

Dobrinka Rojnić\*

## Geopolitical Discourse: Where and What is Eurasia?

### *Summary*

Contemporary geopolitical discourses are to a large extent shaped by networks of global actors with different sources of power. In such networks, key source of power is not just a territory, but also effective and vibrant economic policies that are shaped by countries, companies and other economic actors. The growing attention on geopolitical and geostrategic issues have placed the issue of economic integration high on the list of policy and governance priorities in last two decades. While every country, region, alliance shapes its own geopolitical and geostrategic positioning by formulating and implementing its own energy policy, such policies are to a large extent influenced with what takes place in the territory of Eurasia. In geopolitical discourses, Eurasia has been in the focus of scholarly and political discussions for quite some time now. Previous reviews of geopolitical discourses on Eurasia have showed, however, that while the concept of Eurasia is often employed in the context of its relations with western democracies, the boundaries or properties of concept itself still remain unclear. This paper aims to tackle this problem and define Eurasia in geographical as well as cultural, political and social terms. The literature review and document analysis are, thus, employed to offer the answer to the question: "What and who is Eurasia?" While answering to the question, this paper takes into account the important role Eurasia plays for European Union as a territory with significant energy resources and with a consequential attractivity for economic integration with European Union and its members states. In order to offer the answer to the question "What and who is Eurasia?", in order to unfold the dimensions of its geopolitical domination, the paper focuses on cultural, economic, geopolitical and social dimensions.

**Key words:** Eurasia, geographical dimension, cultural dimension, economic dimension, geopolitical dimension, social dimension.

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\* Dobrinka Rojnić, PhD candidate, University of Zadar, dobrinka.rojnic@gmail.com

## Introduction

The network of power of today's global players is shaping its geopolitical discourses. The source of power is no longer classical territory, but a strong and effective economic policy of states, companies and economic actors. All other sources of power are consolidated through economic power (Milardović, 2008). This was especially the case in the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when geopolitics and energy geostrategy became imperative. Each state, region, alliance begins its geopolitical and geo-strategic governance with energy policies. The seed becomes an energy strategy, which, starting from the institutional norms and cultural values of the actors, provokes the power and awakening of the spirits of the past. The spheres of influence on governments and society as a whole emerge as a consequence. Thus, geopolitical discourses emerge as dominant in the state because they reflect the influences of the given power structure; moreover, these discourses are part of the very functioning of such power structure (O Tuathail, 2007). Geopolitical discourses beyond the borders of states should be added to this. Thus, geopolitical discourse on Eurasia has long been the focus of public interest. Reviews of geopolitical discourses on Eurasia, most often on its relations with the "Western world," display a frequent use of the lexeme Eurasia without a spatial culture category. Creating an image of Eurasia remains solely on the reader's perception. To comprehend and discover the dominance of this world, it is vital to answer the questions as to where and what is Euroasia.

The scope of the research is geographic identification of Eurasia and the answer to the question "who and what is" Eurasia. Given the importance of Eurasia as an energy-rich area, the subject of research involves identifying the cultural, economic, geopolitical and discursive dimensions to answer who Eurasia is in geopolitical discourse and to uncover its dominance. The paper is based on literature review as well as analysis of policy documents and relevant websites. The descriptive method describes facts as the theoretical and expert knowledge about Eurasia that has been compiled so far. A quantitative research on the economic dimension of Eurasia was also conducted. During the research, a gradual analysis was carried out, starting from the geographical dimension of Eurasia to the conceptual one. The synthesis of all the data led to the conclusion of the study.

### **Euroasia: where is it and who is it?**

In examining the relationship between Eurasia and any country and/or region, the main question arises: where or who is Eurasia, is it an area space or an idea? Namely, if one wants to divide the world and define Eurasia, then the division nevertheless implies polarities between individual parts and reflects different interests (Pavić, 2007).

According to Dekanić (2011), global geo-strategic doctrines as part of geopolitics, seek to find a system and opportunities for world domination, where the positions of particular countries, regions and continents play an important role. The global dominance consists of politics, while the space category comprises accommodation as a static category on one side, and position as a dynamic category on the other. Thus, the physical dimension of area represents the backbone within which large groups of people live delineated by some boundaries (Milardović, 2008). This is not the end, because a relation is generated. Relation is essential because in the relation of one space contents to the other contents of another space, interdependencies/interactions are created simultaneously (Pavić, 2007). The process of globalization has added another dynamic category. It is a space of flows, a so-called network space. Therefore, in defining who and where Eurasia is, in the sense of spatial culture, the geographical, cultural, economic, geopolitical and discursive dimensions of Eurasia are taken into account. It will begin by considering the geographic dimension of Eurasia and answering the question: where is Eurasia?

### *Geographic dimension of Eurasia – “CasCauStan”*

The answer to the question “where” Eurasia is excludes any interests and conflicts. According to the geographic determinant, literature generally directs Eurasia towards a single-valued definition. The starting point is that Eurasia (or Euroasia) is an isolated continental entity, made up of broadly connected Europe and Asia (from the Yugorsky Passage in the north to the Caspian Sea in the south, about 3300 km), covering an area of about 54,7 million km<sup>2</sup> (Petrović, 2010). As Europe is separated from Asia as a separate continent, due to its socio-geographical features and a specific Euro-centrism, the name Eurasia is used to emphasize the natural-geographical integrity of that continental entity (Trenin, 2002). It was also necessary to consider the definition claiming that Europe is not Asia nor is Asia Europe but Eurasia is rather the eastern part of Europe and the western part of Asia (Abeghian, 1928). These two views can be partially maintained. This is theoretically true, but the problem should be approached based on the speaker’s geographical perception. The geographic location of Eurasia will depend on the speaker and the place where he/she resides. Prominent examples are the geographical perceptions of a European, Russian, American, Chinese or an African. Taking into account the theoretical and practical variables, the author proposes the following geographical definition: Eurasia includes the Central Area of Eurasia, the countries of the Caspian region and the South Caucasus; The central area of Eurasia is the so-called five “stan” states, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; The Caspian region is brought together by countries around the Caspian Sea: Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Kazakhstan, while Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan are included in the South Caucasus. Therefore, this makes a

total of 10 states. The proposed language code is “CasCauStan” and consists of the first three letters of key regions, all for easier identification of Eurasia.

The geographically largest country of CasCauStan is Russia. It is spread over two entities, Europe and Asia. Its area is 17 075 400 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 4 562 462 km<sup>2</sup> is the European part and 12 512 938 km<sup>2</sup> is Asian (Petrović, 2010). Its main geographical feature is its size. The size of the European part of Russia makes it the largest country in Europe in comparison to other European countries. The same applies to the surface area of the Asian part of Russia and the countries of Asia. Also, Ural Mountains were internationally recognized by geographers as a new border between Europe and Asia (Uyama, 2012). After the geographical dimension, it is necessary to consider the cultural dimension of Eurasia.

### *Cultural dimension of Eurasia – “religious mix”*

The cultural dimension of Eurasia is the most interesting and thus the most problematic entirety. Acting as a delineation between Europe and Asia, the space is defined by a “community of civilizations” and thus different cultures. The three determinants of the “community of civilizations” of Eurasia reflect its problematic nature. The first determinant concerns the division between the “East” and the “West”, the second is Islamic civilization as a mediator between the “East” and the “West”, and the third is the influence of Western civilization on the European part of Eurasia.

The division into the “East and West” has been relevant in the Western and Russian worlds since the 10th century. Since the 10th century, the “East” was represented as the Russian world in the Byzantine surrounding and the accepted religion of Orthodoxy (Braudel, 1990). Today’s division has remained in the same atmosphere. The “West” culturally represents Western civilization with Catholicism and Protestantism as its main representatives. The “East” represents the Orthodox civilization, mainly referring to the growing power of Russia (Basin, 1991). The second determinant of Islamic civilization as an intermediary explains that for this civilization, roads have always represented the greatest wealth for the world economy. The central area of Eurasia, dominated by Islam, has always been an area that connects large cultural spaces and, in its history, has played the role of “mediator” between the Far East, Europe and Africa (Braudel, 1990; Basin, 1991). It plays the same role today because it is a geographical user of the necessary passageways. The third determinant adds the influence of the Western civilization on the European part of Eurasia, specifically Russia, with the religion of Catholicism and Protestantism. Its influence throughout the deep history has enabled the development of awareness of the Russian society and creation of the national identity. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this reflection of influence is clearly visible throughout all spheres of Russian activities (Trenin, 2009).

Along with religious mixes, relevant aspect of culture is a variety of languages used in the countries and co-existence of numerous ethno-linguistic groups. The Caucasus is divided into its southern and northern parts. In the Northern part there are seven countries that are part of Russia: Adygea, Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia and North Ossetia. For the most part the population of Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia are Sunni Muslims (Vidušić, 2016). There are thirty different ethno-linguistic groups in the northern part of Russia. The South accommodates three independent states: Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The population of Armenia and Georgia is predominantly Orthodox, however, the Muslim population prevails in Azerbaijan and is Shiite. The peoples of the North and South Caucasus are connected by the past, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and other similarities. Part of the countries in the Caspian region are Turkmenistan, Iran and Kazakhstan. In Turkmenistan, the population is mostly Muslim and Sunni, and religion is Islam (Burgess, 2009). The official language is Turkmen, but Russian is also used. The population of Iran is also predominantly Muslim, but the population is Shiite and thus the official religion of Islam (Daniel, 2006). The official language is Farsi, while minorities use their own languages. Kazakhs are mostly Sunni Muslims, while the official languages are Kazakh and Russian (Daniel, 2006). Countries of Central Uzbekistan Tajikistan and Kirgizstan. In Uzbekistan, the population is Muslim, Sunni while the official language is Uzbek, but Russian is also used. Similar is the case in Tajikistan, where the majority of the Muslim population is Sunni and the official language is Tajik and Russian is widespread (Daniel, 2006). Kyrgyzstan is made up of the Turkic people of Kyrgyzstan and other minorities, so the Muslim religion is Sunni while the official language is Kyrgyz (Daniel, 2006). The Eurasian states that were once part of the Soviet Union only after its dissolution gained their independence and recognition of national identity (Vidušić, 2016). Finally, Russia, which is spatially located in all the regions of Eurasia and has a very profound history, represents a country where Christianization began as early as 988 with a strong influence of Byzantine culture (Boban and Cipek, 2017). Russia is today a country with 80,90 % Russians and more than a hundred ethnic groups with a dominant Orthodox religion, followed by the Muslim religion. The official language is Russian, in addition to which the majority of the republics have declared the second language as official in the given republic (Daniel, 2006).

All this implies that the area of Eurasia is a religious mix of Orthodoxy, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism, thus forming the ethnic groups and their respective national identities. Each of them would need to be analyzed individually within the framework of their internal and external relations in relation to structural factors, institutions and social relations (Hann and others, 2016). However, the processes that took place on these foundations also created cultural and political phenomena (for

example, the European Union in the “West” and the Eurasian Union in the “East”). The mix of concepts of religions and cultural diversity represent the key elements in operationalizing the agenda of what was once the Silk Road and today the New Silk Road. Russia, as the pivotal state of Eurasia, has the strongest influence and multi-interaction with all other Eurasian states, which has enabled to it by its profound history and present stability. The fact is that all three determinants of the “community of civilizations” that created the religious mix make up the composition of Eurasia’s cultural profile as well as the crisis focus. In addition to the cultural dimension, the economic dimension must certainly be added to the problematic nature of the whole.

### ***Economic dimension of Eurasia – “export above all”***

The economic potential of Eurasia is of fundamental importance to Europe as well as to other countries such as China. The potential is notable in the fields of energy, raw materials, metal and non-metal ores as well as wood products. Energy products represent a crucial structure in the export of Eurasia countries. The Caucasus-Caspian energy node is rich in sulfates, especially alunite, copper, zinc, chromium, manganese, metal and non-metallic raw materials, molybdenum, petroleum, lead, coal, uranium, tungsten, natural gas, gold, iron and mercury (Vidušić, 2016). The Caspian Sea (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan) is estimated to be the third largest oil and gas source in the world, after Saudi Arabia and Russia (Vidušić, 2016).

However, the importance of linking Eurasia’s economic potential with Europe should not be diminished, as illustrated by the following examples. Russia’s energy hub has the most developed geographical connection with the EU and Europe in general, especially the oil and gas pipelines (the “Družbna” pipeline from 1960, then the North Stream 1 from 2011, and the realization of the disputable North Stream 2 pipeline) (Bondarenko, 2012). Namely, due to the gas crises and political crisis with Ukraine, Russia mainly concludes bilateral agreements with the EU member states. Bilateral agreements with Germany on gas pipelines North Stream 1 and the undergoing North Stream 2 is just one example. Russia has also reached an agreement with Austria to deliver gas by 2040, although there is certain dissatisfaction with this respect in Poland and the US (*Rusija će snabdjevati Austriju plinom do 2040. godine*, 2018). In addition to bilateral oil and gas agreements, Eurasia needs Europe’s capital and knowledge. Deputy Energy Minister Anton Injucin made it clear at the “Russian Energy Week 2018” congress held in Moscow that Russia needs European experience in order to implement energy reforms (Injucin, 2018). The investment of a global technological German company Siemens with 170 years of experience in engineering excellence in electrification, automation and digitization is taken as an example (Russian Energy Week, 2018). The global German company Schneider is also emerging (Russian Energy Week, 2018). Likewise, a review of the trade exchange between Russia and the EU

is proposed. Measured since the beginning of the political crisis with Ukraine, from 2014 to 2017, it has deteriorated. From 2014 to the end of 2016, the EU imports declined by 34,82 % to increase by 22,03 % in 2017 compared to 2016, but compared to 2014, imports were still down at 20,45 % in 2017 (European Commission, 2018). Thus, in 2017, Russia was the fourth largest partner-importer of the EU, where two-thirds of imports relates to energy imports (European Commission, 2018). Due to the 2014 Ukrainian crisis and the imposition of sanctions on Russia, the EU's alternative to importing resources is turned towards the countries of the South Caucasus, in particular Azerbaijan. Although Azerbaijan has no energy reserves like Russia, cooperation opportunities exist because of strategic decisions by the EU and the US. Development of the Southern Corridor pipeline will allow the EU to diversify its energy supply. There is considerable accordance between the EU and Eurasia, and it speaks in favor of interdependence. Finally, on the one hand, the EU depends on energy imports, on the other – Eurasia depends on their exports. Moreover, the EU has turned to the Caspian region and it is therefore interesting to examine how Russia has overcome the “lost exports”?

Russia has made a major strategic shift because of the “lost exports”. There are three obvious shifts in their economies: opening up to China with infrastructure projects, substituting imports, and connecting according to the principle “integration to integration”. The first turning point was already in 2014 by opening up to China the export of energy and other infrastructure projects. Although negotiations with China have been known to the public since 2004, bilateral cooperation came to fruition following harsh US-EU sanctions on Russia in 2014 (Perica, 2014). The “Power of Siberia” project on the Moscow-Beijing axis in gas delivery should be completed by the end of December 2019. They announced new routes for gas deliveries from the Far East and along the “Western Route” (*Kina troši sve više plina*, 2018). The second turning point is the strategy of imposing sanctions to counteract sanctions. These are increased investments in the agricultural and real sectors, with guidelines published through the 2020 Reduction of Imports Plan. Substituted imports have already achieved overwhelming results. In 2017, Russia was the largest exporter of wheat, breaking the record by defeating the US output from 25 years ago (Babić, 2018). In the real sector, priority was given to industrial production (pharmaceutical, chemical, light industry, heavy and road engineering, military industry). The third shift based on the principle of “integration to integration” gives a representative path of economic development in relation to economic integration. Connecting the two strategic regions, the Eurasian Union and China's project “One Belt-One Road” or the New Silk Road, provides moral strength to both Russia and China in the implementation of strategic economic plans. In conclusion, the strategic model of “lost exports” of Russia, as the capital of Eurasia, is characterized by the “export above all” slogan. Likewise, this model points to the inclusion of the geopolitical dimension as a purpose for the existence of Eurasia.



### ***Geopolitical dimension of Eurasia – “multi-geo” code***

To understand Eurasia means to look back at the old and new geopolitics. Great contribution to the old geopolitics in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was made by geopolitical theorists Alfred Thayer Mahan, Johan Rudolf Kjellen, Karl Ernst Haushofer, Halford John MacKinder and Nicholas John Spykman. Mackinder and Spykman defined Eurasia by terms Heartland, Romeland, off-shore islands and peripheral seas (Dekanić, 2011). The goal was to identify the areas rich in natural resources in order to realize the sphere of influence and world domination. The Mackinder configuration has remained current to this day. This is witnessed by the various debates of geopoliticians of today. For example, Zbigniew Brzezinski (2000) describes the US relations with Eurasia on its foundations. Metaphorically calling it the “Grand Chessboard” where through the US moves the sphere of influence is realized. In a narrow sense, it divides Eurasia into three Europes, which makes the stability of Europe 1 and Europe 2 dependent on the fate of the Europe 3 issue, in particular Russia and Ukraine (Brzezinski, 1994). Robert Kaplan (2014) elaborates on the intellectual roots of Mackinder’s ideas and developments with which Kaplan fully agrees and sends a message to modern politicians that they “think like Victorians.” It is important to emphasize that from the second decade until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, four important events marked the old geopolitics that had a long-term impact on social phenomena: World War I and World War II, aimed at expanding space and changing borders; The Cold War with the clash of two ideologies – communism and liberalism; the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 and globalization that made the free market for people and capital possible (Brzezinski, 2000). The latter marks the transformation from the old to the new geopolitics. According to Milardović (2008), the new geopolitics enabled the creation and recognition of new states as a result of the dissolution and fragmentation of communist federations (the breakup of the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia), and at the same time was pervaded by macro-regional integrations such as the European Union.

In the postmodern era, the 21<sup>st</sup> century geopolitics was also marked by several events. The first, considered a turning point in geopolitics, was the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States. The attack has shown that it threatens the free flow of oil in the Middle East and the political control of the United States over the area (Dunlop, 2004). At the time, the president of the United States was George W. Bush Jr., who responded by announcing a “war on terrorism” in response to the attack. The “war on terrorism” has become a cover for all the further US geostrategic steps (Dunlop, 2004). From then on, even in these first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the geostrategic context rests on the “circulus vitiosus” concept: market – politics – terrorism – oil in the fight for resources in the central part of Eurasia (Dekanić and others,



2003). The following events are the gas crisis of 2009 and the political-gas crisis of 2014 in Ukraine. The political Ukraine-Russia crisis of 2014 escalated by a geopolitical division into East (Russia) and West (EU) and the EU's search for alternative routes of gas supply. These events were followed by new macro-regional integration; the Eurasian Economic Union was founded in 2014 with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. For the sake of better understanding, recognizing the essence of the union is very important.

The Eurasian Union was established following the model of the EU with all the institutions as the EU (Putin, 2014). It was founded by three countries: Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus while it was subsequently joined by Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. It was established as an international regional economic integration organization aimed at free movement of goods, services, capital and labour with a coordinated uniform and unified policy of its members. Its main objective is the comprehensive modernization, cooperation and enhancement of the national economies' competitiveness and creation of conditions for stable development in the interest of raising the living standard of the member states (Euroazijski ekonomski savez, 2014). The Russian media have been emphasizing that the idea of the Union is 20 years old and that its father is President of Kazakhstan Nazarbaev. Nazarbaev cited the need to ensure the territorial integrity and security of the post-Soviet republics as a reason for its establishment in 1994 (Nazarbaev, 1994). The establishment as such was only selected during the escalation in Ukraine in 2014 and sanctions against Russia by the US and the EU. Sanctions by the US and the EU have prompted Russia to redefine territorial power distribution.

The founding of the Eurasian Union is, in geopolitical discourse, actually the takeover of the rudder in the distribution of energy, and in particular the pipeline routing by Russia. The "long game" around the Caspian basin, which includes the three richest countries of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan with enormous existing and potential reserves of gas and oil, plays a special role in this (Dunlap, 2004). The major region of the world has become the Caspian Basin region. The only obstacle to the economic growth of the region is the development of transport infrastructure, oil and gas pipelines linking production zones with ports of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Arabian-Persian Gulf and directly with consumer zones of China. At the heart of the pipeline route are the conflicting US and Russian geo-transport conceptions of rivalry, including the geo-strategic interests of the EU, China and Iran (Vujić, 2015). Therefore, the Caspian Basin represents the very core of a geostrategic challenge that will redefine global relations on the Eurasian continent. The fact is that the Eurasian Union is not interested in extracting energy generating products from the Caspian. The three richest countries with gas and oil reserves have become major competitors to the Eurasian Union for the EU market. Manufacturers from the Caspian region wish to strengthen the existing oil pipelines and develop new pipelines in a west-east-south direction. This direction covers the large markets from the Mediterranean in

the west, China in the east and in the south towards India. Therefore, the goal of the Eurasian Union is to win over as many member states as possible and to control the political situations in the volatile countries around the Caspian Sea, thereby reducing the US influence (Vujić, 2015).

The most important day in the redefinition of Eurasia is August 12, 2018, when the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea was signed. It was signed by five countries around the Caspian Sea: Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran. Russia, as the main initiator of the Caspian Basin deal, launched the negotiations in 1996 (Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea, 2018). The Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea stipulates that countries may install pipelines at the bottom of the Caspian Sea. The projects do not require the consent of all Caspian coastal countries and it is sufficient to solve the problem only with those countries through which the pipeline should pass (Garibov, 2018; Babić, 2018). The Convention also has a clause that allows only Caspian armies to be on board, creating a permanent barrier for the US and NATO in case they attempt to penetrate the Caspian Sea area, whose strategic importance is well understood in Washington and Brussels (Babić, 2018). Such policy of Russia's relations with the US began with Putin's rise to power in 2000 (Alvi, 2018). At the very beginning of his term, he made it clear that Russia's relations with the US were part of a diversified macro-regional and multipolar foreign policy, and the US was treated on an equal footing with other priorities (Vujić, 2015). Russia's persistence on reaching consensus on the Caspian Sea and signing the Convention alters the theories of Mackinder's "Heartland" and Brzezinski's "Eurasian Balkans". The Convention facilitated the victory of Russia over the United States. The US observation of Eurasia has still not moved from Mackinder and Brzezinski's theory. Specifically, the United States today are more concerned with its placement of liquefied natural gas on the European market than it cares about pipelines. The US wants neither Russian nor any other gas in Europe (*Treba li euroljanima ukapljeni američki plin?*, 2018).

Today's geopolitical picture of the world has changed. From the Cold War bipolar system, which was dominated by two forces and two ideologies, and after the fall of the Berlin Wall and American unipolarity and one prevailing Western ideology, a new way of distributing the power and contradictions of neo-liberalism and neo-Eurasian ideologies has come to the scene (Millerman, 2014). This new geopolitics of the world is called multi-polarity (Glebov, 2013). It does not mark Russia's escape from the region of Eurasia, but rather integration and domination in the new geopolitical picture of the world (Petrović, 2010). The new geopolitical picture of the world rests on the geo-strategy of the "multi-geo" code. The multi-geo code has its root in neo-Eurasianism. It was created by its derivation in terms of a new configuration of geopolitics where the territorial distribution of power was directed towards the major regions of

the world. It articulates the vision of Putin's Eurasian Union as well as its actions towards integration as a bridge for cooperation with the EU and China. Neither Russia nor China want to embrace Western values but prefer to keep their own values.

In the geopolitical discourse, the impression may be that the Eurasian Union is shaping the new Eurasia with the help of a "multi-geo" code, and thus geopolitics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – with a balance between the polarities. It is important here to emphasize the semiotic meaning of the word "Eurasia". Two elements are visible: contradiction and integration. The first element of contradiction is in favor of the absolute opposite to the Cold War geopolitics when different regions were forced to converge according to a single model. Integration, on the other hand, is breaking the boundaries by connecting modern society through technologies. Contradiction and integration make the era of the second globalization process. On the one hand, borders will be dissolved, but not the differences in cultures and civilizations (Maçaes, 2017; Maçaes, 2018). According to Milardović (2017), it is a quiet new dominance of Orientalism, that is, of the "non-Western world", where it spreads across the globe of the earth through political, military, cultural, scientific and technological power. In doing so, Eurasia, in geopolitical discourse and in polycentric structure, is Putin's Eurasian Union as a territorial unit with a distribution of power to Europe, Turkey, Brazil, Iran, China and India and with scrutiny towards the Middle and Far East. The question is: Putin's Eurasian Union rests on the "idea of Eurasia" as an "elite project" only for Russians, or also for the rest of the world?

### *Discursive dimension of Eurasia – the "elite project"*

The "idea of Eurasia" in today's global arena sounds like a project promoting the new but only manufacturing ideology of the East. Considering that the pivotal state of Eurasia is Russia, both in the geographic and in the historical terms, it is worth directing an analysis of the idea from this very centre. In the discourse, the "Idea of Eurasia", i.e. the "Russian world" separated from the West, developed in the 1920s (Dugin, 2002). The ideology of Eurasianism was developed in an attempt to conceive the logic of the political, social, cultural, geopolitical development of Russia, taking into account the processes from the Rus of Kiev to the USSR (Dugin, 2002). Eurasia is, in fact, one of the components of the famous Russian soul, that is, its messianic dream that portrays Russia as the third Rome (Moreau Defarges, 2006). Throughout its history, Russia has had a number of events that have left their mark on Russian society, and it is undoubtedly still present today. Furthermore, the text shows the turning points in Russia that influenced the development of the geopolitical discourse of today's "elite project".

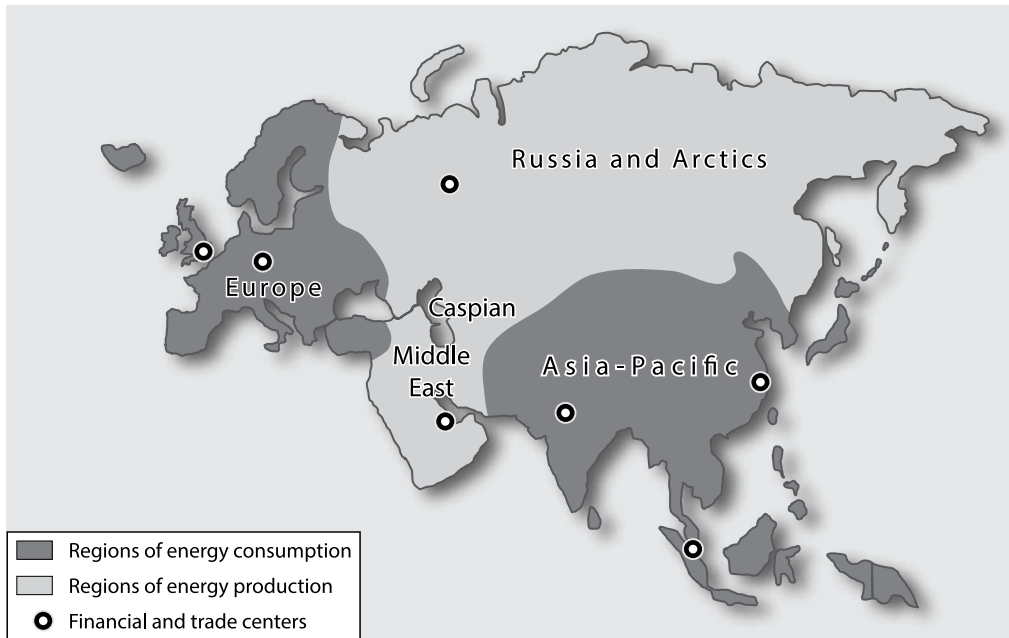
The fact is that the enrichment of Russia in the spirit of Byzantine culture began in 988 and with the development of Orthodoxy as stated earlier in the text. With the fall

of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the ideas of Moscow as the “Third Rome” were born and developed in the circles of Russian Orthodoxy. At that time, the Orthodox religion was perceived as the core of Russia’s spiritual resistance to foreign rule (Boban and Cipek, 2017). The first crucial event that influenced the shaping of Russia’s political culture was during the reign of the first Russian emperor Peter the Great (1682–1725) at the end of the 17th century. During the war with Charles XII, Peter the Great decided to shift Russia culturally and politically from Asia to Europe (Trenin, 2001). He sought to modernize the Russian Empire modeled on the West. For example, the city of St. Petersburg personifies the European spirit with a construction style modeled on Paris and Venice (Petrović, 2010). The next event is the half a century long attempt of cultural integration of Russia with Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Catherine the Great (1762–1796), a German princess who married into a Russian empress. Her statement “Russia is a European country” speaks for this (Kissinger, 2015). The third event is the development of Russian thought and political ideas since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Namely, within Russia itself a division emerged between the east and the west, which distinguishes Westernizers and Slavophiles (Berdyayev and Bamford, 1992). Westernizers are divided into liberals and revolutionary democrats, whereas the Slavophiles divide into traditionalists and Eurasians (Berdyayev and Bamford, 1992; Boban and Cipek, 2017). Among the Slavophiles, the so-called great patriots were developing the idea that Russia is a special civilization at the core of which is the Slavic spirit in response to the West. One of the prominent ideologues of Pan-Slavism was Nikolai Danilevsky (1822–1885), who defined the Russian identity by the borders of the Russian Empire. He associated his idea of redefining the borders of Eurasia with humanity as a group of cultural and historical types. He argued that geographically Russia does not belong to either Europe or Asia because Europe is part of the German-Roman civilization and therefore that civilization is simply synonymous with Europe (Danilevsky, 2007). According to his ideas, Slavs are the people with the highest values belonging to the Russian Empire, and this is by no means a German-Roman civilization. In the Russian media, on the occasion of the 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Danilevsky, it was called upon to develop his ideas and his book was re-listed as a literature at universities in Russia (Čarski, 2012).

More recently, the 20<sup>th</sup> century “idea of Eurasia” came from the “white emigration.” Russian emigrants sought to provide a solution to the problems of Russian history in the construction of the geopolitical theory of Eurasia. The central ideological position of Eurasianism they tried to find in the positive assessment of the Mongol invasions and their thirty years of rule. The Europeanization of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great was assessed as negative for the Russian people. The most famous ideologist of Eurasianism was *Nikolai Sergeyevich Trubetzkoy* (1890–1938), a “white emigrant” who taught at the University of Vienna. He claimed that the in-

tolerant, absolutist nationalism of the Germanic peoples was foreign to Russian culture (Boban and Cipek, 2017). *Trubetzkoy* also spoke of creating a new identity and uniqueness for the Russian people through the ideology of Eurasianism as an antipode to liberalism. He drew his ideas from the manuscripts of Danilevsky and other famous Slavophiles. The basics of Eurasianism were also explained by historian and ethnologist Lev Gumilyov (1912–1992), but only within the framework of ethnicism and the super ethos of the Russians. Later, various geopoliticians interpreted his views in favour of Eurasianism (Berdyayev and Bamford, 1992). Namely, this ideology did not have any echoes in geopolitical discourse from the creation of the USSR until its collapse. It came to life after its breakdown, especially with Putin's rise to power in 2000. At that time, the development of new Eurasianism had reached its exalted transformation into neo-Eurasianism. One of the restorers of this ideology is Russian sociologist and geopolitician Alexander Dugin (1962 -). He founded the Eurasia Party in 2001. He published the reasons for founding the party and supporting the idea of neo-Eurasianism in his book "The Basics of Eurasia," observing the US globalism as a threat (Dugin, 2002). He divided the postmodern world into the "Atlanticist", led by the US and Europe, and the "Eurasian" led by Russia, and this division thus represents two diametrically opposed elements: the sea (Atlantic) and the mainland (Eurasia) (Milardović, 2017). The "competition" of these elements, or the actors promoting them, is borne by the idea of power and control of the world (Milardović, 2017). Given the closeness with the Duma and Vladimir Putin, this idea is even more strongly developed and articulated in Russian circles. As a professor at Lomonosov University in Moscow, he supports his "fourth political theory" based on multi-polarity versus Western universality (Millerman, 2014). The interpretation of the famous Portuguese political scientist Bruno Maçães (2017) on "Greater Eurasia" is also very interesting in recent times. Specifically, this is the presentation of a geopolitical report by Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin in Verona (Italy) "on the ideals of Eurasian integration." Figure 1 shows the map presented during his address. It is evident that Eurasia has been identified as a supercontinent divided into three regions Rosneft Information Division, 2017). The regional division was made according to energy consumption and production. Significantly, the division was not recorded between Europe and Asia. The first two regions are located on the western and eastern borders of the supercontinent. The first of these is Europe, including Turkey, and the second is the Asia-Pacific region, including India. Among them there are three areas of energy production. These are Russia and the Arctic, the Caspian region and the Middle East. Interestingly, the map does not separate these three regions and prefers to mark a line connecting adjacent blocks, at least from a purely geographical perspective (Maçães, 2017).

**Figure 1.** A depiction of Greater Eurasia in the geopolitical report of the Rosneft Director



Source: Rosneft Information Division (2017).

The map illustrates the new world order in the system of the “multi-geo” code, where Russia determined its self-position through trade-integration links. The map did not include the US as the global leader, so the question remains – is the US positioning itself in isolationism by the “ideological integration”?

The essence of the problem presented is the obvious dichotomy of Westernizers and Slavophiles within the political culture of Russia, which facilitated the development of a new paradigm for Eurasianism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This dichotomy is still present in the Russian circles today. The ideology of neo-Eurasianism is the first ideology to emerge in that part of the continent and that – in the “idea of Eurasia” which embraces a geographical, cultural, economic and geopolitical dimensions. Neo-Eurasianism is “the second globalization, synonymous with a multipolar world” (Milardović, 2016). In addition, the key issue of identity has been relevant throughout the history of Russia, in the imperial era, in the time of Soviet Russia and the new Western globalization (Milardović, 2016). Key events, played through a deep history and through a series of attempts to be realized by the strong leaders, have made it possible to find the answer to the question “who they are.” The issue of identity has been resolved by founding of the Eurasian Union which, in addition to answering who they are, also provides the

answers as to where they are and what they want to be. In the geopolitical discourse, this “elite project of Eurasia” in response to the West and the first globalization represents the natural and logical path of Russia and the Russians and will increasingly assume its significance.

## Conclusion

For the purpose of acquiring an image in the geopolitical discourse of Eurasia, the analysis have taken into account the geographical, cultural, economic, geopolitical and ideological dimensions. The aim was to obtain an answer to the question: where and who is Eurasia? Research on the geographical dimension has revealed that uniform definitions are found regarding the location of Eurasia. Due to theoretical and practical variables as well as changes in the surrounding, it was necessary to define Eurasia. The author used the language code “CasCauStan” along with the largest country – Russia. CasCauStan is composed of the first three letters of the regions that make up Eurasia, while Russia forms a part of each of these regions. Further to the cultural dimension, its complexity and intricacy in terms of the crisis focus have also been identified. It was determined by the “community of civilizations” and three benchmarks are set forth: the division into the “East” and the “West”, the role of Islamic civilization as a mediator between the “East” and the “West” and the influence of Western civilization on Eurasia. It follows from the guidelines that the area of Eurasia is a religious mix of Orthodoxy, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism, thus forming ethnic groups and national identities. Due to such a religious mix, there is a great danger of escalating conflicts, while the processes that have taken place on these grounds have created the cultural and political phenomena such as the Eurasian Union. The economic dimension indicates that energy generating products represent a crucial structure in the export of Eurasia countries. Russia upholds the greatest power through the established Eurasian Union, which seeks to control the trends in the Caucasus and Caspian regions. Because of the escalating crisis of 2014 due to the “lost exports”, Russia has taken a strategic turn. There are three obvious shifts in its economy: opening up to China with infrastructure projects, substituting imports, and getting connected in accordance with the principle “integration to integration.” In addition to creating bilateral relations with the EU Member States, it also enhances the development of relations with individual Member States such as Germany in linking knowledge, innovation and technology. The economic slogan “export above all” represents its economic mission. Namely, a further analysis of the geopolitical and discursive dimensions was necessary to illuminate the complete picture. In this analysis, the need to emphasize the semiotic meaning of Eurasia emerged: contradiction and integration. Furthermore, Russia, as the core of Eurasia, seeks the polarity balance. By



pursuing the geostrategy of the “multi-geo” code rooted in the ideology of neo-Eurasianism, it fosters integration and dominance in the new geopolitical picture of the world. Thus, Putin’s Eurasian Union plays a leading role in the function of a territorial unit with a distribution of power to Europe, Turkey, Brazil, Iran, China and India and scrutiny over the Middle and Far East. The reconfiguration of the geopolitical picture of the world is considered to be the signature of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea signed by the five surrounding states. Russia defeated the United States by this act and got a back wind for even more perseverance on multi-polarity as an alternative to Atlanticism. The “idea of Eurasia” as the third Rome, or today in the modern interpretation the “idea of Greater Eurasia” speaks in favour of this. It incorporates the first created ideology of the “East” called neo-Eurasianism as “the second globalization, synonymous with the multipolar world”. In support of the thesis on the “idea of Greater Eurasia” rests the establishment of Putin’s Eurasian Union as an “elite project” for the “rest of the world”, i.e. those who do not want to accept the Western values, but also for the Russians as it provides them with an answer to the question of who is Eurasia or Russia.

In the end, the result of the research made a positive shift in the geographic designation of Eurasia and confirmed the thesis of a new 21<sup>st</sup> century geopolitics with Russia’s domination – the geopolitics of multi-polarity and quiet dominance by connecting ideas, knowledge, capital and technology.

A future research should certainly be focused on the new forthcoming analyzes of geopolitical discourses on Eurasia by the “East” and the “West”, while further developments in terms of the possible shift of the geographical determinant and its geopolitics and geostrategy should be identified through comparison.

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## Geopolitički diskurs: gdje je i što je Euroazija?

### *Sažetak*

Suvremeni geopolitički diskursi u velikoj su mjeri oblikovani mrežom globalnih aktera s različitim izvorom moći. U takvoj mreži, ključni izvor moći nije klasični teritorij već snažna i djelotvorna ekonomska politika država, kompanija i gospodarskih aktera. U zadnjim dvama desetljećima 21. stoljeća, u geopolitičkim i geostrateškim pitanjima veliku su pažnju zauzele ekonomske integracije koje se nalaze na prioritetnim listama dnevnog reda politika i upravljanja politikom. Dok svaka država, regija, savez svoje geopolitičko i geostrateško pozicioniranje započinje formuliranjem i implementiranjem svojih politika, istodobno su one pod utjecajem zbivanja na teritoriju Euroazije. Euroazija je u geopolitičkom diskursu već prilično dugo u središtu diskusije znanstvenika i političara. Prethodna istraživanja geopolitičkih diskursa o Euroaziji pokazala su zaokupljenost odnosima sa „zapadnim svijetom” dok je sama granica odnosno koncept još uvijek ostao nejasan. Cilj je ovoga rada riješiti taj problem i definirati Euroaziju u geografskom, kulturološkom, ekonomskom i socijalnom smislu. Pregled literature i analiza dokumenata tako su omogućili odgovor na pitanje „gdje je i što je Euroazija?” Odgovarajući na to pitanje, ovaj rad uzima u obzir važnost uloge Euroazije kao aktera s Europskom unijom i to kao teritorija sa značajno bogatim energetske resursima i posljedično atraktivnog područja za ekonomske integracije s Europskom unijom i njezinim članicama. Kako bi se ponudio odgovor „gdje je i što je Euroazija?” te razotkrila dimenzija njezine geopolitičke dominacije, rad je fokusiran na njezinu kulturološku, ekonomsku, geopolitičku i socijalnu dimenziju.

**Ključne riječi:** Euroazija, geografska dimenzija, kulturološka dimenzija, ekonomska dimenzija, geopolitička dimenzija, socijalna dimenzija.