to this flow, economic migrants rushed to the EU. The contradictory influence of the refugee crisis on the problem of identity is manifested in the following. On the one hand, there is a contrast between cultural and civilizational ("we are Europeans"), as well as religious ("they/others are Muslims") characteristics. Refugees are the "others" who pose a threat to European culture and way of life, they are not able to integrate into the "European melting pot", as they are temporarily displaced people who hope to return to their homes after the end of military conflicts (Junuzi, 2019). In this regard, at the psychological level of "we" vs "others" there is a need to use mechanisms to protect the European civilization. However, the EU's common migration policy has failed as has the adoption of a consolidated position on refugees. These factors contributed to the strengthening of nationalist sentiments and the fear of national identity erosion due to the EU's inability to find an adequate response to the migration crisis.

The malfunctioning of *European institutions* and the inability to adequately respond to external threats underlie the rise of Eurosceptic sentiment and the rise of nationalism. According to opinion polls by the Eurobarometer, the EU population on average does not trust the EU (in

2019, 47% do not trust, 43% trust), while more than half of the European population believes that their vote means nothing in the EU (Standard Eurobarometer 92, 2019), which indicates a low level of democracy in decision-making. However, according to data for 2019, 52% of respondents are satisfied with the way democracy functions in the EU. A high proportion of those dissatisfied with the work of democracy was observed in 2012–2016. As for the image of the EU among the population, in 2019, 43% of the population had a positive attitude to the EU, while 20% had a negative, and 37% a neutral ones (Ibid). The peak of the EU's negative image was in 2011–2014, when 25–29% of the population chose a negative answer, albeit it must be borne in mind that the consequences of the economic crisis were lingering (Effects, 2013); in 2016, 27% answered so.

An example of the ineffectiveness of supranational institutions is the migration crisis, which showed the lack of cohesion of European states and the fragility of the Dublin system. The Dublin system includes legal acts, primarily the Dublin Convention (1997) and the Dublin I, Dublin II, and Dublin III regulations, and regulates the issues of granting asylum to refugees and determining the responsible state for considering a refugee application. Due to the refugee crisis in 2015, the European Commission has introduced a quota system in order to reduce the migration burden on the southern EU countries. However, not all states supported the decision of the European Commission, which provoked an internal crisis of solidarity in the EU. The reasons for the ineffectiveness of the Dublin system and the EU migration policy are non-compliance by member countries in full with their obligations under EU legislation, the inconsistency of migration policy among EU countries, and the absence of a sanction mechanism for violating the rules for considering refugee applications (Ivanov & Jordonovski, 2016). The feeling of insecurity and the inability to adequately respond to the new challenge led to a rise in nationalistic attitudes and Euroscepticism in the states located on the southern EU borders.

The combination of socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors led to an increase in Eurosceptic sentiments among the population and the emergence of Eurosceptic parties at the centre of the countries' political life. The inferiority of the economic and monetary union and the simultaneous reluctance to transfer tax policy to the supranational level does not allow the integration project to be fully implemented and leads to economic problems of the member-states. The inability to respond

to common problems and threats, as well as the lack of democracy of European bodies, is increasingly causing discontent among people, which is clearly demonstrated by the migration crisis. Fears of losing national identity are also fuelling Eurosceptic sentiments.

Conclusions

When analysing the theoretical foundations of Euroscepticism and its origins, the following conclusions were drawn. Today, a broad theoretical base of Euroscepticism has been developed, and various definitions have been proposed in which attention is focused on certain features of this phenomenon. There are two schools for the study of Euroscepticism: the School of the University of Sussex, whose founder is Taggart (the first theorist of Euroscepticism), and the School of the University of Surrey, headed by Flood. Taggart and Szczerbiak have developed a classification of Eurosceptics into "soft" and "hard", which has now become traditional. Flood formulated a broad definition of Euroscepticism and focused on the incorrect use of the term (claiming it is more correct to speak of EU-scepticism), and also developed a detailed classification of Eurosceptics. Also, P. Kopecký and K. Mudde made a great contribution to the study of Euroscepticism proposing their own version of typology. The contribution of Russian scientists to this topic is also great. Kaveshnikov and Domanov have developed a new approach to measuring Eurosceptic sentiments—the Index of Attitudes towards European Integration, with the help of which it is possible to carry out a comparative analysis of Eurosceptic parties in European countries. For the purpose of research, it was important to correlate Euroscepticism with populism, nationalism, and radicalism, since these terms are often used together or interchangeably. Eurosceptics have based their programmes on the ideology of nationalism and the tools of populism, which allows them to use the emotional factor and more effectively convey their proposals to the voters. As for the general reasons for the increased influence of Eurosceptics, there are three groups of factors: socio-economic (demographic and economic problems), cultural (national identity erosion), and institutional (ineffective EU responses to challenges and threats). The migration crisis is not considered a separate group of factors, since it aggravates existing problems and affects the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the European Union's development everywhere.
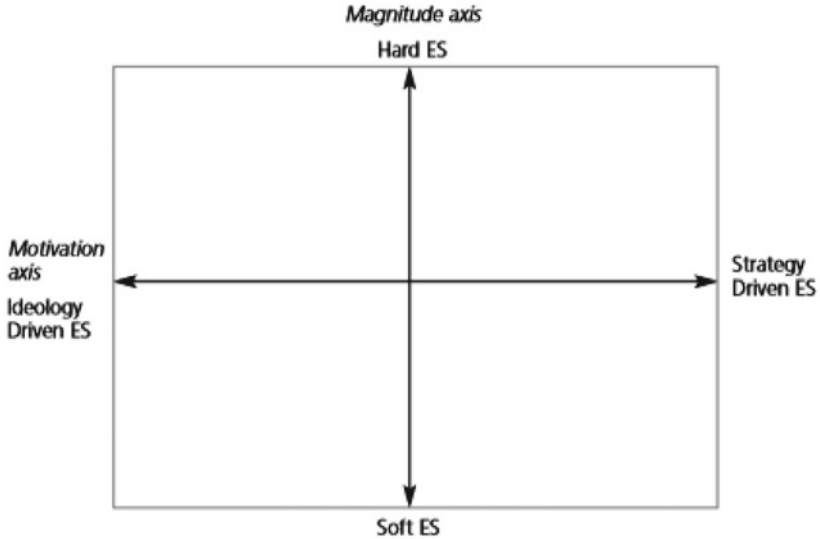
APPENDIX

See Fig. A1.

Fig. A1   Theoretical Eurosceptic space

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