

## Geographical Analysis of the Basis of Geopolitical Development of Territories and its Methodology

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**Abstract:** The proposed research provides a concise summary of the geographical analysis of the foundations of geopolitics and its methods. The author attempts to examine the country's territory from the perspective of spatial and legal analysis because every country operates depending on economic, political, and natural resources. A component of geopolitical research involves the formation and study of geographical regularities and features of the distribution of a country's sovereignty over a specific territory in historical processes and considering the contemporary era. Geographical analysis of the geopolitical development of a territory is characterized not only by factors but also by instruments, which also have their own system of concepts, shaping the nomenclature of geopolitics. The geographical analysis of geopolitical development depends not only on the overall country's geopolitical potential but also on the specification and assessment of the geopolitical potential of particular regions within the country. This constitutes an important tool for strengthening a country's development potential. The study of the geopolitical development of a territory is based not only on the geographical analysis of the territory but on forecasting the growth and development of the examined state territory based on the analysis of a complex of criteria characterizing the state's potential from a geopolitical perspective.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, the geopolitical potential of the country, geopolitical development of the territory, methods of geographical analysis, natural resource conflict

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According to contemporary perspectives, geopolitics is a scientific discipline that explores the international relations between countries, manifested in geographical and political characteristics (Zaidelman, 1997). When considering a country from the perspective of geographical features, the analysis involves studying the country's borders and their extent, the spatial relationship of the country with its neighbors, whether the country has access to water spaces, the country's relief features, its location on the globe, and the country's position on a continent or island, as well as the natural resources possessed. When conducting

a political analysis of a country, attention is directed toward the form of governance and inherent political features. The American researcher Nicholas John Spykman reflected the fundamental essence of the geopolitical analysis of a country, which boils down to the following: as long as the country remains unchanged in terms of geographical realities, its foreign policy perspectives are interlinked with them, even in the case of a radical change in political or economic structure. Therefore, the role of the geographical component in state governance plays a pivotal role. The significance of natural resources is undeniable (Zhebrikov, 2016).

To characterize the geographical component of geopolitics, it is essential to present the history of the development of the geopolitical field because these two disciplines quite closely intersect.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, geopolitics was regarded as a science studying the influence of the Earth's surface on the historical development of peoples within specific territories and states. Carl Ritter proposed naming this field "comparative agriculture." Friedrich Ratzel suggested incorporating it into the branch of geography that studies political orientation. The term geopolitics entered scientific discourse thanks to Rudolf Kjellén. In 1916, a work titled "The State as a Form of Life" was published, in which the term geopolitics was officially formulated as a scientific direction investigating the fundamental qualitative indicators of territory, linked to studying land and soil resources, as well as the formation of the territories of countries (Kjellén, 2008).

The history of developing and establishing the essence of the geopolitical field of knowledge spans over a century. Specialized researchers in political geography engage in exploring geopolitical aspects. Therefore, it can confidently be noted that geopolitics constitutes an interdisciplinary synthesis of numerous scientific disciplines. All research with a geopolitical orientation is characterized by established fundamental concepts, serving as the starting point for a scientifically oriented assessment of the country's structure and territory. These concepts are interconnected and form the science of geopolitics. In conducting geopolitical studies, the political indicators of a country's development are evaluated, and territorial indicators and their interdependence are analyzed. A comprehensive assessment of the country's influence on spatial development is required to analyze the territory. Additionally, there is an examination of how the territory directly influences the organization and development of the country as a structural unit in geopolitics (Ustryalov, 2003).

The statements above are indisputable and represent an evident fact. However, with a more in-depth analysis of territorial space, specific problems arise related to the theoretical and methodological foundations of research. Therefore, some questions still lack unequivocal answers. Existing scholarly works on the study of the theoretical and methodological basis of geopolitical research make it possible to identify various approaches to defining the role of the country and territory in their interaction.

One approach to studying the country's territories involves analyzing them from the spatial analysis perspective because every state functions based on economic and natural resources. This approach is grounded in considering the territory from the viewpoint of

geographical characteristics of spatial components, encompassing the examination of state borders according to social, economic, and military indicators. In short, this approach views the territory as the life space of any country.

Another approach to studying the country's territory is based on legal and juridical analysis. In this case, the country's territory is seen as an arena with specific sovereignty, including an analysis of terrestrial, aquatic, and aerial space. With this approach, state borders are defined based on the limits of the country's authority. The territory's boundaries are determined by the legal and juridical systems existing in the country (Ustryalov, 2003).

In geopolitics, there is also an approach to analyzing territorial space, the basis of which is formed by the principles of studying qualitative indicators of state ownership, specifically land and natural resources within the country. This involves considering land and natural resources belonging to the country and its population, even if they do not hold citizenship in that country but have legal relationships with that country. In this case, the authorities have political rights to manage these land resources.

One of the peculiarities of any land parcel of territory lies in the formation of its condition as a result of the interaction and functioning of the available natural resources of that territory. Therefore, it is quite logical to investigate the development of the territory as a crucial factor in terms of the evolutionary progress of the country's territory. The Soviet geographer V. S. Zhekulin (1982) considered the country's territorial space considering a complex set of indicators and conditions that influence the evolutionary development of the country. These indicators and conditions include relationships that arise among people during construction work and the organization of political and administrative systems of territorial organization within the country. V. S. Zhekulin consolidated this complex set of indicators and conditions into groups formed due to the evolutionary construction of countries.

Accordingly, one of the components of geopolitical research is the formation and study of geographical regularities and features of the distribution of state sovereignty over a specific territory in historical processes and in the context of contemporary times. In doing so, conditions must be observed to create the interests of residents and explore the functions and evolutionary development of political and territorial structures in the country's construction. The presented goals contribute to studying tasks that enhance the interconnection between geopolitical research and geography. These tasks include the following:

- Formulation of geographical aspects forming the theoretical basis of geopolitical research;
- Establishment of the methodological foundation utilizing the formulated theoretical geographical aspects;
- Modification of the system of geopolitical interests, considering changes in its form and structure, and, if necessary, creating separate branches for spatial and temporal periods of geopolitical process development, considering the geographical analysis of the territory;

- Utilization of data obtained from geopolitical or geographical research to fully disclose the studied direction, as well as the generalization of obtained results to identify their reliability and completeness.

### **Methodology**

The methodology of geopolitical research is grounded in the economic and technological features of societal development. Currently, scholars are dedicated to studying methodological approaches to examining geopolitical aspects, which encompass the control of space exercised by the country through technical means.

Various methods are employed in geopolitical research to facilitate the study of relevant processes and phenomena. In conducting studies of geopolitical nature, methods from other scientific disciplines are utilized, including political geography, history, sociology, political science, and others. However, alternative methods to assess systematicity, activity, historicity, and normative and functional features can also be employed during research. Institutional, anthropological, and general logical methods are used, along with methods of empirical research and other methodologies, to conduct a structural-functional assessment of geopolitical space.

The geographic analysis of a territory's geopolitical development is characterized by factors and instruments that have their own system of concepts, forming the nomenclature of geopolitics. This nomenclature includes various methods. A brief significance of these methods is as follows:

- Every investigation begins with collecting research methods and systematizing primary data, utilized not only in political science but also in other applied scientific disciplines;
- The explanation of gathered data and their analysis contribute to the selection of a method for interpreting results, which, in turn, forms factual interpretations of thematic concepts;
- Systematizing the obtained information during the research facilitates the distribution of the available material according to the categories of a classification system;
- Data reconstruction is applied to reconstruct or create missing elements of past or ongoing processes or phenomena.
- Chronology ensures the distribution of studied processes and phenomena considering the interrelation of evolutionary changes;
- Chorology contributes to the distribution of investigated processes and phenomena considering their territorial manifestation.;
- Comparisons are used in comparing similar processes and phenomena to determine patterns within them;
- Cartography is necessary for creating a visual and spatial representation of the evolutionary development and contemporary manifestation of geopolitical realities;

- Statistics offer the use of formal mathematical methods to process the obtained data;
- Structural functionality contributes to the examination of geopolitical phenomena from the perspective of the characteristics of political and territorial systems based on the interdependence of elements performing specific functions in the geopolitical development of a territory;
- Analysis of the obtained data using methods from sociology, religion, and ethnicity, as well as identifying the influence on specific individuals in the distribution of activities of geopolitical and political systems of the country;
- Behavior is closely related to action because it contributes to explaining the specific actions of active subjects;
- Formation of institutions contributes to reflecting the significance of existing or newly formed institutions as a result of the development of territorial and political processes;
- Integrity is used to assess occurring phenomena from the perspective of the hierarchy of their ordering.

## **Results**

In conducting geopolitical research, the object should encompass a given country's political components and spatial orientation, for which geographic analysis in geopolitics is responsible. Utilizing geographic analysis, the subject of geopolitical research is the principles and conditions of geopolitical development of the country's territory. The geopolitical development of the territory represents the essence of the interconnections and relationships between the country and space. In this case, the country plays the role of sovereignty over the political structure, while space serves as the object through which the country influences processes and conditions. Further examination of the interaction between the country and space makes no sense without revealing the specifics that define the relationships between the object and subject in the overall structure of the state-territory system.

When studying the territory development process by the country, it is necessary to possess information about the territory's historical development. The intensity of the development process varies depending on the development period. However, it is essential to remember that once the development process begins, it does not cease, even if it is very slow.

Describing the geopolitical process of territory development is a comprehensive undertaking, involving not only the mastery of the territory considering its existing natural resources and conditions but also the temporal aspects of the development process. This includes the current and future periods of development, encompassing the rates and directions employed to alter the geopolitical status.

Thus, the essence of the territory's geopolitical exploration lies in the use of multifaceted approaches to investigate the country's sovereignty over its territory, with the core of the research focusing on the country's interests. The next level includes institutions and structures of political and economic orientation necessary for managing the country's

territory and responsible for the population's security. Accordingly, geopolitical exploration of territory or space is a procedure for forming a system of activities and conditions that contribute to the dynamic growth and development of the country's geopolitical potential (Shinkovsky et al., 2007).

Therefore, the geographical analysis of geopolitical development depends not only on the overall country's geopolitical potential but also on the specification and evaluation of the geopolitical potential of individual regions within the country. This represents an important tool for strengthening the country's development potential. It is necessary to note that this fact in developing the geopolitical study of territory has evolved without a clear definition. The established situation was altered in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century thanks to P. Ya Baklanov, who first used the concept of geopolitical potential, thereby introducing this definition into the circulation of scientific concepts in geopolitics. According to P. Ya. Baklanov, geopolitical potential represents the maximum opportunity for the country to realize a system of geographical factors prevalent on its territory. These factors are considered to have an impact not only on the internal structure of the state itself but also on the development of neighboring states (Shinkovsky et al., 2007). In the author's opinion, the presented definition reflects the essence of geopolitical potential, emphasizing the significance of geographical factors in evaluating territory, as they serve as an instrument in characterizing the territory and constitute a substantial part of the scientific field of geopolitics. Some researchers assess the territory's geopolitical potential without analyzing geographical factors. However, the combination of these indicators influences the growth and development of the country's territory.

When considering the exploration of a country's territory, attention must be given to the development of society, which depends on the development of the natural environment because an individual engages not with the natural environment as a separate system but with individual natural factors of a specific biological and geological landscape. Accordingly, in analyzing the territory's geopolitical potential, it is possible to form a complex of factors with a flexible framework since individual factors can intersect to create a comfortable living environment for people and their activities. Thus, the country's geopolitical potential is influenced by production industries, technologies, and transportation and telecommunication systems. These geographical factors (i.e., industries, technologies, transportation, and communications) are traditional indicators used to assess a country's economy. In our case, they can also be applied to evaluate the country's geopolitical potential.

Therefore, the country's geopolitical potential can be characterized as a variable indicator dependent on the country's natural environmental conditions. The influence of external and internal factors can cause fluctuations in the overall level of a country's geopolitical potential, either increasing or decreasing. In turn, this depends on financial investments in specific underdeveloped regions of the country. Consequently, an important component of any geopolitical study is the development and implementation of measures aimed at managing the processes of a country's development, which determine the level of geopolitical potential.

Therefore, a comprehensive geopolitical study of a territory should be based on characterizing indicators emphasizing their essence and practical relevance. For assessing the territory's geopolitical potential within the research framework, the authors propose the following indicators, with justifications provided below.

Initially, a geo-centricity assessment is carried out. This indicator is fundamental and serves as the starting point for the geopolitical analysis of the territory, characterizing the susceptibility of the geographical environment. The basis for its characterization is the geographical environment (Baklanov, 2003).

The next indicator in geopolitical research is political centrality. The socio-political component of the evolutionary development of humanity, considering various types of activities, is assessed when using this indicator. This indicator characterizes the spatial political self-organization of society, which is an integral part of the global system.

Chronological orientation is assessed during geopolitical research. This indicator characterizes the interconnection of the research object with a specific territory. Utilizing this indicator in geopolitical research contributes to determining the relationship between the development of the country's territory and the geopolitical potential of the territory at different stages of development, ranging from local to global.

The next indicator in geopolitical research is multidisciplinary. This indicator evaluates the methodological system of a set of scientific disciplines involved in geopolitical research, including political science, geography in physical and economic aspects, sociology, history, and other specialized fields.

The concluding indicator in conducting geopolitical research is axiological. This indicator is used to assess the conditions of the geographical environment. It characterizes the degree of its provision for the existence of individuals. Accordingly, axiological evaluation represents an assessment of the territory on the level of judgment. However, it is essential to understand that this indicator involves an analysis of the relationship between the country, acting as the subject, and the territory, serving as the object. This relationship is crucial in studying geopolitical territory development from a geographical and geopolitical perspective.

## **Discussion**

The study of the geopolitical development of a territory should be based not only on geographical analysis but also on forecasting the growth and development of the studied country's territory. This is grounded in analyzing a complex set of criteria characterizing the country's potential from a geopolitical perspective. This indicator characterizes the geopolitical potential of the studied country and its regions. The assessment of a country's geopolitical potential makes it possible to consider the territorial spaces of sufficiently large countries. An example of assessing geopolitical potential can be seen in comparing social and economic indicators between the Chui and Batken regions of the Kyrgyz Republic. In this context, an influential factor in evaluating the geopolitical potential of these regions is their border position, which reflects a decrease in the overall level of the Kyrgyz Republic's geopolitical potential in the southwest direction. Due to frequent outbreaks of natural

resource conflicts in the border areas of the Batken Region with the Republic of Tajikistan and their repeated military incursions into the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, the growth and development of this region have suffered. The provided example of assessing the geopolitical potential of the Kyrgyz Republic clearly illustrates the developmental differences among certain regions within a country. A natural resource conflict is a struggle between opposing parties for the right to possess (access), dispose of, and use those other natural resources (Matikeeva, 2021).

## Conclusion

Thus, the geographical analysis of geopolitical studies contributes to the examination of the data collected during the research, aiming to answer a question posed to geopolitics and other related sciences: “What is the relationship between the successful advancement of a country’s geopolitical interests and the quality of the political organization of its governance structure, as well as the level of development of the country’s geopolitical potential?”

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