DANISH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
STRANDGADE 56 • 1401 COPENHAGEN K • DENMARK
+45 32 69 87 87 • diis@diis.dk • www.diis.dk

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'Self-fulfilling geopolitics'?
Or: the social production of foreign policy expertise in Europe

Stefano Guzzini
Senior Research Fellow

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Abstract

This paper sketches the very first research hypotheses and methodological framework for exploring the puzzle why at the peaceful end of the Cold War, more militarist versions of realism and decidedly geopolitical thought have known a comeback in different European countries while not in others. It proposes a constructivism-inspired analysis which, in a sequence, explores geopolitics as an intellectual tradition, an expression of state interests, and of identity politics. It proposes to analyse the actual revival (and/or the lack of) via a sociological process-tracing inspired by already existing institutionalist approaches yet embedded in an application of Bourdieu's field theory to 'foreign policy'. Needless to say that the most important part needs still to be done, both on the methodological level (the concrete framework) and on the comparative empirical analysis which necessarily asks for a collaborative teamwork.

Introduction

The origins of this not-yet-paper lie in my early days of teaching at the Central European University in Budapest in the mid-1990s. I had just arrived with all my Western European post-1989 package of enthusiasm, having been able to finally dump Cold War Realism and power politics. Yet, when discussing European security with my students, I was puzzled by two phenomena in particular.

On the one hand, students who had been exposed to a more or less convinced Marxist teaching, seemed to have no problems whatsoever to slide into a Realist mind set. Indeed, the more 'geopolitical' an argument sounded, the more it seemed to command a wide audience. Similarly, the books in international relations which were most immediately translated into 'regional languages' included Central European emigres like Zbigniew Brzezinski, but also the other usual suspects like Kissinger's *Diplomacy* and most prominently Huntington's ubiquitous *Clash of Civilizations*. From Marx to Mackinder.

On the other hand, when confronted with the details and implications of such argument, students actually were quite unwilling to subscribe to them. The wars in former Yugoslavia were a case in point. Although many Realists claimed that these wars have been instrumental in their reaffirming of Realism (Mearsheimer 1990), a view generally echoed by my students, the same students were decisively less convinced of geopolitical visions when they were actually applied to their own countries. Many had troubles with Huntington's European divisions which seemed to cut across not only whole countries (e.g. Belarus), but also across families (as many Czechs and Slovaks confirmed). The world was apparently full of unavoidable civilisational clashes - elsewhere. Many students from former Yugoslavia were quite cynical about 'ethnic arguments' and referred to the elite motives which led to the wars, in particular in those regions where the ethnic distance was not very big (e.g. Vojvodina and parts of Croatia). Indeed, some went as far as to see in Huntington's theses an easy ex post justification of conflicts which were neither God-given nor necessary. Geopolitics was no longer a neutral theory, but a policy tool for other ends. From Mackinder back to Machiavelli.

This research project will touch the two aspects just mentioned, both the renaissance of geopolitical thought and also its relationship with a foreign policy reality it claims only neutrally to analyse. Applied to Europe at large, the project is about the analysis of possible 'self-fulfilling geopolitics' in Europe.[1]

The research project on 'self-fulfilling geopolitics' is hence inspired by the puzzle that exactly when the Cold War came to an end and seemed to herald the superiority of non-realist approaches in International Relations (Allan and Goldmann 1992, Lebow and Risse-Kappen 1995), many European countries, both East and West, have experienced a revival of a distinctively geopolitical tradition. In some countries, like Italy or Russia, such thought has reached an almost hegemonic position in expert discourse.

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[1] Indeed, from spring 1996, I offered a course on 'the end of the post Cold War' at the CEU.

The project has a triple aim. First, it wants to explore the content of present geopolitical thought and critique in Europe. It does so by re-tracing it within their respective national and international intellectual traditions. Second, it wants to explore the reasons for the geopolitical revival (or its lack of) in selected European countries. This analysis focuses on the institutional structure within which foreign policy thought is produced and advocated, and which is more or less conducive to geopolitical thought. This refers hence to the political economy of knowledge production or the national organisation of foreign policy expertise. Finally, it investigates, in return, the effect such thought has on that very reality it is supposed to analyse (mainly in terms of foreign policies).

1. The revival of geopolitical thought after the end of the Cold War

1. What revival?

Can one really talk about a geopolitical revival in the first place? Although it is a bit premature to make an assessment of its general importance or impact (indeed, this is part of this research project), its resurgence is by now fairly well documented in a series of countries. Three might suffice for the sake of illustration.

There is most prominently Russia, which has seen a quite remarkable turn around from its Cold War ideology to a debate in which geopolitics looms dominant (Tyulin 1997, Sergounin 2000). In particular, Alexander Dugin, his *Fundamentals of Geopolitics* and his political activism, have attracted the scorn of critics (not shying away of likening him to a neo-fascist, see Ingram 2001).

But there are other, perhaps less obvious cases. Most strikingly perhaps, Italy has seen a revival of geopolitics with General (and political advisor) Carlo Jean (1995, 1997) as its figurehead and the relatively new journal of geopolitics, called *LiMes* (the new Italian equivalent to the French *Hérodote*, but with the success of *Foreign Affairs/Foreign Policy*) as its main outlet (Lucarelli and Menotti 2002). In fact Jean's books are the most widely read books in international relations in Italy written by an Italian. Together with *Limes*, they have succeeded in making geopolitical vocabulary permeate also daily discourses of politicians and newspapers (Antonsich 1996).

Also in Eastern Europe, many researchers have been interested by the resurgence of geopolitical thought. Estonia has been closer researched than many other countries of the region. Although the exact status of geopolitical thought in Estonia is still disputed (for an overview, see Aalto 2000, 2001), the place accorded to Huntington's *clash of civilizations* is remarkable. The Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote the foreword to the 1999 Estonian translation of Huntington's book. At the launch of the translation, Huntington visited Estonia and spoke at a press conference together with Estonia's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Kuus 2002b: 307). His book was extensively reviewed in major newspapers and has more generally become part of popular discourse (Aalto and Berg 2002: 261-262).

2. Which geopolitics?

By looking at the major international journals, one might think that with the exception of the Huntington controversy, there has not been much of a revival at all. In the aftermath of the globalisation literature and of IPE, territoriality itself was increasingly contested as a major reference point for theory (for a relatively balanced account within that tradition, see Ruggie 1993). And even within the more classical mainstream, IPE had its impact. Hence, Gilpin (1987, 1991) early argued for a national competition not in terms of territory, but market shares, a shift from geopolitics to geoeconomics (Luttwak 1990). Indeed, Huntington's (1993) thesis itself has been heralded as an attempt to go beyond a too material understanding of international competition in which not countries or power blocs, but civilisations, indeed cultures, oppose each other. Which geopolitics are we talking about?

As a first step, it is therefore important to stress that 'geopolitics', despite its usual and purely material geographic connotation, does not imply a definition of power based solely on military capacities. If anything, Gilpin's neo-mercantilism is more consistent with the wider realist tradition than many realist balance of power theories (something he rightly claims himself in Gilpin and Gilpin 1987). Nothing really new in Luttwak.

Moreover, geopolitical thought was never only just about seas and continental masses, but always included a cultural, if not civilisational component. Whether or not this component was – in the as usual, last resort – derived from a version of geographical determinism is not that important for the argument here. What counts is that 'space' is always also human and cultural space. It is therefore nothing unusual that the same Mackinder who is known for his dichotomy of sea and land powers, is writing about politics with a series of cultural (and national) stereotypes. Similarly, he has been positively discussing issues of ethnic homogenisation as a way of conflict resolution, as indeed practised in the aftermath of the First World War in the Turkish-Greek population exchange (Mackinder 1944 [1919]). In the past, the inherent nationalism of much geopolitical thought always included a cultural, if not ethnic or racial component. In this regard, Huntington's thesis is hardly new within, and belongs to, a geopolitical tradition.

But there is a second component of the present revival of 'geopolitics' which is important to stress. Very often, writers pepper their papers with geopolitical jargon without necessarily being aware of its ancestors or by using the geopolitical pedigree in a very loose way. This is the case of the Italian discussion, for instance. In this case, it is relatively difficult, and sometimes probably impossible, to distinguish between a revival of 'authentic' geopolitical thought and the slightly more muscular version of realism which has undergirded much public, but also academic debate. Indeed, to some extent, such vocabulary still seems to fulfil a function of socialisation for the foreign policy expert, as quite crudely described 40 years ago by Inis Claude (1962: 39)

> *[t]hese cases illustrate the widespread tendency to make the balance of powera symbol of Realism, and hence of respectability, for the scholar or statesman. In this usage, it has no substantive content as a concept. It is a test of intellectual virility, of he-manliness in the field of international relations. The man who 'accepts' the*

balance of power and who dots his writing with approving references to it, thereby asserts his claim to being a hard-headed Realist who can look at the grim reality of power without flinching. The man who rejects the balance of power convicts himself of softness, of cowardly incapacity to look power in the eye and acknowledge its role in the affairs of states.

As a result, the present study, by being interested in the self-evidence with which geopolitical thought revived in some countries, understands geopolitics in its wider, also cultural way, and will have to touch its relation with the realist tradition, as well.

3. Which puzzle?

Was such a geopolitical revival after the end of the Cold War not to be expected? There are two types of rejoinders for which there appears no puzzle whatsoever in the present revival. On the one hand, there is the classical realist answer, saying that the aftermath of the Cold War showed clearly the 'eternal wisdom' of the realist tradition, including its more geopolitical component. Mearsheimer and Huntington are there, because world politics required it. On the other hand, there have been arguments which showed how the success of Huntington fitted very well the anxiety with which established discourses tried to fill the post-1989 void or simply stem the anti-realist tide.

The necessary return of realism and geopolitics?
Some citizens of former Yugoslavia might be forgiven for having a less glorious view of the end of the Cold War. Certainly realists pointed to the many civil wars as indication for the need not to be lured by the peaceful solution of the Cold War. For them, the post-Cold War era was a dangerous peace. And yet, this does not invalidate the puzzle. Even if we would grant that there is no unique interpretation of the end of the Cold War, it is by far not clear why geopolitics should so early and suddenly arise out of the ashes, both East and West.

For once, geopolitics as a distinct theory belongs to those very systemic and deterministic versions of realism which are usually considered unable to explain the behaviour of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War. Although the interpretation of the end of the Cold War will probably stay 'essentially contested' for its far-reaching political implications, it is not wrong to say that realist theories which concentrate mainly on systemic determinism (the balance of power) have been under severe attack (Kratochwil 1993, Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994, Lebow 1994). The USSR was not weaker in relative power terms in the mid-1980s than it used to be at earlier stages of the Cold War. Moreover, a geopolitical outlook which would add more geographical emphasis, including a focus on territories, would have to explain the ease Gorbachev let the Soviet gains from 1945 go.

And indeed, very quickly a *Waltzian* systemic response was discarded by realists themselves. An early rejoinder (Wohlforth 1994/1995) was more inspired by Gilpin (1981) and Walt (1987). It mixed the idea of hegemonic decline and a moment of perception: whether or not the power position was really as bad, Gorbachev perceived a power decline

and had to react by leaving lest ('retrenchment'). Reagan's re-armament is seen as the catalyst (Patman 1999). Such argument has been recently enlarged with another systemic factor, by taking also the effects of globalisation and economic decline into account (Brooks and Wohlforth 2000/01).[2]

It is debatable whether that late realist fixing is persuasive. There is the question of timing, since the major shift appears in 1987, not only quite a while after the first Reagan administration, which had provoked only responses of Soviet re-armament, not retrenchment (MccGwire 1991), but also after Reykjavik and the much more accommodating second Reagan administration had started. And moreover, why would a challenger in decline prefer simply to give up the battle, rather than go for a preventive war before the situation will further deteriorate? Even if such a realist reading rightly stresses the existence of constraints on Soviet policy, it cannot explain why they were interpreted in a particular way and which policy was to follow. There seems no compelling evidence to support that the Soviet Union needed to give up Eastern Europe (Evangelista 2001), let alone to encourage the demise of existing communism there (Kramer 1999, 2001). Against this mainly US power politics story, it is perhaps not fortuitous that mostly US-outsiders (but not only, see Evangelista 1999) have been particularly keen to stress the influence of detente on the then new power elite in Moscow: social-democratic ideas (Lévesque 1995), *Ostpolitik* (Risse-Kappen 1994), 'non-offensive defense', the Helsinki process and confidence-building measures, which all helped to build up a remarkable reservoir of trust in particular towards Germany (Forsberg 1999). European peace researchers certainly saw themselves vindicated by the events (Wiberg 1992). Material explanations, if they are not just indeterminate (Lebow 1994), simply do not suffice and might not even get at the most important components (for a recent assessment of the debates, see Petrova 2003).

Hence, how come that in the predominantly North-Western-dominated IR discourse, the peaceful opening of the wall and the end of the daily threat of a global war, i.e. that the major shift in world politics at the end of the century, was in some European countries ultimately considered less important than a partial reading of local ethnic conflicts? In other words, even if not all states or their elites shared the e.g. German enthusiasm of the days of the then celebrated Paris Charter or the hopes of a really common European security structure[3], it is not self-evident that geopolitical thought, long scorned for its militarist and determinist vision of foreign policy would resurrect just after the Cold War came finally to a peaceful end.

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[2] It is, however, somewhat curious that IR realists pick up this argument right now. In the meantime, the globalisation debate has moved towards conceiving of globalisation as a dependent variable itself in dire need to be explained, rather than as a general systemic and independent variable to explain all possible national socialisation and convergence patterns (Leander 2001).

[3] This enthusiasm could be found both in government (Genscher 1995) and in academia (e.g. Senghaas 1992).

'Geopolitics' as a way to resurrect 'geo-politics'?

There is a second way of seeing little puzzle in the resurgence of geopolitical ideas. Whereas the first one analyses it in terms of a valuable tradition vindicated by the post-1989 events, the second sees rather the inertial effects of a pre-existing discourse in search of a new application. According to this, it was only to be expected that the established strategic discourse would have found ways to re-assert itself: such discourses change slowly and even major events do not necessarily undermine their basic logic. As I will argue, this critique is justified. It does not really solve the puzzle, though: it provides an important element for its specification.

Huntington's theses are not only an old hat with regard to classical geopolitics, they also simply re-hash Cold War dichotomies. He divides the world into different civilizations (poles) which occupy different cultural areas (blocs) at the borders of which (e.g. iron or bamboo curtains) friction is likely to occur. In particular, the Western world (democracy) will face the combined onslaught of civilizations which, by their self-definition, cannot compromise (totalitarianism). In this reading, Huntington seems to be looking for a new enemy to be slotted into an argument already given. In other words, it is not a new problem which spurs a Western response, but Western strategic solutions which are in search of a problem (for this argument, see Guzzini 1998: 234).

In particular, Gearóid Ó Tuathail (Gerard Toal) has stressed the resurgence of such old-fashioned geopolitics in times of disarray in strategic thought, a disarray to which he refers as the 'geopolitical vertigo' (for the following, see Ó Tuathail 1996: chapter 7). Here, the resurgence of more spatial presentation of international dynamics are part and parcel of an attempt – not necessarily conscious and strategic – to regain ground in international politics. Faced with the partial dissolution of spatial references, the revival of 'geopolitics' is not simply an intellectual move: it is the reaction against the decline of the politics of geopolitics (or: 'geo-politics'). Being intrinsically connected to militarism, geopolitics re-appears at a time when military budgets are shrinking, heeding the public's call for a Cold War 'peace dividend'. It is the attempt to fix the disorientation, exacerbated by 1989, and to allow a return to 'business as usual'.

This argument is clearly congenial with the present approach (see also below). Indeed, it helps to specify the puzzle. Although in this context, it does not seem all too puzzling that geopolitics re-appears, indeed might even be the privileged expression of a pre-existing strategic discourse (and imaginary) in dire need of strong justification, it does not answer the question why some foreign policy elites and discourses seem to be much more receptive for it than others. In some countries, geopolitical thought remained basically dead letter (Sweden, Germany). This asks for a contextualising approach, as proposed by Ó Tuathail himself. For him, *critical geopolitics* is out 'to problematize the pervasive geographical politics of foreign policy discourses, the ways in which the global political scene is geo-graphed by foreign policy regimes of truth' (Ó Tuathail 1996: 18). Yet, this can only be done by studying the embeddedness of discourses and practices 'within local, national, and transnational interpretative communities' (Ó Tuathail 1996: 60/61).

2. A constructivist study of the uneven revival of geo-politics in Europe

Given the different national traditions, political situations before and after 1989, and also the different understandings of geopolitics, the project does not assume ex ante a common set of causes or reasons for the revival, or the lack of. In a sense, it uses this starting point as a way to apprehend the state of geopolitical thought in different national contexts and as a way to map the 'field' within which foreign policy expertise is produced. Looking for the different reasons of the revival (or the lack of) should allow a manageable entry which links a comparison of the national organisation of foreign policy expertise with the development of European security after 1989.

There are necessarily different contexts within which a revival of geopolitics can take place. The justifications for the return of geopolitics look quite different from Italy where it allows military expertise to simply re-assert itself, via Russia where it functions as a great power ideology to Estonia where it is part and parcel of an identity politics defining Estonia as on the sunny (European, Western) side of the world. The study will need to compare them with those countries where it did not happen. For the sake of illustration, let me propose four basic research avenues which I present in a sequence of increased contextualisation of geopolitical thought. Before doing this, however, I will shortly clarify the theoretical position from which this study is conducted.

1. A constructivist approach

This study is informed by a constructivist meta-theoretical commitment which I define by three characteristics (for a more detailed exposition, see Guzzini 2000).

First, constructivism implies an ontological position which stresses the construction of *social* reality. A piece of paper can become money if and only if people identify it as such and share this udnerstanding, as in Searle's (1995) well-known example. These are social or 'institutional' facts. Those facts are the (usual) object of the social sciences.

Second, constructivism has an epistemological position which stresses the social or intersubjective construction of meaning (and hence knowledge). Understanding is not a passive registration, but an active construction: we need concepts to make sense of the world. They are the condition for the possibility of knowledge. This position opposes both the reduction of knowledge to an objectivist ('data speaks for itself') and to a subjectivist position (since there is no private language game). There are two ways of reaching this position. It can be reached from the social ontology just mentioned above (for this route, see Adler 1997, 2002): if the social world is constructed, and meanings are part of the social world, then also meanings (and hence knowledge) are socially constructed. One can also derive it directly from the philosophy of knowledge (Kratochwil 1989, 2000). Here, constructivism stresses that phenomena cannot constitute themselves as objects of knowledge independently of discursive practices. Such a position does not challenge the possible thought-independent

existence of (in particular natural) phenomena, but it challenges their language-independent observation. What counts as a socially meaningful object or event is always the result of an interpretive construction of the world out there. Whatever route one takes, epistemology and ontology go together.

Finally, constructivism is particularly sensitive to the distinction between the level of action (proper), the level of observation and the relationship between the two. In other words, constructivist approaches usually problematise what rationalist approaches often (but not always) take for granted or interchangeable, namely the relationship between the meaning world of the actor and the one of the observer.

Power is crucial for constructivist theorising, since it handles the relationship between the social construction of meaning and the construction of social reality. For constructivists, the categories we use, so they are shared, have an effect on the social world. To some extent, statistical categories 'produce' what counts as significant facts, and function as the 'authoritative' way of understanding the world. Moreover, human beings – but not natural phenomena – can become reflexively aware of attributions and influence their action in interaction with them. This 'looping effect' (Hacking 1999: 34) is one of the reasons for the importance of 'identity' in constructivist writings.

And as a final point linking the social construction of knowledge and the construction of social reality, constructivists stress the importance of self-fulfilling prophecies (Wendt 1999). If money is money and not just paper, because people identify it as such, then it ceases to be so the moment this shared attribution goes missing. When people stop trusting money, money will through this very action literally not worth the paper it is printed on. Similarly, Huntington's geopolitics can become political reality not because of some alleged iron laws, but because of the combined (and sticky) effect of actors believing in its truth. By the binary oppositions it imposes, by the homogeneous identities it reads into the world map (the West being Christian, white, fundamentally WASP, etc.), it is not a passive registration of a conflictual world, but enacts one. 'Huntington's thesis is not about the clash of civilizations. It is about making global politics a clash of civilizations' (Ó Tuathail 1996: 149). In this return to the issue of self-fulfilling prophecies, constructivism revitalises an old subject of peace research (Guzzini 2003 forthcom.).

Such a meta-theoretical commitment, although not determining a certain theoretical framework, does have implications for the way we analyse international politics. For this particular case, it asks for a more sociological analysis which embeds the intellectual traditions of geopolitics. It does so not only into their respective national contexts, but eventually asks for the reconstitution of the 'field' within which 'authoritative' foreign policy expertise is produced and which then, in turn, helps us to understand the fate of geo– politics. I will shortly sketch four such layers of contextualisation.

2. Geopolitics and intellectual affinities: the continuity of materialism

Given the weight of intellectual traditions in foreign policy elites, a first research axis is to control this intellectual tradition itself. There is the rather obvious hypothesis that a geopolitical renaissance is more likely in countries in which such a tradition existed. Yet, given the different national contexts, this common idea can express itself in different ways.

In some countries, most notably France, there has been a quite vigorous geopolitical debate. The presence of elite military schools and many military in public debate assured a presence of more classical geopolitical themes. But, at the same time, it also opened geopolitics to some renewal around the figure of the post-Marxist Yves Lacoste, editor of the journal *Hérodote*. This version of a more left-wing geopolitics has included a series of conceptual changes, including an analysis of the strategic use of geography for political purposes, which make it both more acceptable outside of the initial audience (the first issue of Hérodote featured an interview with... Foucault) and less prone for a need of a 'revival'.

In other West-European countries with a strong geopolitical tradition, geopolitics has been marginalised after 1945 sed for its connection to fascism and nazism. And yet, there is quite a compelling difference between on the one side Germany and Sweden where geopolitics as a coherent theory is still hardly acceptable and audible, and on the other side, Italy where, as already mentioned, it has become the buzzword for academic and political discourse and its publications a major commercial success (to this difference later).

The inclusion of Central/Eastern countries adds a twist to this hypothesis. In many regards, geopolitics (or geoeconomics) is not too different in outlook with a vulgarised historical materialism. In other words, the related hypothesis would be that a predominance of a materialist political tradition in a country would make a geopolitical renaissance more likely. What remains to be explained is then, of course, why in some countries, it did occur (e.g. Russia, and more limited: Hungary), and not in others (e.g. Czech Republic). Still, the continuity of materialist thought is one of the themes for the analysis in terms of intellectual history or the national history of ideas in international affairs.

In other words, *prima facie* the control of the intellectual tradition, although able to show some continuities, is a weak indicator for the revival. The success obviously does not draw from the ideas alone. Still, some affinities, in particular in the swift acceptance of the foreign policy expert communities in former communist regimes, are worth exploring. Moreover, as all intellectual traditions, it also trades what is academically politically correct and hence how a successful idea has to be framed.

3. Geopolitics and the sociology of knowledge: the ideology of a great or dissatisfied power

Intellectual histories can give only so much. A second research avenue looks for the social and political context, which empower certain ideas rather than others. If another blink towards Budapest be permitted, a first route harks back to the sociology of knowledge tradition, as an

attempt to 'take account of the rootedness of knowledge in the social texture' (Mannheim 1936: p. 33).

Such argument has been used in IR in one of its classics, when Carr (1946) argued that the 'harmony of interests' could possibly only appear in satisfied and status quo powers, like his native Britain.[4] The following research hypotheses can be derived from it. Yet, they should be read with the important caveat that, despite the obvious relevance, there is no one to one correspondence between a certain social or political setting and the leading ideology.

A first hypothesis would double check whether geopolitics or more militarist versions of realism can be mainly found with governments who perceive themselves as 'great powers.' Ó Tuathail indicates the historical moment of the rise of 'geopolitics' when the imperialist scramble had succeeded in dividing up the world: geopolitics appears as the attempt of reconciling expansionist nationalism in a now finite world.

But, for our purposes, it can also be inspired by several analyses during the Cold War which showed an astounding *de facto* similarity between US realism and Soviet international thought (see in particular Light 1988), be it the balance of power vs correlation of forces, or containment vs peaceful coexistence. Although they theoretically should stay apart, they have been used for very similar foreign policy goals and justifications. As in the early days, geopolitics justifies great power politics. This kind of hypothesis seems prima facie to suit well the present revival in Russia, but arguably also in the US which had been struggling with a perception of (undue) decline.

A related hypothesis would look at the possible relationship between *dissatisfied* states and geopolitical arguments which somewhat scientifically would adjudicate them what they believe to be their due. Although not very strong, such a hypothesis could suit the 'geopolitics of irredentism' which seems to inspire some Hungarian scholars like the Transylvanian Gusztáv Molnár who heads the Geopolitical Research Group of the Teleki László Foundation-Institute for Central European Studies in Budapest and who has no troubles referring back to the old geopolitical tradition à la Mackinder (Molnár 1996). For Hungarian nationalism, the treaty of Trianon is still a traumatic event. It drastically reduced Hungarian territories and made Hungarians a strong minority in nearly all its neighbouring countries (Slovakia, Vojvodina (Serbia), Transylvania (Romania) and nurtures until today Hungarian irredentism. Although not asking for any secession, Molnár (1998) has written on the Transsylvanian issue by using Huntington to (for him) good purpose, an intervention which quickly spurred major rebuttals, all taking issue with the allegedly scientific use of Huntington's geopolitical scheme (Andreescu 1998, Mitu 1998).[5]

Yet, although all this can indicate reasons why particular scholars use geopolitics and why they would be suitable for political claims, such hypotheses provide hardly more than a

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[4] For an analysis of the link from Mannheim to Carr, see Charles Jones (1998). It is this heritage which lets also Gramscians like Robert Cox (1986 [1981]) or Randall Germain (2000) show affinities to Carr.

[5] Contrary to the lavish treatment of Huntington in Estonia, the Romanian translation of his *Clash of Civilizations* was not prefaced by a politician but by an academic, Iulia Motoc, an international lawyer and IR theorist, who went out to heavily criticise the very book she introduced...

certain indication of research. There is no necessity that such arguments are heard, as the German case, arguably a rising power after its unification, illustrates. Nor would Italy's revival fit the bill. It does, however, highlight the nexus which can exist between the political system and the production of foreign policy expertise. Geopolitics hardly gets a say in Germany (with whatever government), whereas Molnár's research institute(s) have seen their funding expand under the more nationalist Orbán government (which closed the research center on the 1956 revolution). Dugin is now director of a Centre for Geopolitical Expertise at the Russian Duma. Hence, rather than a strong causal hypothesis, it works as a pointer for the analysis of the political context.

4. Geopolitics and identity politics

The just mentioned Hungarian example indicates also a further component of cultural geopolitical discourse which is very attractive for Central European states, and even more for the ones with a new statehood. They are all in search of a new identity and whatever 'objective' criteria is welcome which can foster an identity of their liking. Geopolitical frontiers produce such identity containers. Huntington's fault line between Western Christianity and the rest has accordingly become a major issue in the identity imagination of Central and Eastern Europe of those countries around it.

But although such an instrumental use of geopolitical thought seems to be just another of the categories of the political context just mentioned, it opens up for a considerably wider context. It leads to the basic research agenda of constructivism-inspired IR security studies, namely the relationship between identity formation and discourses and the formulation of 'national interests' or foreign policy traditions (as examples for an exploding research field, see Campbell 1992, Finnemore 1996, Katzenstein 1996, McSweeney 1999, Weldes 1999).

For illustrating the difference, a constructivist approach makes to security analysis, let me start with a small anecdote. Huntington is apparently persuaded that there are important similarities between his thesis and the concept of 'societal security' as proposed by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies (Wæver 1993, Buzan, Wæver et al. 1998). True, both refer to threats to the national culture or identity of a country and not to classic military threats. But the differences are telling. For Huntington, these are threats which derive from the nature of civilisations and from objective spatial fault lines. The Copenhagen School, however, defines security as an intersubjective phenomenon which is best understood backwards, as it were: not from what it means, but what it does/enacts. That is, instead of looking for the objective nature of threats which prompt responses from the political system, it is best to look at the way threats are defined in and through the national security discourse and which actions such a definition suggests. Such threat definition will draw from a given 'security imaginary' (to rely on a concept introduced by Weldes 1999) in national foreign policy traditions, which includes and produces representations of space and danger, of identity and otherness. Security is in this defining activity which is embedded in a national security discourse and the collective memories it stores: it can hence neither be reduced to the

subjective whims of some opinion leaders, nor to features intrinsic to the object of threat, even though both play a role. If an issue has been securitised, it will move up the political agenda, indeed ultimately outside of politics by allowing special means. Although the Copenhagen School does not posit such threat definition to be independent of a reality out there, the reality's impact is always indirect.

As a result, for the Copenhagen School, Huntington's thesis would not be primarily interesting for its pointing to some truth about world politics, but for its way to securitise civilisations and hence for its intervention in such politics. His analysis is not similar to their societal security, but is in itself a societal securitisation and hence an object of their study. For them, Huntington's thesis is not a statement about the world out there, but a speech act in our security world. To borrow a line from elsewhere, societal security is also about the analysis of Huntington's thesis as a speech act, as 'a Mackinder-like attempt to assert – in the guise of uncovering – the existence of fundamental civilization blocs' (Ó Tuathail 1997: 45).

The constructivist-inspired research on the link between identity formation and foreign policy discourse can hence provide another hypothesis for understanding the ease or difficulty with which geopolitical discourse has entered national debates. In those countries where the common geopolitical imagination (such as Huntington's) seems to overlap and justify pre-given or politically important (state-)identity definitions, one could expect a revival of geopolitical thought. Yet, at the same time one must be careful that identity is reconstructed in the very process of its ongoing definition and that there is also a recursive effect of interests on this always moving identity. Once put this way, such a hypothesis somewhat subsumes the above-mentioned intellectual tradition and the political context of the sociology of knowledge tradition (as most thoroughly done by McSweeney 1999).

And indeed, the fate of geopolitical thought in Estonian politics have been quite successfully analysed along these lines. Merje Kuus (2002a: 97-100) shows how the 'civilizational narrative' resonates in the present identity politics, allowing to draw a line between Estonia and the East – a line, however, whose strong features of cultural othering conflicts with the very West it says to belong to.

Similarly, the outliers of Germany and Sweden might be better understood in this context. Certainly, there is already ample material on German identity and foreign policy (e.g. Berger 1998) which would point to the specificities of the German foreign policy discourse (and consensus) after World War II and which would make the acceptance of geopolitical arguments seem unlikely. This is more than the usual argument that Germans are somewhat forbidden to think in these terms, since Haushofer's ideas had been used by the Nazi government. It points to something more than just a taboo on words: it is a lesson of history which applies to the underlying arguments.

5. Geopolitics and the 'field' of foreign policy expertise

So far, the research hypotheses about the diverging response to the geopolitical revival in European security discourse have not touched the cultural and political component in a more strictly sociological sense. Yet, 'ideas do not float freely' as Risse(-Kappen) so nicely coined it (Risse-Kappen 1994).

The ideational and institutional context must meet in the analysis. Indeed, only this assures an analysis which is subtle enough to include the actual process-tracing and can hence embed the research tracks outlined so far. This can be illustrated with the different German and Italian case for the geopolitical revival. Although the extent of the taboo might have been slightly different, one could have expected a similar aversion against geopolitical arguments in both countries. Yet, Italy embraced it.

An institutionalist analysis would start by look at the institutional context within which foreign policy experts are socialised and work. The existence of strong peace research traditions and its institutionalisation in research centers which have challenged the traditional foreign policy establishment in the later decades of the Cold War seem to go hand in hand with a much weaker geopolitical revival. For this reason, so the hypothesis, the revival of geopolitical thought was meagre even in countries with strong geopolitical traditions (Sweden and Germany). Instead, in countries like Italy, where an alternative expert culture was never allowed to join the official discourse, where the foreign policy establishment was able to isolate itself in a much more forceful manner, the influence of the military was bigger and geopolitics could more easily rise.

This line of approach is already linked to the wider question of the institutional arrangement of foreign policy knowledge production, for it begs the question how these institutes came into being and were 'allowed' to acquire a role in the foreign policy establishment. Moreover, it asks for the investigation of the existing 'field' of authority in foreign policy and the actual networks (political and academic), as well as their reproduction (or not) over time.

Hence, there are basically two components in this more directly sociological analysis. One concerns the institutional basis for the actual transfer of ideas which is a well-established research programme now in constructivism-inspired studies, be it on the role of more general 'epistemic communities' (Adler and Haas 1992), or the specific roles of think tanks and political/ideational entrepreneurs (e.g. Checkel 1997), the role of civil society groups, and the very organisation of the foreign policy bureaucracy and the policy process itself (Majone 1989). This entrepreneurship is not limited to national players, but also to international or transnational actors. In other words, both in the study of the field and the actual changes after 1989, awareness of foreign ideational influences, financial supports and networks is crucial (and hence the US has to be part of the study).

But there is also a second component, one which goes beyond institutionalist analysis usually understood (although it is one which is clearly linked to sociological institutionalism or economic sociology, see Leander 2000). This touches the political economy of expertise production, that is, which kind of research projects are funded and by whom. It finally

includes the relationship between the socialisation of present and future experts, the social definition of who counts as an expert and which knowledge is symbolically 'authorised' and which censored, often self-censored.

For this latter component, the study will try to operationalise Bourdieu's field-theory (e.g. Bourdieu 1980) for a series of reasons. First, choosing a constructivist framework involves also the choices of a more interpretivist approach as general framework of analysis, like Bourdieu's. Second, in order to study the effect of self-censorship, political and academic correctness, as it were, Bourdieu's field theory offers an approach which encompasses the habitus and dominant logic of a field, as well as the different concrete and symbolic power relations (Bourdieu 2001). This implies, thirdly, that Bourdieu's approach is trying to combine macro factors, such as the inner logic of particular sets of actions, with individual rationality and choices. Although different from rational choice approaches, it is an approach which, at the same time, does not need to dispense with agency. Moreover, this approach, despite being consonant with a constructivist meta-theory – usually seen as asking for 'idealist' hypotheses, whatever that exactly means) – does have a strong political economy component which, given my question, seems important. Finally, Bourdieu and his associates have used and refined the analysis on a series of empirical case studies. In particular his study on the 'state nobility' (Bourdieu 1989) should help to better design the significant sociological research component of the study. But using Bourdieu is no religion; it is a starting point.

Conclusion

This paper sketches the very first research hypotheses and methodological framework for exploring the puzzle why at the peaceful end of the Cold War, more militarist versions of realism and decidedly geopolitical thought has known a comeback in different European countries while not in others. It proposes a constructivism-inspired analysis which, in a sequence, explores geopolitics as an intellectual tradition, an expression of state interests, and of identity politics. It proposes to analyse the actual revival via a sociological process-tracing inspired by already existing institutionalist approaches yet embedded in an application of Bourdieu's field theory to 'foreign policy'. Needless to say that the most important part needs still to be done, both on the methodological level (the concrete framework) and on the comparative empirical analysis which necessarily asks for a collaborative teamwork.

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