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NEW GEOPOLITICS – WHAT IS ACTUALLY “NEW”?

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to show the differences between classical and contemporary geopolitics. Geopolitics was always considering the territory as a main determinant of states development but globalization began to offer a world structured in a very different way. In the “global village” the territory is less important as it used to be. That is why modern geopoliticians have been changing the meaning of the geographical factor. About geopolitics scholars started to write, again¹. They show it in a wider perspective, as a space/place (for example “virtual space”) or imagined space/place (for example “lost homeland”) or just people’s perception (meta-geography) of the world order, different countries, politics and culture. The question raised in the article is: Can we identify a new

¹ J. Agnew, *Geopolitics. Re-visioning world politics*, Routledge 1998; B. Chapman, *Geopolitics. A Guide to the Issues*, Santa Barbara 2011; F.P. Sempa, *Geopolitics. From the Cold War to the 21st Century*, New Jersey 2009; R. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle against Fate*, New York 2012; J. Agnew, *Geopolitics. Re-Visioning World Politics*, Second Edition, London 2003; K. Dodds, *Geopolitics. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford 2007; C. Jean, *Geopolityka*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1995, p. 201; C. Flint, *Wstęp do geopolityki*, Warszawa 2008.

geopolitics as new scientific approach to explore world politics or is it just derivation of the classical geopolitical concepts?

Key words

geopolitics, critical geopolitics, space, geostrategic, political geography, geopolitical codes

Geopolitics is a controversial and ambiguous concept. According to general definition it studies the influence of geography on politics, principally the composition and use of power, and geographical factors, especially space, location and distance. It calls attention to the context in which national security decisions are made and issues of war and peace are decided². In some opinions “Geopolitics reflects international realities and the global constellation of power arising from the interaction the interaction on geography on one hand and technology and the economic development on the other”³. But “geopolitics” is a much used-overused term. Maybe that’s why Carl Jean stated that “geopolitics is a terrible mess”⁴. Writers, researchers, practitioners of international politics frequently invoke this term to describe specific foreign policy issues, not always in proper situations⁵. That is why is good to know how geopolitics has been evolved.

This concept was born in reunited Prussia, which was looking for territory and colonies to develop. A German geographer Friedrich Ratzel in 1897, who was writing about political geography gave the ideas, and terminology like “spatial” (*die Raum*), “location” (*die Lage*), “living space” (*Lebensraum*) or ‘Central Europe’ (*Mitteleurope*), than adopted by following researchers concerning political strength, and power. A Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén, who used the term “geopolitics” for the first time, saw it as a “science about state as a geographic organism and a phenomenon in space”⁶. Examining the co-ncept of state, Kjellén divided it into five main categories, of which the most important was “geopolitics”⁷. He was strongly influenced by Friedrich Ratzel and like him

² J. Black, *Geopolitics*, London 2009, p. 5.

³ B. Chapman, op.cit., p. 3.

⁴ C. Jean, op.cit., p. 201.

⁵ F.P. Sempa, op.cit., p. 3.

⁶ R. Kjellén, *Der Staat als Lebensform*, Leipzig 1917, p. 46; M.F. Gawrycki, *Geopolityka w myśli i praktyce politycznej Ameryki Łacińskiej*, Warszawa 2007, p. 30.

⁷ Others are: demopolitics, etnopolitics, sociopolitics, cratopolitics.

he regarded states as organic and growing. The state together with its people, was an organism that is why – in his opinion – each state needs a territory to grow. It was regarded as a “political strength” (Ratzel), “power” (Haushofer), or “strategic value” (Cohen) for the country. Although geopolitics was a legitimate scholarly discipline incorporated into academic research in the United States, France after IWW, its strong association with Nazi German resulted in it being discredited after all⁸. A German geopolitician Karl Ernst Haushofer, wrote that “geopolitics is a science about political organisms in space and world structure”⁹. In 1923, he founded “The Geopolitical Magazine”, which became the central organ of German geopolitics but Karl Haushofer did not call for a war with Russia. In his opinion the strength of the nation comes from the culture, and strong enough culture can expand but not necessary by military meaning. Geopolitical ideas may have influenced Nazi’s expansionist strategies. Looking for “living space” in the Central and Eastern Europe they started World War II¹⁰. After the war everyone blamed geopolitics for “unleashing hell” by giving ideological foundations to violence. That was the reason to reject geopolitics as a potentially dangerous political doctrine¹¹. During the Cold War geopolitics was associated with the worst of Nazi expansionism. In USSR the word “geopolitics” was forbidden.

But the problems with “geopolitics” is not only about its history but also with definition and its place in different scientific disciplines¹². There is no single definition of geopolitics and it’s usually defined by prefix “geo” (terrain), for

⁸ B. Chapman, op.cit., p. 8.

⁹ C. Flint, op.cit., p. 38; L. Moczulski, *Geopolityka. Potęga w czasie i przestrzeni*, Warszawa 2010, p. 71; T. Kobzdej, *Mysł geopolityczna. Nauka czy ideologia?*, “Społeczeństwo i Polityka” 2005, No. 1, Vol. 2, pp. 147–148.

¹⁰ Z. Lach, J. Skrzyp, *Geopolityka i geostrategia*, Warszawa 2007, p. 13.

¹¹ R. Kuźniar, *Globalizacja geopolityki i polityka zagraniczna*, “Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 2000, No. 1, pp. 17–19, A. Wolf-Powęska, *Doktryna geopolityki w Niemczech*, Poznań 1979, pp. 112–113, R. Kuźniar, *Polityka i siła. Studia strategiczne – zarys problematyki*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 86–87.

¹² T. Klin, *Geopolityka: spór definicyjny we współczesnej Polsce*, “Geopolityka: Biuletyn naukowo-analityczny” 2008, No. 1, pp. 6–7; G. Cimek, *Znaczenie geopolityki w warunkach procesu globalizacji*, “Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Marynarki Wojennej” 2009, No. 3, pp. 113–131; J. Macała, *Czym jest geopolityka? Spory wokół jej definicji* [in:] *Geopolityka. Elementy teorii, wybrane metody i badania*, Z. Lach, J. Wend (eds.), Częstochowa 2010, pp. 9–20; A. Dybczyński, *Teoria geopolityki* [in:] *Geopolityka*, A. Dybczyński (ed.), Warszawa 2013, pp. 32–33.

example: political geography, geopolitics, geostrategy, geohistory¹³, geoeconomy¹⁴, geoculture¹⁵.

Geopolitics can be seen like “unwanted child” of political science and geography, from which it originates¹⁶. Geographers criticize geopolitics for to close connections with politics, wars and expansion¹⁷. On the other hand, political researchers are blaming geopolitics for putting too much attentions on geography. For them, as well as for international relations observers, there are many factors which are important and influence on world politics, and the geography is only one of them, and not of major important¹⁸.

The first controversy concerns the differences between geopolitics and political geography. This was explored by Friedrich Ratzel since 1897. In literature there are three approaches to that question: 1) thinking about geopolitics as a part of political geography (which is common among the British and Americans researchers); 2) that they are completely different topics; 3) there is no differences between the two topics¹⁹. Polish researchers mostly accept the second approach. For them political geography deals with the influence of political organisms, like states, on geography and natural environment. So it is connected with the past and shows how human kinds shaped the space. Geopolitics examine completely different processes, how the geography determines the word politics and its concentrates on the future²⁰.

The second issue concerns the links between geopolitics and geostrategy. This term was used by Frederick L. Schuman in the article *Let Us Learn Our*

¹³ Term used by Fernand Braudel, referring to the past and exploring the historical background of contemporary geopolitical processes.

¹⁴ Geoeconomy is focused on economic expansion, as a part of politics, in the world, *Geoekonomia*, E. Halizak (ed.), Warszawa 2012. Confer R. Kuźniar, *Geoekonomia, czyli chybiona próba paradygmatu (w związku z książką pod redakcją Edwarda Halizaka, Geoekonomia)*, “Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 2012, No. 3, pp. 98–110.

¹⁵ It concentrates on sociological influence of urbanization.

¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 32–33.

¹⁷ P. Bartosiewicz, *Geografia polityczna i geopolityka*, Lublin 2008, p. 27.

¹⁸ Jacek Czaputowicz is not convinced that it can be useful as a method in international relations science. J. Czaputowicz, *Teorie stosunków międzynarodowych*, Warszawa 2008, p. 90; R. Kuźniar, *Globalizacja...*, op.cit., pp. 22–23.

¹⁹ C. Flint, op.cit., p. 37.

²⁰ M.F. Gawrycki, op.cit., p. 35; W. Kazanecki, *Geopolityka krytyczna – skuteczna metoda wyjaśniania w XXI wieku [in:] Geopolityka. Elementy teorii, wybrane metody i badania*, Z. Lach, J. Wendt (eds.), Częstochowa 2010, p. 96; T. Kobzdej, op.cit., p. 156; J. Skrzyp, Z. Lach, op.cit., p. 13.

Geopolitics (1942). During the Cold War another author, Saul Bernard Cohen, divided the world on two strategic subregions, in which he identified geopolitical regions²¹. Saul Cohen claimed that, “geopolitics is about reasoning from relations between worldwide politics and geographical factors”²². Geostrategic regions were actually mirrors of two military blocs as rivals, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. For him the term “geopolitics” was connected to political process, and “geostrategic” for security issues²³. The renaissance of “geostrategy” fell between the 50th and 60th. During this period “geopolitics” was not popular and international relations were concentrated on security issues²⁴. This is why Carl Jean referred to “geostrategy” as the elder sister of “geopolitics”, which is concentrated merely on military issues (military geopolitics)²⁵. Roman Kuźniar disputes this opinion and rejects “geopolitics” in general²⁶.

1. Revival of geopolitics

Second World War’s experience marginalized the geopolitics as science, and political doctrine. The Post WWII international order had rejected the geographic determinism. Geopolitics was erased, forbidden and humiliated. At the same time, despite the general denial of geopolitics, it was used in practice by building two blocs and spheres of influence. In the East it was the “Brezhnev doctrine”, according to which the Soviet authorities tried to prevent establishing different systems of governance in the satellites states of the Soviet Union²⁷. In the West the resignation from geopolitical thinking was not very obvious. Common values like democracy, free market and respecting for human rights helped the US and Europe build geopolitical alliance, and later the dominance in the post-Soviet world order.

Rehabilitation of geopolitics faintly began from the researchers, and politicians. At the 70th Yves Lacoste started publishing the “Hérodote” journal, in which authors had been writing about geopolitics. Yves Lacoste noticed the

²¹ C. Jean, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

²² S.B. Cohen, *Geography of the Peace*, New York 1944, p. 5.

²³ M.F. Gawrycki, *op.cit.*, p. 33; L. Moczulski, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

²⁴ L. Moczulski, *op.cit.*, pp. 35–36.

²⁵ C. Jean, *op.cit.*, pp. 46–48.

²⁶ R. Kuźniar, *Polityka...*, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

²⁷ В.А. Колосов, Ф.Г. Агнелли, *Геополитическое положение России: представления и реальность*, Москва 2000, p. 20. In 1940, and 1941 Mahan’s works were translated into Russian. At the end of 70th G. Shahanazrow stated to talk about Soviet geopolitical concept.

differences between the German and French schools of geographic thought originating in the 19th century. He claimed that the concepts developed by German geographers in political geographical matters were strongly influenced by biopolitical theories inspired by Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. A French school of geographical thought emerged later preserving it from this ideology, but also led to its rejection of politics and later on geopolitics. The journal "Hérodote" demonstrated how geographical reasoning incorporating political factors can be remarkably efficient²⁸. The second step was made by de Gaulle, Richard Nixon, Ronald Regan, but mostly because of Henry Kissinger²⁹ and Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose started to use "geopolitics" in their speeches as an instrument of foreign policy in the Cold War, justifying the need to maintain a balance of power between the USSR and the US. From the couloirs of diplomacy geopolitics went to the universities and started again to be an inspiration for the scholars. Slow rehabilitation of geopolitics was connected with appearing of the new group of theories such as poststructuralism and constructivism³⁰. First one raised the role of language in politics, social life and foreign politics. Second one claimed that significant aspects of international relations are historical and social constructed, rather than inevitable consequences of human nature or other essential characteristics of world politics. Both of them were undermined by the traditional theories of international relations like realism, liberalism and tried to warn the scholars about the possible manipulation of language by politicians and media. For some researchers geography or geographical knowledge started to be used as an instrument of manipulation.

Evolution of international relations changed the meaning of the geopolitics. Classical geopolitics based on geographical determinism which analyzed the relationship between geographic factors and political choices have disappeared. The research process consisted on drawing conclusions primarily on factors such as: terrain, distance from the sea, the size of the territory, climate and space etc. The biggest geopolitical concepts were related to a dispute between the maritime and mainland states (A.T. Mahan contra H. Mackinder). The situation changed with the development of military technology, especially nuclear weapons. Then "all the classical political factors – territorial, demographic, economic,

²⁸ Y. Lacoste, *La géographie, la géopolitique et le raisonnement géographique*, "Hérodote" 2008, No. 3, Vol. 130, pp. 17–42.

²⁹ M.F. Gawrycki, op.cit., p. 27.

³⁰ K. Szczerski, *Analiza neo-geopolityczna [in:] Podmiotowość geopolityczna. Studia nad polską polityką zagraniczną*, K. Szczerski (ed.), Warszawa 2009, p. 13.

cultural and civilization – lost, it had seemed to make any difference, since the fate, the existence of the world can be resolved in such a quick war. (...) Under those conditions, the space has not lost its relevance but it has been reduced to only two factors determine the optimal targets and move towards nuclear weapons”³¹. The development of technology, not just the military, contributed to the acceleration of the globalization process, in which the distance factor and all the territory ceased to be of such importance. Geographical factors were only one of the factors that influence international relations. For many researchers the process of globalization disarmed geopolitics and put attention mainly in the field of economics and transnational market cooperation. According to these concepts, globalization has “murdered the geopolitics”³².

But there were others researchers, for whom globalization had a different influence on geopolitics. Stanislaw Bieleń said once that geopolitics and globalization are “like the obverse and reverse of the same coin” and both are important in the explanation process of international relations³³. Geopolitics is about global balancing of forces, in which the most important are the actual or potential superpowers. Globalization instead reinforces the growing interdependence, cooperation and maturation processes of integration. Globalization reduces geopolitical rivalries, but do not eliminates them³⁴.

Geopolitics has expanded its research subjects and objects. First of all it gained a new look on the geographical factor, not only the territory but much more – all spaces, where the people are operating. Generally geopolitical thinking follow the human activities. When man was governing the land and the sea, geopolitics analyzed the physical geography, but when he gained the air technology, geopolitics started to follow the rivalry of the airpower (Alexander de Seversky). Currently man works in many spaces at once: on the ground, at sea, in the air and in outer space³⁵. A relatively new place to operate for a man has become a cyberspace. That is why new geopolitics can recognize the struggle between different players (powers) in the “virtual world”. Geopolitics started to analyze the intangible reality (cyberspace). According to same researchers, new

³¹ L. Moczulski, op.cit., p. 35.

³² E. Cziomer, L.W. Zyblikiewicz, *Zarys współczesnych stosunków międzynarodowych*, Warszawa 2005, p. 291.

³³ S. Bieleń, *Geopolityczne myślenie o ładzie międzynarodowym*, “Przegląd Geopolityczny” 2009, No. 1, pp. 34–35.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 36.

³⁵ L. Łukaszuk, *Współpraca i rywalizacja w przestrzeni kosmicznej. Prawo – polityka – gospodarka*, Toruń 2012.

technology changed the nature of human activities, that is why geopolitics still matters today³⁶.

A new element in geopolitics is also the increased range of participants as objects of the research process. In the past, the classical geopolitical concepts were concentrated on powers, like Russia, Great Britain, Germany and US and were giving answers to the question: Who is going to rule in the world? For example in Harfold John Mackinder's view it has to be continental Russia because: "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island; Who rules the World Island commands the World". On the contrary Nicolas J. Spykman was sure that, "Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; Who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world". The Rimland was an intermediate region, lying between the Heartland and the marginal sea powers. In others words geopolitics had a global view on international processes³⁷. New geopolitics started to recognize also regional and local levels of rivalry, disputes and interests.

Summarizing this, we can notice that contemporary geopolitics is trying to understand the relations between different players, including non-states players, who are rivals on the specific area/place/space. Researchers have given different names to new geopolitics, such as: modern geopolitics, neo-geopolitics (neo-geo)³⁸, alternative geopolitics and postmodern geopolitics³⁹, but generally new geopolitics is: 1) concentrated on place, which is defined wider than physical geography (virtual space, outer space); 2) taking into consideration different players of international relations, not only powers but also races, non-governmental organizations, terrorists, ethnic and religious minorities, the geopolitics is no longer states-centric; 3) not only concentrated on global scale of thinking but regional and local.

2. Critical geopolitics

An interesting addition to the new geopolitics gives its critical approach⁴⁰. This trend has developed in the West, from the late 70^{ts} last century, mainly in France,

³⁶ T. Gabiś, *Powrót geopolityki*, "Stańczyk" 1995, No. 1, p. 19.

³⁷ C. Jean, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

³⁸ K. Szczerski, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

³⁹ R. Jackson, G. Sørensen, *Wprowadzenie do stosunków międzynarodowych. Teorie i kierunki badawcze*, Kraków 2006, pp. 267–268.

⁴⁰ W. Kazanecki, *op.cit.*, p. 93.

the United Kingdom and the United States. The creator of this concept and its biggest promoter is Gearóid Ó Tuathail⁴¹. In the spirit of critical geopolitics also writes: Klaus Dodds, John Agnew, Simon Dalby, Timoty Like Leslie Hepple, Paul Routhledge, James Sidaway⁴², John O’Loughlin, Luiza Bialasiewicz and Alan Ingram. Critical geopolitics stems from two trunks: rehabilitation of geopolitics and deconstructionism (post-structuralism) thanks to works of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, strongly emphasizing the sociological aspects of international relations. “Critical geopolitics” challenges our common understanding of definitions, categories and relationships, by replacing them with, in some cases, utopian wishful thinking, by political commitment instead of an objective appreciation of the causes of conflict⁴³.

Critical geopolitics as presented by Ó Tuathail exposing the ‘natural’ and ‘objective’ science of geography and geopolitics. “Although often assumed to be innocent, the geography of the world is not a product of nature but the product of histories of struggle between competing authorities over the power to organize, occupy, and administer space”⁴⁴. According to him critical geography is variable due to political decisions and subjective, because it is ruled by man. Physical maps of the world had provided the necessary information to the European, who had conquest the world. With the increase of knowledge about the new territories, new civilizations, natural resources, raised the willingness to the territorial expansion. That is why, for critical geopolitics “geography was an essential tool of Western imperialism”, when the politics decided about geography, not geography on politics⁴⁵. Summarizing it, the critical geopolitics analyzes influence the knowledge about geography on world politics.

Critical geopolitical scholarship continues to engage critically with questions surrounding geopolitical discourses, geopolitical practice (i.e. foreign policy), and the history of geopolitics. Marcin Florian Gawrycki defines three methods of research in critical geopolitics:

- practical geopolitics – which deals with the activities of the state associated with the country’s foreign policy, explores how geography affects the process of decision-making in foreign policy. Critical geopolitics is concerned

⁴¹ Gerard Toal (Gearóid Ó Tuathail), <http://toal.org> [access: 23.08.2012].

⁴² M.F. Gawrycki, op.cit., pp. 43–44.

⁴³ J. Black, op.cit., p. 10.

⁴⁴ G. Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics. The Politics of Writing Global Space*, Minneapolis 1996, p. 1; W. Kazanecki, op.cit., p. 95.

⁴⁵ R. Kuźniar, *Geopolityka...*, op.cit., p. 53.

with geopolitics as discourse, studies of practical geopolitics pay attention both to geopolitical actions (for example, military deployment), but also to the discursive strategies used to narrativize these actions;

- formal geopolitics – the concepts, models and strategies for explaining and justifying the actions of practical geopolitics, presents what is normally regarded as “geopolitical thinking” or “geopolitical tradition”;
- popular geopolitics (folk) – which is formed under the influence of mass communication, theater and novels, journal (popular culture), which creating widespread awareness of the geopolitical imagination of citizens.

According to the first method, critical geopolitics does not differ from classical geopolitics. What can be considered as something new is the “geopolitical thinking” in the second and third method. Klaus Dodds is writing, that “Geopolitics provides ways of looking at the world and is highly visual as a consequence, readily embracing maps, tables, and photographs”⁴⁶.

Critical geopolitics are convinced that each of us has to be aware of what kind of message we receive from politicians⁴⁷. For example when the political elite start to make a war, puts strategy or concept which are based on existing stereotypes in the society. Colin Flint argues that “if enemies are to be fought, the basis of the animosity must be clear, and the necessity of the horrors of warfare must be justified. Enemies are portrayed as “barbaric” or “evil”, their politics “irrational” in the sense that they do not see the value of one’s own political position, and their stance “intractable”, meaning that war is the only recourse. (...) These representations are tailored for the immediate situation, but are based upon stories deposited in national myths that are easily accessible to the general public”⁴⁸. Critical geopolitics draws attention to the real motives of policy makers, which are often hidden under the ideology of nationalism, fundamentalism, democracy, protection of minorities, and humanitarianism. Geopolitics is close to a realistic paradigm that does not believe in the ideals, values and principles, considering it as a “useful suggestions” to broaden the influence countries in the world. That is why it is necessary to notice real motives of the country’s foreign policy.

Colin Flint is comparing traditional geopolitics which has claimed to be able to paint neutral and complete pictures of “how the world works” with critical geopolitics which is post-modernistic, and do not recognize the possibilities of

⁴⁶ K. Dodds, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

⁴⁷ G. Ó Tuathail, *Understanding...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 108–109.

⁴⁸ C. Flint, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

understanding “how the world works”. The only thing we can do is to try to understand the mechanisms and geopolitical codes of the states. In his opinion each country has its own code which defines consisting of five main calculations:

1. Who are our current and potential allies;
2. Who are our current and potential enemies;
3. How can we maintain our allies and nurture potential allies;
4. How can we counter our current enemies and emerging threats;
5. How do we justify the four calculations above to our public, and to the global community.

In the Colin Flint’s opinion foreign policy of the country is more or less limited by the history of alliances and conflicts, which it had experienced. Critical geopolitics try to see political strategies of governments from this “alliance” perspective⁴⁹. He points out that the fifth element is important part the process of justifying our strategies to our voters as well as international community. And this is connected with third research method of critical geopolitics – the popular geopolitics which is concerned with the ways in which “lay” understandings of geopolitical issues are produced and reproduced through popular culture. Popular geopolitics studies are, therefore, premised on the idea of a recursive relationship between popular culture and popular conscience. Specifically, critical studies of newspapers, films, cartoons and magazines have all been published in leading peer-reviewed. In other words individuals and groups of people constantly mapping the world, region or even theirs own city. By mass-media, television, Internet, we are receiving the information about the others countries, people, civilizations, religions, etc. In popular conscience are formulating the ideas about the events, wars and revolutions which are far away from them. Thanks to “virtual space” we are involved in the military conflicts, peoples suffering and humanitarian catastrophes. On the other hand it can be considered as a manipulation, when politicians or media trying to give an incomplete picture of the situation. A good example of this was the Kosovo and Iraq conflicts, when the information about motives of those wars was covered. Internet and media makes the military conflicts “our business” when they discuss the subiekt talk about in all the time. We can see the “virtual geography” when such conflicts in distant places on earth, thanks to the media, become close to us⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ C. Flint, op.cit., p. 32; R. Pain, S.J. Smith, *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life* [in:] *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*, R. Pain, S.J. Smith (eds.), Ashgate 2008, pp. 1–25.

⁵⁰ J. Agnew, op.cit., p. 150.

With the “geopolitical imagination” is linked to the phenomenon of the perception of place, so called meta-geography, when people recognized the specific territory as very important for them. It can be the lost homeland during the military conflict, when groups of people were forced to leave or resettle. “Imaginary place” is an area that people either want to get/keep/recover or establish a zone of influence, for example Russians perception of the “near abroad” is connected to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The territories of new independent twelve states were called by minister of foreign affairs Andriej Kozyriew in 1992 as “near abroad”, where Russia has its special interests. This area is considered as a place of exclusive sphere of influences. For international security much more problematic was the imagination of “lost homeland” for the people who were forced to leave this territory. Changing the borders in last centuries for many minorities appeared unfair and did not cover with their “mental map” of the borders. Building their own identity they confirmed “historical rights” to the disputed territory, what can sometimes bring to military conflict like between Armenians and Azeris, Georgians and Ossetians, Abkhazians, Israelis and Palestinians, Serbs and Croats, Bosnians, Kosovars and many others.

3. The usefulness of the geopolitical paradigm

The new elements of geopolitics mentioned above lead us to the question: Can we consider it as a useful paradigm for scholars of social science, politics and international relations? According to Carl Jean geopolitics is good instrument for researching the world politics, because it gives primary methodology to follow the specific problems of place, territory, geography and spheres of influences. That is why it can be useful for researchers who are interested in security issues like military conflicts, rivalry, dominance, balance of power, military race and terrorism. Thomas Kuhn, who introduced the ‘paradigm’ to the science was convinced that it gives the ability to create theories and models, as well as specific language which can logically explain the processes⁵¹. Geopolitics can be a paradigm but we need to find a common approach to its definition which will be adequate to the contemporary global international order. We can give general definition that geopolitics is a research approach – a paradigm – which is concentrated on relations between powers (not only global but also regional or

⁵¹ T.S. Khun, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition*, Chicago 2012, p. 24.

local) on the specific area/place/territory⁵². But this definition can be adequate for classical geopolitics in which scholars have been considering the state power, its ability to maintain and develop its own territory, winning wars with others⁵³. Geopolitics gives the platform to explore the powers relations, components of the power, strength of influences on others etc. From that perspective geopolitics tried to answer to the question: How to ensure the future of the nation within the limits created by the state and the international system. But what about new geopolitics?

The revival of geopolitics has had an unexpected result. It became a key-word to explain many different international processes and issues. Journalist and scholars started to overuse this word, what actually has complicated the scientific perception. In 2010, Dominique Moïsi wrote a very interesting book *Geopolitics of Emotion*, in which he divided the world into the dominant emotion: hope (Asia), humiliation (the Islamic world) and a fear (Europe). Critical geopolitics put attention to popular geopolitics, others find something like “feminist geopolitics” and “geopolitics of sports”. The question arise again if it still geopolitics? When Colin Flint was arguing about geopolitical codes, and what kind of geographical approach he could offer? He was talking about alliances, not about place, territory or the spheres of influences. This doubts bring us to the final question: If the new geopolitics can be a usefulness paradigm? The answer is: it depends on what kind of process or events we are going to explore. Yes, when scholars are trying to find the ‘real’ motives of politicians, and how they explain their strategies to the people. Virtual geopolitics can show us the rivalry between disputing sides in cyberspace. During the Russia-Georgia war in 2008 we could observe the fight not only on battlefield but also in media, where either Moscow and Tbilisi had put their own “true story” and were looking for supporters. Thanks to critical geopolitics explorers can find the answers about the emotions linked with territory (perception of place), for example lost homeland, when different groups of people want to gain the same area. That makes difficult the resolving the conflict or dispute. In Nagorny Karabakh they do not have any resources or diamonds but both Armenians and Azeris have the ambition to control this territory. Imagination of place can be observe also in Russians attitude to “lost Imperium’s territory”, which they call “near abroad”. Russians knows that it is now area of nearly independent states like

⁵² C. Jean, op.cit., p. 11.

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 13.

Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan but still they have special emotions about this area⁵⁴. Summarize, the new geopolitics can be seen as an interesting and inspiring research method but on some conditions. First, researcher subject should be concerned with place/territory/area. It can be only “imagination” of that place (metageography) but still it should be possible to locate it on a map. Otherwise we lost the prefix “geo” and argument that is somehow connected to geopolitics. Second, it is not a universal paradigm, and it has its own limitations. In security issues it can help but in the economy, not always. Third, we need to know what region we do explore, and what kind of vision of the world order people there have. In the post-Soviet area geopolitics is very popular but in Europe or even in Africa the approach to geopolitics is more skeptical of there if any relation to it. Not without reason, in 2012, Robert Kaplan, a recognized American scholar, published a book *Revenge of Geography* in which he was arguing that Americans have forgotten about the geography, which took revenge on them in Afghanistan and Iraq⁵⁵. The conclusion was made in Klaus Dodds’s book, that “It is smart to geopolitical”⁵⁶.

4. Conclusions

Classical geopolitics paid much attention to geography, which determined political decisions of the strongest centers of power. It was a state-centric concept in which researchers were focused on who is going to rule in the world. Definitely the territory, its shape, open access to the seas, neighborhood were very important elements in building power of the country. After World War II geopolitics has been forgotten. Scholars denied it because the territory did not play such an important role, as it was before. Despite these concerns in the West, mainly in France, in the United Kingdom and the United States researchers began to adapt geopolitics to the new international situation.

They began to emphasize a different understanding of the geographical factor, extending the meaning of the place. Geographical factor is not only understood as a physical territory, but also as a space in all dimensions of human activities: outer space, cyberspace (virtual geopolitics). Western’s scholars started to think also about perception of place, so called meta-geography. These are the maps that

⁵⁴ T. Klin, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

⁵⁵ R. Kaplan, *op.cit.*, pp. 33–36.

⁵⁶ K. Dodds, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

are in the minds and consciousness of different social groups all over the world. Everyone develops at a certain place that shapes his identity. Of how strong the social relationships associated with the place, territory and space depend on history, culture and traditions. For example, decisions on the outbreak of hostilities in defense of the place, and recover “lost ground”, identified with a “lost paradise”. In addition, the new element is to study the interactions between different centers of power, not only at the global level, but also at regional and local levels.