

# Chapter 1

## The Role and Place of Geopolitics in the Scientific System

**Nika Chitadze**

*International Black Sea University, Georgia*

### **ABSTRACT**

*Geopolitics belongs to the group of social-geographical sciences and is a part of political geography. They distinguish between traditional, new (geo economics), and the latest (geo philosophy) geopolitics. Traditional geopolitics emphasizes the military-political power of the state and the dominant role of geographical factors in the conquest of foreign territories. The new (geo-economics) focuses on the economic power of the states in contrast to the traditional one. The latest geopolitics, in which spiritual power dominates military and economic power, helps states to overcome traditional and economic determinism at the expense of expanding the basic factors in determining behavior in international relations.*

### **INTRODUCTION. GEOPOLITICS AS A SCIENCE. THE CONCEPT AND SUBJECT OF GEOPOLITICS**

Even scientists of the Ancient World noticed a natural connection between political activity (by which they primarily understood the acts of rulers) and the space of the Earth, where this activity unfolded. Indeed, is it possible to plan and even more so to carry out political measures without knowing the extent, area, topography, vegetation, climate, rivers - as water barriers and means of communication, the sea - as a special geographical factor in politics, etc.? Is it possible to achieve victory in a war, or even in one battle, without knowing and not using at least the main characteristics of the spatial factor and the specific terrain on which the opposing armies will fight, without having information about the economic power of the country and the military strength of the army? Moreover, one cannot count on retaining the occupied territory, Moreover, one cannot count on retaining the occupied territory, if there is no information about population – what is the number of people, density, other demographic characteristics, national character, etc.

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Thus, geopolitics is a determination of the success of political activity (peaceful and military) by geographical, historical, socio-psychological, ethnographic, and economic factors, as the relationship between the political and the Spatial-social, has existed for a long time. The term consists of two parts: “geo” means geographical in general, that is, the influence of geographical factors in the broadest sense of the word on the policy of the state. The main among these factors are:

- “ territory;
- “ geographical location, ie the location of the state on the continent;
- “ extent of borders, their position on natural or artificial borders;
- “ the presence of rivers as water barriers and means of communication;
- “ the position of the country about the sea, the length of the coastline, and the conditions for navigation;
- “ climate (cold, temperate, hot, arid, etc.);
- “ soils (to what extent they favor the development of agriculture, infrastructure, and industry);
- “ bowels, their wealth, the ability to ensure economic growth and social needs of the population;
- “ population, its size, density, social composition, and other characteristics (Heffernan, 1998).

At the end of the XX - the beginning of XXI century. the root “geo” acquired a second meaning. Now it is increasingly interpreted as a “planetary”, “global” dimension of politics, characterizing the relationship of superpowers or military blocs (USA and the USSR, NATO and the Warsaw Pact), as a “clash of civilizations” (A. Toynbee, S. Huntington) or as a change the general configuration of the world system, for example, from bipolar to mono- or polycentric.

The second part of the term - “politics” - in this context means the exercise of domination, the conquest of power, space, and its development. Recently, it has also been undergoing significant changes in the sense that modern actors of geopolitics are not so much eager to conquer and develop new territories, but rather strive to control the maximum possible spaces, and - and this is also a feature of modern geopolitics - to control not territories as a whole, but for the most part, the communication lines of these territories and flows (financial, commodity, labor, etc.), thereby maintaining the most favorable conditions for their development and prosperity (Chitadze, 2011).

In the classical period of development of the discipline (late 19th - early 20th century), when it acquired the characteristic features of science, emphasis was placed on the knowledge of the state as a living organism embodied in space (F. Ratzel, R. Kjellen). Modern geopolitics continues the study of states as actors in the geopolitical process, but taking into account the declining role of state bodies in modern international relations and the increasing importance of the UN, military-political blocs, regional international organizations, and economic and cultural international structures. Modern geopolitics includes both geopolitical statics (world hierarchy, statuses, and roles of subjects of world politics) and geopolitical dynamics (geopolitical processes, the changes of the geopolitical actors at the “chessboard” of the world) (Chitadze, 2011).

In the period of becoming geopolitics was an independent branch of knowledge, there was no common opinion about the fact, is geopolitics a science or only a method, possibility to understand the interrelations among the states in the process of spatial growth. For example, the author of the term “geopolitics” R. Kjellen defined it as “the science of the state as a geographical organism related to space (Kjellen, 1916).”

The opposing position was held by the prominent representative of the German classical school A. Grabowski, called geopolitics the “means of cognition,” the “method,” and by no means science, which has its subject, law, and place in the system of sciences (Chitadze, 2011). A recognized representative

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