

# **GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL REGIONAL DIFFERENTIATION.**

## **SELECTED ASPECTS OF INNER GEOPOLITICS OF RUSSIA.**

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***Abstract:*** Internal geopolitics presents a new challenge for the development of geopolitical thinking. It focuses on several issues related to the functioning of the state in relation to its action in the international arena. The article outlines the main theoretical basis of internal geopolitics, which is applied to the conditions of the Russian Federation. The article emphasizes the specifics of its internal structure, while critically relies on the proposition of Russian authors.

***Keywords:*** geopolitics, innergeopolitics, Russia

### **INTRODUCTION.**

The term geopolitics in its various modifications used an increasingly broader semantic spectrum nowadays. Nevertheless, the geopolitical importance of thinking of political practices, especially in the context of functioning of state is underrated. Geopolitics is understood primarily as a study of political-state operation of power in the international arena, especially in terms of the formulation of the doctrine of foreign policy, as well as its implementation in practice in terms of its national interests.

In this context, it is understood by M. I. Glassner (1996), who considered the application of geographic information and geographic perspectives in the process of formulation and implementation of foreign policy. This understanding of geopolitics combines the process of division of the world of space between different geopolitical entities, thereby underlining its international (supranational) dimension. The national aspect of geopolitics that has a significant effect on the action of the State as a subject of international relations was recently on the side of geopolitical thinking.

Applied geopolitical thinking operates with four spatial scales in the definition of which shall be developed for analysis.

So we can focus on global geopolitics (which actors are important global international organizations and global powers and aims to solve the problems at the global level, in particular the issues of peace, international cooperation and the hegemony of power), supra-state (macro-regional) geopolitics (whose main actors

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are mainly regional international organizations, regional powers respectively, numerous ethnic and confessional communities and its aim is to solve the problems of large civilizations, maintaining macro-regional stability, etc.) and national (state) geopolitics (which actors are nation-states) that addresses the issues of state action on the international scene. The fourth level is sub-national (domestic) geopolitics, which actors are different regions of the hierarchy (especially territorial and administrative units) and communities living in them, respectively, minority communities living in mixed communities in the territory. Some authors allocate at the subnational level two levels: regional and local levels (Turovskiy 2013)

Sub-state geopolitics addresses issues of the status of regions of different hierarchical levels, the application of subsidiary, as well as the share of regional communities and minorities in state power, even in the context of the possibility of enforcement of their interests at the international level. This is particularly the elimination of national centrifugal forces (particularly separatist) that weaken the cohesion of the state. Subnational geopolitics should therefore be involved in the search for optimal solutions in favour of maintaining, respectively strengthening the stability of the state and influence the behaviour of politicians towards this goal. This factor has significant impact on its position, the action and influence in the international arena.

On analysis of internal geopolitics, which our contribution deals, is involved in the subnational dimension of geopolitical thinking in connection to the national (state) scale. This reflects the fact that the state must be studied not only in the context of its internal structure (consisting of regions of different scales), but also as a holistic phenomenon, defined by boundaries, which maintains relations with the international community. As G. N. Nuryshv (2005) writes, the formation of transnational world leads to divert foreign policy to the internal states and vice versa. Understanding between external and internal geopolitics are gradually losing differences. Each state, a specific model, focused on maintaining its territorial and political integrity of the coordination of foreign and domestic geopolitics.

## **THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF INTERNAL GEOPOLITICS**

It follows that one of the ambitions of geopolitical thinking should be a comprehensive view of the functioning of the state in terms of its understanding as a spatial-political structure. This structure consists of regions of different hierarchical degree, which activity should be as a subject to geopolitical analysis. In this context there is a need to emphasize the importance of internal geopolitics. National interests that are trying to push individual states are heavily influenced by spatial-political factors. Therefore, to their fulfilment can significantly contribute geopolitics, which is in its "classical" form linked to the realization of national interests of a particular state in practice. Geopolitical analysis should answer the question of what should be done to meet this objective, respectively; what kind of action is needed to bring this filled. One of the conditions for the successful implementation of national interests is the promotion of the national population, which is connected with a sufficient degree of stability is one of the aspects contributing to the growth of the importance of analyses that internal geopolitics provides.

In this context, it is necessary to take into account the influence of other factor that is the growing importance of national actors. This process is associated

particularly with the decentralization of responsibilities from the central authorities of the state to sub-state regions of different hierarchical levels, and this process takes place mainly in countries with democratic regimes. In addition, in the last two decades we have seen a growing number of internally destabilized countries in the world, where the central state power is inefficient, respectively, weakened under the influence of national centrifugal forces.

This was reflected in the increasing interest of geopolitical analysis of sub-state actors, in particular regions and minority communities. State as the most important international geopolitical actor both within its operation must take into account their spatial-political action, with a view to its aim - to achieve the highest degree of internal stability. This stability is based on three dominant postulates:

- Ensuring efficient power and political control of the state territory by central government authorities;
- Maintain compactness and territorial integrity of the national territory in terms of eliminating centrifugal forces;
- Strengthen the stability of the ruling political system (Ištók 1996).

Developing of internal geopolitics is also a reflection of efforts to use knowledge regularities on functioning of the globalized world in which the changing status and role of the state. Increasingly important role in the new global situation is played by the various national regions and localities. Geopolitical activities are becoming to new form; while within them still mobilize new actors into and participating with more people. This process is reflected in the growth number of conflicts of different nature, the escalation of political power rivalry and struggle for enforcement of various political or cultural values. To these processes occur at all spatial levels - from global to subnational.

Internal geopolitics has been developed mainly in France. Its traditions were based on the works of great French geographers, like P. Vidal de la Blache, A. and L. Demangeon-Febvre. It is also tied with the tradition of French geopolitical thinking, especially the spiritual legacy of his compatriot A. Siegfried, who examined the percentage of ideas of political parties and movements in the context of regional structure of France. Systematic development of this direction (in French *la géopolitique interne*) is now linked to the work of contemporary French geographer Y. Lacoste and his followers, combined magazine about Herodotus (1986 wide team under his guidance issued by the extensive work to analyse regions of France). Y. Lacoste understood the internal geopolitics as an analysis of specific regional situations using selected methodological models, which are taken from classical geopolitics. Internal geopolitics was reflected in a large number of works that analysed the territorial-administrative units of France on different hierarchical levels (from regions across departments to cities). According to them is geopolitics understood very broadly and is associated with a variety of spheres, sectors and activities, with virtually all manifestations of human and social activities (Tomeš 2000).

Development of internal geopolitics in recent decades has been a turning point in the geopolitical thinking and at the same time opened new horizons for its further development. We can speak of “deglobalization” of geopolitics, which create new possibilities for the use of the geopolitical approach until a few mainstreamed into the subnational scale. In recent years, the internal geopolitics developed in the United

States, the United Kingdom, as well as Latin American countries. For this dimension of geopolitical thinking is gradually being called the term internal geopolitics (*inner geopolitics, geopolítica interna*).

Currently, there is widely emphasized on the importance of internal geopolitics in intellectual discussion of the future of Russia. The country is an ideal “laboratory” for the application of inter-geopolitical approaches, whereas regional stratification here has deep roots. Several Russian thinkers point out that the geopolitical analysis of the current situation and the future development of this state are decisive approach that is characteristic of geopolitics (*vnutrenňaja geopolitics*). Territorial dimensions of Russia, as well as the transformation of its geopolitical position after 1991, accentuated the importance of thematically far reaching geopolitical analysis. Their objective is based on a comprehensive assessment of the current state of geopolitical propose alternative solutions to problems in the direction to achieving internal stability of Russia. This stability is the primary condition for restoring its great power status. As G. N. Nuryshv(2005) writes, the key problem of internal geopolitics of Russia is to maintain the unity of the internal geopolitical space, as well as integrity of the state within the borders of the former Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. For Russia is therefore a priority to develop national geopolitical concept, which should include an analysis of each region from the aspect of socio-economic, natural, historical, ethnic and other geopolitical determinants.

Internal geopolitics is understood as part of an innovative geopolitical school, which is called the new geopolitics. The direction of geopolitical thinking in contrast to the “classical” geopolitics, focusing primarily on the natural environment factors, considered to be the dominant human factors (demographic, economic, and sociological characters). Taking into account that any spatial hierarchical levels - from national regions to global dimension. As Ó Tuathail (1996) writes, understanding of the term spatialization in terms of spatial organization in the geopolitical thinking “spread” of global; respectively super state scale to the state or regional dimension.

It should be stressed again that the internal - inner geopolitics is applied toward geopolitical thinking. This is a power-political analysis, which is useful for understanding the relationship between regions of different scales themselves, while the state as a whole and also in relation to its position in the world. Broad understanding of internal geopolitics allows framing a broad spectrum of geopolitical analysis, preferring a variety of factors to take into account the condition of their national spatial dimensions. Internal geopolitics includes mainly analyses the following topics:

- The establishment and operation of space-political organization of the state, priority territorial and administrative division;
- Spatial distribution of power and political forces within the State within the meaning of the relationship between the centre and regions, respectively between regions with each other (and also other specific relations and digestion);
- Power and political context of the application of the regional policy of the state in relation to the centre of the region;
- Power and political status of ethnic, confessional and racial minority communities in the context of their impact on the stability of the state.

Geopolitical analyses linked to the operation of state are essential for the assessment of its internal stability. Antagonistic forces that operate within should

be considered as subjects to geopolitical analysis, which is linked to the power and political objectives of the specific political forces acting on the citizens of the state. These forces can promote the application of centripetal tendencies (which aim is to unify and strengthen the state), respectively encourage centrifugal tendencies (which erode the unity of the state). Internal geopolitical analysis may include a wide range of approaches to this issue, and cannot ignore the impact of “external” geopolitical factors on the stability of the state, which takes over from the ‘classical’ geopolitics.

## **SELECTED ASPECTS OF INNER GEOPOLITICS OF RUSSIA**

Extensive territory of the Russian state, which expansion has been shaped over more than four centuries led to the emergence of the concept of “burden of space”, which introduced the Russian philosopher I. Ilyin. This burden, according to several authors related to the visibility of the efforts of Russia in the international arena. According to Russian philosopher P. A. Chaadaev had to be extended Russia from the Bering Strait to the river Oder to get noticed at all in the world (cit. Nolte 1992). Vast territory, controlled by Russia does not mark only its superpower status. He also met with the view that the size of Russia was his misfortune. The state long bore its imperial burden, only to have his government paid close attention to the changing area of law as a definite sign of its global superpower status. The extensive Russia Empire, however, the increasingly heavy burden for the Russian state-forming nation.

As wrote philosopher N. Berdyaev (2003) the territorial expansion had a great importance in the life of Russian society, as evidenced by the fact that it has become a collectively alongside with Orthodox one of the pillars of Russian idea, which appeared in the late 19th century. The author also stresses, however, that the Russian nation was exhausted by tremendous loss forces, which had caused him vastness of the Russian state. Colonization of large areas had always been a significant burden on the national economy, absorbing a huge material and human resources, but also the mental energy of the Russians. It could not be reflected well on the political development of Russia and the management and organization of large territory. This historical experience is also reflected in the current spatial-political structure of Russia despite the Soviet Union as a successor empire, must therefore be taken into consideration in the analysis of the domestic political landscape.

According to V. Weber (2001) the excessive size of Russia was the root cause of its backwardness and its political and economic system was unable to handle it. As Weber pointed out, the effort to keep growing empire and to solve the problem of managing such a large territory at the same time was over the economic potential of the Russian state. It turns out that it was and still is too high tax for great power behaviour of the Russian ruling elite and for increasing Russian confidence. The emergence of internal political and economic crisis in the changing global situation at the end of the 20th century was therefore essentially inevitable.

The effort to find effective power-political organization of the vast territory stagnated for a long period on a system of self-governance (samoderžavija). Its application could under certain historical conditions, not only to fulfil the role of “administrator” imperial territory, but also to secure the expansion of the territory through its relentless expansion. Constant fear of threats from „outside” justifies the legitimacy of the military forces of the empire as well as the totalitarian nature of the regime. As it turned out neither the Soviet system did not mean a substantial change

in the nature of a totalitarian regime. Despite stalled Russian expansion, respectively even retreat Russia from conquered the territory in the early 20th century (after the First World War) the imperial policy was a part of the political doctrine of the Soviet Union as the successor to Russia. It has been partially transformed only in terms of creating spheres of influence thus abandoned by direct connection to the Russian state. This was reflected in the system of satellite countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union as a successor to the Russian Empire for the political elite and the Russian people meant a huge shock. As said, the current Russian President V. V. Putin, it can be seen as a “geopolitical catastrophe”. It is therefore obvious that at present only the Russian ruling elite, but also looking for Russian geopolitics in the imperial past in addition to inspiration and ideological justification for the theory and practice of Russian foreign policy. Recent developments suggest that it is still valid, says British historian N. Davies (2000), who considers that Russia needed an increasing supply of countries and people to compensate for their sense of insecurity. Several authors point to the fact that the Moscow’s rulers so far mostly behave rationally and were willing to give up any territorial objective, if it is possible - as it presents too great a risk of interference with the Western powers. It turns out that is no longer valid, because of current development in Ukraine is seen as exceeding the “geopolitical carrying capacity” in terms of threats to his position.

As it was mentioned, despite the positive developments in the last thirty years in the context of historical experience the authentic application of liberal democracy is problem in Russia. According to P. Juza (1999), the application of any type of consolidated democracy in Russia tempered in the context of maintaining (or extension) of its current territorial scope. This is due to the fact that historically the territory of Russia is the product of purely imperial manner. Create a real functioning system of internal political-spatial organization of the Russian state in accordance with the principles of democracy and subsidiary is therefore a very difficult task.

It can be said that many problems associated with load space are badly in Russia today, despite the already changed political, economic and technological conditions. It should be also noted the impact of the huge dimensions of the territory on the settlement. Its isolated and separate character in the northern part of European Russia, Siberia and the Far East disrupts the internal continuity of a huge territory. It also affects the relationship complication remote regions to the centre. According to the Russian geographer R. F. Turovskiy (2005) is a realistic image of Russia archipelago, which consists of hundreds of large and small towns that are scattered in the forests. Residents of Russia havenot always inhabited contiguous territory, but lived in separate and spaced self-sustaining communities and thus lack a sense of national, respectively state of belonging (Pipes 1998).

The adversely effect on the internal continuity of the country also has enormously long communication, the use of which was and still is difficult to adverse natural conditions. These circumstances have always adversely affected the functioning of Russian society and weaken the internal cohesion of the state. To this may be added the problems with the formation of regional identity, which in Russia is only poorly developed despite considerable internal economic disparities. This applies particularly to areas with dominant ethnic Russian population. In the territory of sparsely populated Asian part of Russia and enhanced the macro-regional (Siberia),

respectively local identity. In terms of internal geopolitics are other shortcomings as well as asymmetrical ethnic structure of the entire country, greatly polycentricism developed and underdeveloped, poorly differentiated economy. In addition, the lack of developed communication network, as well as high transport costs are forcing some Russian peripheral regions (e.g. areas of the Far East) to make searching for economic ties with neighbouring states rather than the remote metropolis.

For problematic factor contributing to the difficult burden of space can also be considered natural conditions, particularly climate, which significantly adversely affect the suitability of a large part of the territory of Russia for the development of a modern economy and the emergence of permanent settlements. This applies particularly to areas with a tendency to the Arctic Ocean and the vast areas of the interior of the Asian part of Russia. The establishment of permanent settlements and economic capacity building in these areas can require high financial cost. This fact cannot fully offset the considerable resources of minerals and other natural resources. Significant changes in the regional structure of Russian north can cause climate change in the Arctic. These will affect the intensification of maritime transport along the northern coast and in the more distant future, the development of mining and quarrying (especially energy carriers) from the shelf of the Arctic Ocean. These situations may result in demographic and economic revival of the Russian North.

R. F. Turovskiy (2013) writes that, in connection with an area of Russia, it is necessary to emphasize the role of geographical distance, which has an adverse impact on governance. Long distance causes spatial polarization accompanied by the interregional differences and create specific identities of inhabitants of remote areas. There have been created the areas of geopolitical risks, which are characterized by a large distance from the centre of the country. Their parts can be separatist regions, respectively the territory in which they can pretend neighbouring states. Under the influence of these various elements is the provision of effective power and political control over the vast area of Russia challenging problem. His solution consisted in finding the optimal political system and in creating a balance in relations between the centre and regions. Vast territory of the Russian state and its features has always caused considerable difficulties for effective governance in the context of applying the optimal relationship model centre - regions. It was largely related to promoting centralization of government by totalitarian regimes, whatever their ideological base. The problem was a management of vast empire from a single centre. Recipe for its solution was centrally controlled transfer of power to the local ruling class. They terrorize the population through the relevant organs and also seek to ensure compliance with orders from the capital (Galeotti 1998). The strength of the centre was personified ruler, disposing of an absolute power, relying on his spiritual and mystical irreplaceable role in Russian society. This position inherited the leaders of the Communist Party, among which this effect was dominated by J. V. Stalin.

History of development in the centre and the regions in Russia had several developmental stages. According to R. F. Turovskiy (2013) there were the substitution cycles of centralization and decentralization. After the great cycle of decentralization in the Kievan Rus in the 14th and 15th century asserted the trend of centralization and then there were various changes of these processes. After the demise of Czarist Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution was introduced federalism, where regional communities gained considerable power. We can conclude that there was a braking

process of disintegration through some “cosmetic” adjustments, mainly in the form of creating apocryphal Federation.

According to F. Pročková (1997) was the preservation of the main area of the Russian Empire by Bolsheviks redeemed for the price of creating a State which did not title the word “Russian” and its division into entities of republics as a federation. In the reign of Stalin argued for centralization and the Soviet federation received only a formal character. After the breakup of the Soviet Union during the reign of B. Yeltsin was the decentralization process that can name the attempt to create a “new Russian federalism”. The period of V.V. Putin’s government strengthen the centralization processes.

During the whole history of the Russian empire, the relationship between centre and the regions is marked by the constant efforts of the city to expand and maintain the state’s territory. According R. F. Turovskiy (2005) in this respect includes an entire logic of historical development of Russia as a spatial phenomenon. This is a traditional Russian policy of imperative. As follows from the above remarks, this model assumes an emphasis on centralization, respectively centralized control and leads to the suppression of regional principles. Today is therefore the definition of optimal model of the relationship between the centre and regions of Russia still an unsolved problem.

## **INNER GEOPOLITICS OF RUSSIA AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF SOVIET UNION**

Russia’s geopolitical balance of losses after the collapse of the Soviet Union was warned (Beydin 2006). Russia sensitively understood this decay as a loss of more than five million km squared of “their” territory. It has lost important approaches to prevent freezing seas (major ports in the Baltic and Black Sea). The whole territory of the state is as if shifted with respect to Europe to the north and east. Russia’s new neighbours have become largely destabilized politically and economically less viable states. They are the light of Russian foreign policy considered as “near abroad”, naturally belonging to Russia’s sphere of interest, but also as threatening of its stability. As M. Galeotti (1998) writes, Russia had to be first in the new situation to deal with itself and with its altered geopolitical position.

The rapid development of geopolitical thinking in Russia in the last quarter century can be regarded as an inevitable phenomenon. After the trauma of the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was necessary to return the frustrated Russian society self-confidence, combined with the chance to return to the Russian state into a global power status. According to Russian politicians it is a place that Russia has its historical traditions, military power, natural and human resources, but especially its territorial size deserves. In this context it should be noted that pride of the area of state is a key element of Russian national pride and one of its last motivations in times of crisis (Besancon 2001).

Geopolitical thinking, enabling a wide variety to formulate conclusions, has become one of the appropriate tools for strengthening Russia’s self-confidence. In the development of Russian geopolitical ideas in this context is often emphasized the concept of “island Russia”, formulated by V. L. Cymburskiy in 1993 (see also Potulski 2010). According to him, it is necessary to focus attention on the Russian intelligentsia and its own internal problems in the spirit of philosophical ideas that



celebrate Russia as a self-contained “third Rome”. At this direction should also focus geopolitics, which is aptly called “insular”. This geopolitics, however, while not imply the conclusion of Russia in their problems or conscious isolation. Essentially, it means encouraging the development of internal geopolitics, which in its analysis should take account of development in abroad. As write Krivov A. and J. Krupnov (2006), in Russian geopolitical thinking has dominated internal geopolitics. Practical role of external geopolitics in Russia, according to them only consist in the fact that the world community to ensure support for internal stabilization of the Russian state, whose successful implementation is to contribute to the stabilization of the world system.

Geopolitical analysis of Russia according to T. A. Mikhailov, (1999) after the collapse of Soviet Union must be necessarily based on a number of specific premiums. It should be stressed in particular the balance of the characteristics of the Russian state, namely:

1. Centralized and state controlled economy, which should ensure, in particular the colossal military power.
2. Strict authoritarian, respectively totalitarian political system, coupled with messianic ideology, which was only called upon to manage the economy so focused and who was leaning against a huge military force.
3. Building Empire, thus vast territorial and political expansion, while increasing the size of the state creates new vulnerabilities, which stimulated further expansion.
4. The constant confrontation with the outside world as a result of the previous characteristics which justify its political system and all its specifics.

If we think of these starting points, then we can conclude that their contents die away today. Currently in Russia we can see the efforts to strengthen centralism, creation of illiberal democracy headed by a charismatic leader, the tendency to spread area and also increasing confrontation with the West.

As we already mentioned, a prerequisite for the empowerment of Russia in the world is its internal stabilization. Therefore, after 1991 internal geopolitics in Russia sought to emphasize the factors that Russia together into a single unit, using geographical, but also historical factors, respectively combination both of them. Analysis of the mosaic nature of the Russian country is associated with an occurrence of a number of “local” or “regional” statehood at the huge Russian plane in the Middle Ages, after the liberation from the Tartar yoke resulted in a robust state through a legitimate process called “harvesting” of Russian countries. This process did not stop at the borders of the Russian population, but logically continued on to the north and east, where the Russian colonization of the region created a “free and enterprising people”, while the expansion of the territory to the west and south meant a spatial connection with the new Euro, respectively old Asian (Middle Eastern) history (Ilyin 2001).

R. F. Turovskiy (2013) points to the internal heterogeneity of contemporary Russia, which is related to several factors. Important role plays the time factor here, related to the time belonging to different regions of the Russian state (the difference between the regions in the historical centre and the Kaliningrad area). Another factor according to this author is the degree of ethno-cultural regions spacers against the statist core, which dominates the Russian Orthodox religious population. Based on

this factor may be entered Russian ethno-cultural and diverse ethnic core periphery, which consists of three areas: Volga-Ural, North Caucasus and South Siberian. Has a characteristic similar to the northern area, which, however, is sparsely populated and has a low proportion of indigenous population.

According to M. Ilyin (2013), the internal structure of Russia's geopolitical configuration characterized by specific population, which consists of three large structures. They operate on the basis of relations core - background. On this basis the Great Russian centre in Moscow defines the core, "Russian-speaking" area of the Urals and Western Siberia and the Far East. It points to the fact that especially the last two structures are characterized by "islands" that form the big cities and their agglomerations. In this context it should be noted weakness in such internal structure which lies in the lack of communication and economic infrastructure of the country.

Russian geographer J. L. Pivovarov (1992) also stresses the great diversity of the vast territory of Russia and mosaic, great differentiation of the population, economy and nature. Nevertheless, according to him, Russia is a synthetic world consisting of many nations, cultures and religions, is thus (as in the case of USA) boiler, which created new community of people. Emphasize the other positive features of Russian history, intended to strengthen the confidence of Russians. In this context, for example, emphasizes that it was the Russian nation, which created a single Eurasian state, and unite all nations into the "Eurasian brotherhood" and formed "Eurasian superethnic system" (Geopolitics and bezopasnost - harmlessness of Russia 2006).

Thus was formed the natural internal structure "Eurasian" Russian Empire, which was disrupted its decay. In relation to the current Russia it should be emphasized that the process of disintegration of the territory of the Soviet Union took place not only at the level of the union republics, but also threatens the stability of the Russian Federation. Its entities seek to get rid of genuine autonomy and dependence from the centre, respectively some of them tended to declare independence. This trend is less likely to be observed in other former union republics. Mentioned processes in the territory of the Soviet Union overlap and influence each other (Kotyk, 1998). Russia itself, however, was threatened by disintegration as a greater degree than most other former constituent republics.

From the internal-geopolitical analysis view, one of the causes of this phenomenon is considering that ignoring Russia's natural geopolitical subdivisions after the victory of the Bolsheviks. The emergence of the Soviet Union was associated with the definition of new quasi autonomous administrative-territorial units of different hierarchical degree, many of which had the ambition to rely on the ethnic structure of the country. Their territorial scope and position in the hierarchy is changed quite often. Thus formed deformation began during the crisis of the Soviet system significantly manifest their destructive potential. These contradictions, however, remained unchanged to this day, because these units have been retained after the collapse of the Soviet Union as the subjects of the Russian Federation. There is no doubt that after the demise of the Soviet Union, Russia has found itself in a dangerous situation, which threatened to escalate into its disintegration in the form of the second stage of the disintegration of the Soviet empire. Relations of the Moscow centre with some regions (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Chechnya) has become increasingly difficult, even acquired an explosive character. Efforts to achieve some degrees of independence from the centre, but hit all regions of Russia, though with varying intensity.

In terms of the analysis of internal geopolitics is worth mentioned that for the majority of federal subjects in a relatively short time after the collapse of the Soviet Union created quite influential regional elites, and so such entities are given the status of real actors involved in the political and economic power federation. These elites, however, show a long time interest in the elaboration of strategies relations between the centre and regions and between regions to each other, which would correspond to the new situation. Therefore in Russia a long time absents a coherent conception of regionalism. Instead, create a special administrative pyramid on top with Moscow under which to establish a hierarchy of regions - "provinces" that controlled regional centres - "little Moscow". The situation is especially complicated economic differences between subjects federation of this aspect of a heterogeneous mosaic of regions. This created a complicated knot of mutual contradictions, consisting mainly of conflict between economically self-sufficient regions and subsidized regions, which affects their relationships and also their relationship with the centre. Economically developed regions in contrast to the backward regions seek to obtain the highest degree of political and economic autonomy.

With this tendency is indirectly linked the factor, which emphasizes R. F. Turovskiy (2013). According to him, Russia is characterized by the existence of national macro-regions, which are linked to the main sub-state identity. Their boundaries are often unclear (there are between areas without clear identity). At the same time, it must be emphasized that the identity of the inhabitants of these macro-regions are developed to varying degrees. This is the 10 macro-regions: North Wing, Russian North, Northwest, Centre - Medium Russia, South, Volga Region, Ural, Siberia, Far East and the Kaliningrad Area.

Analysis of the internal geopolitics of Russia logically aims at identifying the real geopolitical structure more than twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. They rely in particular on the definition of its natural cores (which may have different hierarchical level) in relation to peripheral regions. Account is taken of a vast complex of geopolitical factors, e.g. location, population density, ethnic structure of the nation state-building positions, respectively level of infrastructure. Particular emphasis is placed on these analyses the status of the issue especially sensitive regions of the functioning of the Russian state, such as the Volga, Ural, Siberia and Far East.

If we conclude that the internal geopolitics of Russia is still largely uncertain (Ilyin 1998), then part of the Russian thinkers but also follows a policy oriented analyses deserve considerable attention. In this context it should be noted that due to the size of Russia, and also in the context of his ambitions, cannot be strictly separated in the Russian geopolitical thinking external and internal geopolitics. According to several authors the basics of Russian geopolitics are derived from the national space. According to him, it is necessary to examine Russia's geopolitical space in the unity of the internal and external components through its internal and external interests. Thus, the analysis of the internal geopolitics of Russia must be strictly subordinated to his outside interests, the primary of which is to restore Russia's status as a global geopolitical actor. It is therefore clear that several conclusions aim to promote an optimistic approach to find new ways to rebuild Russia's size.

## **EFFORT OF CENTRE TO CONSOLIDATE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF RUSSIA AND SELECTED CONCEPTS OF INSIDE-GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS**

Russia inherited from the Soviet Union (and the Russian Empire) asymmetric and multilevel character of territorial and administrative division (Turovskiy 2013). Thus it formed a complex system of units which formally created federation of nearly 90 departments. Some of them had a nation-state in nature (they are formed for the “non-Russian” ethnic communities), the others were kind of direct part of Russia (included in particular areas). In addition, the Russian federalism is still characterized by marked heterogeneity names of individual units. Between the collapses of the Soviet Union consisted of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic 16 Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, 5 autonomous regions, 10 autonomous circles, 6 regions and 49 areas. It was therefore rather different structure. Such system in the period of historical breaks presented the danger of destabilization and disintegration of the state.

The centre has tried to deal with the danger of disintegration of Russia by formulating a Federal agreement, which was signed by almost all regions of the 31 March 1992 completing the legislative process was the adoption of the Constitution of 12 December 1993, which reflect the specific nature of Russian federalism. According to the Constitution, all territorial administrative units of First Instance acquired the status of equals Federation subjects. It was created as a specific phenomenon of “composite” federation subjects, where there are entities Federation, involving others Federation (Turovskiy 2013). By this act created a difficult problem, which seeks to deal with Russia today.

Federal agreement as well as the current constitution was stabilizing the asymmetric nature of the federation. This asymmetry reinforces the fact that different regions (the status of federation subjects) are very specific in terms of their internal development, population structure, as well as economic level and thus necessarily mutually differ significantly. In this respect Russia consist entirely unique state entity (Kotyk, 1998). In addition, the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union was also different in status between the various republics. Some of them acquired under agreements with the centre gained a greater range of powers. Reaction was moreover failed attempts of some “Russian” federal entities (counties and regions) to obtain the status of republics (e.g. Sverdlovsk region has sought to establish itself as the Ural Republic). It turns out, however, that the process of emancipation in some regions continues to this day (the efforts of the regional elites Siberia, the empowerment of the macro-region in the Federation). In addition, there was in the 90s of last century to the establishment of inter-regional associations with an aim to coordinate the economy.

When signing the contract to the Federal Administrative Russia was divided into 21 republics (which possess the highest degree of autonomy), 1 autonomous region, 6 regions, 49 regions, 10 autonomous circuits and 2 cities of federal significance (as a new type of unit structures Federation). Thus, the Russian Federation consisted of 89 subjects, more than in the Soviet period. Republic, autonomous region and autonomous circuits were formed on ethnic basis, other units (especially the area) were from ethnic terms “Russian” character. Before the reforms of the federal structure that took place during the reign of President V. V. Putin, was criticized this asymmetric division. According to Russian geographers V. A. Kolosov and N. S. Mironenko (2001) it is

complicated in terms of hierarchical structure, the different entities of the same level are not equal, it is excessively fragmented, and many centres of government are weak in terms of their position in the hierarchical settlement structure. There is no doubt that the fragmented structure of the federal units accounted for centralized management, which is promoted in Russia, as a very inefficient system.

After a year, the government V. V. Putin the centre focused on levelling power status and competence of the Russian Federation. Gradual transformation of this complex system is from 2003, while its goal was to reduce the number of subjects Federation and streamline their hierarchy in terms of their competence. Impact on the structure of the federation will have annexation of Crimea on 21 March 2014 after the merger of several entities (territorial integration was to reduce the number of areas and autonomous circuits) currently has 83 Russian Federation subjects - 21 republics, 1 autonomous region, 9 regions, 46 regions, 4 autonomous circuits and two cities with special status. After a transitional period lasted until 1 January 2015 should be attached to the Russian Federation in the position of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol in the position of the city with special status.

It can be assumed that the process of reduction of Federation subjects is coupled with clarification of its structure that will continue mainly in the form of:

- Unification counties with former Autonomous District (which were until 1991 their parts and then became a republic);
- Unification of cities with federal importance with neighbouring areas;
- Unification of larger entities with neighbouring smaller entities that are not economically successful (Turovskiy 2013).

On May 13, 2000 on the initiative of Russian President V. V. Putin created seven regions (Federal District), associating entities Federation (in 2010 their number increased to eight). Their representatives appointed by the Russian president and represent the formal instrument of executive power. Main power structures of the federal circuits are acting as representatives of the Russian president by the monitoring, control and coordination function for the benefit of the city. It is therefore a tool aimed at optimizing central management in terms of fragmented structure of the federation subjects. In addition, the executive power generated in all subjects Federation departmental network, representing a centralized management tool whose role and importance of a diverse (Turovskiy 2013).

This trend is likely in the current Russian government to strengthen represents (and in the future will likely pose significant) part of determining centripetal forces. In contrast, the act (and no doubt will work) and opposite centrifugal forces stemming from the specifics of the Russian state. In particular, the above-mentioned the high level of internal regional differentiation of the country, coupled with ethno-cultural and socio-economic heterogeneity. Such a situation constitutes an appropriate basis for strengthening the regionalist tendencies (which can be eliminated reforms) and secessionist efforts (which may not be subdued path of reform from the centre).

Creating a Federal District is understood by the regions in two senses. On the one hand is considered as a step centre, directed against disintegration trends and on the other hand, is seen as a precondition for the development of relations between regions within a radius of one another. In terms of evaluation of the current internal

political power structures of Russia, it is essential that neither V. V. Putin found the courage for a radical reform of the territorial-administrative organization of Russia. Definition of Federal District relies on the internal borders of the federal subjects of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. These were largely defined in the 20th and 30th years of the last century during the Stalin government. Apparently there was also applied principle that it is better known evil than new one and that has nothing to risk major changes because they could destroy everything. This dilemma, according to M. Galeotti (1998) characterized the whole of Russian history.

Russian geopolitical thinking runs counter to the ongoing dilemma of Russian philosophical thinking. It has long been tossed about in search of direction of the Russian state which is difficult to find spiritual journey to Europe and was considered not to be part of Asia. Even now, the issue is related to current and finding sources of Russia's own internal and external revival. This also applies to internal geopolitics, as a Russian geopolitical thinking itself the objective of finding the optimal model for the stabilization of the Russian state, which can be performed by different models. One of them is the application of Western European experiences that are associated with the application of subsidiary and decentralization. Russian internal geopolitics but mostly promotes its own model for solving the stabilization of the state. In our contribution we mention only selected concepts, but in a sense, outline trends in contemporary Russian geopolitics.

The relationship between the centre and regions came to the fore immediately after the proclamation of sovereignty of Russia in June 1990 and quickly became the dominant issue of Russia's domestic policy, while further impetus became the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It can be stated that this situation prompted the development of Russia's geopolitical thinking in its internal dimension. The result was quite extensive discussions that sought to find the optimal path that would lead to internal stabilization of the Russian federal state endangered in the first years of post-Soviet existence of wave separation from its subjects.

Several authors in this context pointed to the need to revise the territorial and administrative division of Russia. To justify the high number of subjects Federation, as well as substantial differences between them in terms of their size, population, resource and economic potential. As we already mentioned, these views also responded central power. Criticism also points to the fact that these entities are indeed in line with current constitution equal, but have different status (republic, region, region, autonomous areas, autonomous regions and cities with special status).

Another problem is a phenomenon that is specific to the Russian Federation model. It lies on the fact that some entities are part of the Federation of others (despite the transformation of a federal division of autonomous circuits except the Chukchi autonomous area are part of the "Russian" regions or counties), which creates a number of contradictions and competence problems. Big problems create the mutual territorial disputes subjects Federation, which is now a few dozen (Sulgina 2005). All these negative factors still influence the effectiveness of management's internal cohesion and political stability of the state.

It is widely strengthen this trend promoted the idea of Russian nationalism. One of the supporters of the current Russian thinking M. Nazarov (2004) proposes to eliminate fictitious national services (Republic of autonomous circuits) in which the titular nation constitutes a minority "discriminates against other citizens", i.e. the

population of Russian nationality. Moreover, according to current federal structure and national structure of state power (deputies minorities are too high a proportion of the number of deputies of the Federation Council), which in his words offends the rights of citizens, committed to the Russian nation. Therefore, instead of artificial units based on ethnic differences would be fairer to ensure national minorities "All-Russian cultural autonomy, irrespective of their place of living."

These ideas are shared by the controversial Russian politician A. V. Mitrofanov (1997), who claims that the Russians are essential to promote "national egoism", because only this principle solves their dilemma as a nation to choose between "life and death". Its application means the destruction of all "national sovereignty" (i.e. republics, autonomous region and autonomous area) in Russia in addition to the sovereignty of the Russian nation. This step will lead to the consolidation according to him, the Russian state and progress of all peoples living on its territory. So then Russia could return to good administrative division in the form of governorates, which operated on its territory since the 18th century.

Post-Soviet Russian politicians promote the creation of a new administrative division of the Russian Federation (e.g. G. Yavlinkiy, A. Tulayev). This issue has also become a subject of research of state institutions. For example Council for the Study of the productive forces presented the President's Office proposal that Russia became a unitary state structured in 7 lines and 28 governorates (Jumper, 2005). Radical reform is not only opening the new issues of the administrative organization of Russia, but also means the opening of the amount previously unsolved problems. As already mentioned, even relatively authoritarian government of President V. V. Putin, it has never been able to afford and therefore opted for "buck-passing" the way "integration" federated entities in federal circuits. In addition, recent developments have shown that Russia can survive without radical reform of the administrative organization.

In Russia, moreover, quite intensively speaks of "dispute capitals". These are some of the unanswered questions as possible in terms of political and economic transformation (which persists to the present) from one centre to manage such a huge country (Galeotti 1998). Some authors consider that Moscow is the Russian state symbol "Eurasian empire" until Saint Petersburg has more to become a centre of a new, modern Russia, functioning on the basis of polycentricism. S. Gradirovskiy and S. Preslegin (2006) argued in this context that the system one centre was favourable to the creation of the classic period of imperial structures in the 19th and early 20th century, but today it is no longer an adequate response to the challenges Russia. It is therefore necessary to create several centres of power that will be functionally specialized and due to its functions will also be appropriately geographically localized.

According to them the „Atlas of power“ in Russia should have looked like this:

1. Five places with the status of federal centres, namely:
  - Vladivostok as the seat of president (Pacific region will be the incentive for the development of Russia)
  - Kazan (resp. Samara) as the seat of the Prime Minister and the Government
  - Moscow as the seat of Parliament,
  - Tomsk as the seat of the judiciary,
  - St. Petersburg as the seat of financial institutions.

2. Seven cities as centres of circles:  
Kaliningrad, respectively Murmansk, Voronezh, respectively Smolensk, Rostov-on-Don, Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk and Khabarovsk.
3. Sieť miest, ktoré budú mať status konfesiónálnych centier:

Vladimir, respectively Kiev, Sevastopol' and Blagoveshchensk as centres of Orthodox and Ufa, Kazan and Makhachkala as centres of Islam.

The authors of this interesting project recognize that such reform will require considerable organizational effort and determination, but it will lead, however, in their view, to optimize management and to accelerate development.

## CONCLUSION

From current knowledge it is obvious that Russia thus still must seek a way to achieve the preservation of its unity and territorial integrity while ensuring autonomy of the regions. As G. N. Nuryshv (2005) writes there is a priority for Russia to retain a geopolitical space, controlled by Russia, subject to account for the coordination of the interests of regions, as well as regional and city-based relations within the federation and also NON historical formation of ethnic system. Doing so may lead to a situation where the individual regions spontaneously switched to other centres. Such a development could lead to liquidation of Russia as a geopolitical entity.

Towards the consolidation of the internal structure of Russia related to activities of central state authorities, which in the case of the Russian political system influenced the current non liberal political system. In addition, it should be emphasized that creation of functional internal organization of such a huge country such as Russia is undoubtedly a complex issue. On the one hand, the views on the political map of the world is very flattering for Russians, on the other hand, the territorial government Colossus considerable economic problems. This follows from the fact that a large distance is a considerable burden for the economy. While in the development of rudimentary economy (colonization of uninhabited territory, fur trade), this factor did not play a significant role, at present, the situation is different. The area is necessary to recover economically, and in terms of benefit mainly to manage the state (Besancon 2001). In this context, it is necessary to ask whether the current power structure of the Russian state (even after power-political changes taking place since the beginning of the new millennium) is able to handle these tasks.

In addition, we can say that Russia experienced two different targeted development trends. On the one hand, the efforts to ensure the unity of the state, relying on the legal homogeneity throughout its territory, and on the other hand, the need to maintain ethnic and economic sovereignty Federation entities that make up the natural heterogeneous regional-political structure of its vast territory. As already mentioned, the area of the territory associated with ethnic, cultural and economic heterogeneity create the conditions for a high degree of internal autonomy of regions and necessarily preclude the achievement of absolute centralism. On the other hand, the weakening of the centre raises concerns in Russia with an impact on the regions and the growth of separatist tendencies, which can destabilize "the whole system of territorial state" (Ivashov 2006).

Internal spatial-political structure of Russian legacy of the past interferes with the development of number of factors. This heritage is a politico-cultural structure of



space. R. F. Turovskiy (2013) has earmarked 6 main elements that affect it is affected:

- Fission "centre - periphery";
- Fission "city - countryside";
- Fission "North - South";
- Fission "West - East";
- Fission "Russian core - ethnic periphery";
- Fission "inner core - borders".

The central government of Russia in the current conditions has a dilemma how to consolidate his power in his own space. This process is an important way to achieve the goal of restoring Russia's global position as a world power. According to R. F. Turovskiy (2013) spatially-balanced political system can work only under the suppression of impulses from the regions. In every country (especially territorial extensive and ethnically differentiated) regional communities have developed their identity and also their political interests. This is not possible without the threat of destabilizing the central government (even in conditions of limited democracy) to ignore. Therefore, mechanisms are created for the presentation of regional interests which may conflict with the interests of the city in favour of the relative dominance of nationwide (national) interests throughout the country. The ideal model is the acceptance of regional interests with harmonic asserting nationwide priorities. Therefore, there should be a functional regional autonomy and ensured participation of regions in shaping decisions at the national level.

Solution, beneficial to the whole of Russia, would be to judiciously designing regional policy, tailored to the specifics of the Russian state, which should be based not only on the hierarchical structure of the Russian Federation, as it was previously. This policy should take greater account of the Russian space network structure, based on direct inter-organization relations. In this regard, reference should be made to the reserves that can be found in the regions. Their elites have not created clear and unambiguous political doctrine of regionalism, which would not be explained from the centre as separatism. New "transregionalism" should create a new, All-Russian, truly polycentric regional structure, functioning without directives from the centre of competence over exposed. Pragmatic view on this issue from the position of the internal geopolitics would certainly contribute to the stabilization of the Russian state.

**Note:**

*The contribution is part of the solution KEGA grant project no. 024 / PU-4/2012 Geoconflictology - a new concept of teaching the subject and the development of university text books (project leader: prof. Dr. Robert Ištók, PhD.).*

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