

WHY ARE RUSSIAN AUTHORS NOT PUBLISHED IN AMERICA?

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Abstract

In the second issue of *International Trends* in 2015 Igor Istomin and Andrei Baykov published an article “Russian and International Publication Practices”. While it tries to explain the underrepresentation of Russian authors in Western academic journals by analysing the methodological differences between scholarly communities, Alexey Fenenko claims that Russian specialists struggle to get published in the West for ideological reasons. It identifies ideological principles, which determine acceptance in an American discourse on International Relations. They include belief in a long-term stability of the world order, which emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union, trust in the moral superiority and historical inevitability of liberal democracy and globalization and the acceptance of the U.S. leadership as their principal guarantor. The author, further, argues that the Russian expert community does not share these central axiomatic provisions, advanced by their Western colleagues, therefore, any discussion between them appears to be fruitless. Russian scholars either expect that the American-centric order will disintegrate soon or identify signs of this disintegration, already. An absence of the common ideological framework precludes spillover in the methodological field. Henceforth, Russian academics become reluctant toward quantitative methods so dominant in the U.S., which rest on a hypothesis of long-term sustainability of the political landscape. Russian scholars after excesses of uncritical studying of the American mainstream in the 1990s and early 2000s, over the last few years appear to have become disillusioned in the Western understanding of international affairs. Unlike Istomin and Baykov, the current article expects growing renationalization rather than integration of expert communities both in Russia and the United States. As a result much of the channels for dialogue between Russian and American scholars are destroyed.

Keywords:

epistemic communities; long-term forecasting; quantitative methods; foreign policy ideology; American-centric order; multipolar world; globalization; liberal democracy.

In the second issue of *International Trends* in 2015 Igor Istomin and Andrei Baykov published an article “Russian and International Publication Practices” [2015]. The authors tried to explain the reasons why Russian scientists are so infrequently and reluctantly published in international (and first of all, American) scientific magazines/ academic journals. One of the advantages of the article is an attempt to prove wrong that the main reason of this case is pure hostility towards Russia. Instead, they offer a whole range of possible explanations. One of them is lack of methodological background generally accepted in the West or low quality of works falling below the standard of western scientific researches.

Meanwhile twenty five years passed since the collapse of the USSR. Such a long time should be sufficient for the alignment of Russian works with American standards, which includes the incorporation of mathematical methods, broad awareness of Anglo-Saxon studies and schools of international relations and precise compliance with the international system of citation. Yet, all the mentioned improvements so far have not driven national and western scientific communities closer, as the article of Igor Istomin and Andrei Baykov demonstrates.

National and western approaches to the studies on international relations still differ significantly from each other. Even when Russian researchers adhere to the terms and

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conditions of international scientific community including broad citation of the acknowledged American authors, most of the times they are still not accepted by the US research community. Anyone attempting to be published in western magazines most certainly has experienced difficulties starting from the process of preparation of an article to the actual failure in publishing it. [Koldunova, 2015]. The questions on reasoning behind this case and future prospects have yet to be answered.

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One of the probable answers to the question stated above, I heard at a conference on European security, which used to be the main subject of discussion in the forefront of the 'political reboot' of 2009-2010. One of participants of the conference who happened to be from Finland, in response to Russian criticism made a curious remark in response: 'We cannot reach an agreement on the main subject. All the events which happened after 1991 had a mostly wholesome effect. First of all, the expansion of both the EU and NATO is probably beneficial for us. But there is no secret that the same events were definitely detrimental to you, the Russians. Now you are watching us carefully, waiting for our mistakes, so you can turn the tables'. Back then his words did not resonate with the audience. In my opinion, some credit should be given to the reasonable comment of that speaker today.

The American approach to the academic study of international relations is ideologically loaded. Up to now this value stipulation has not been expressed to the level of Brezhnev's politics in Soviet Russia, but a steady tendency towards this scenario is quite obvious and can be easily observed. So far that approach looks like implicit ideological preconditioning, based on a particular set of axioms accepted in good faith with no critical revision. By definition this set of statements must be used by all members of the Western academic community involved in the study of international relations. It leads to the situation when doubt or criticism regarding the established position makes you an 'intellectual hooligan' first and an academic marginal after.

The set of generally-accepted axioms is the following:

1. The political landscape formed after the collapse of the USSR is a long-term one and it is unlikely to undergo any drastic changes in the foreseeable future.

2. Humanity moves at a different pace towards a unified political platform, which is an American type of liberal democracy. All countries in the world could be strictly divided in two types – 'advanced' (developed) and 'slow' (developing). This division comes in accordance with their abilities to except and adopt the norms of American democracy.

3. The process of liberal globalization is objective and progressive in its nature. In the course of this process, national states give up part of their sovereignty in favor of supranational institutions. The only exception is the United States, which remains the principle guarantor of a sustainable globalization process, at the same time maintaining and increasing its own sovereignty.

4. Liberal and non-liberal states should have different rights in the international political arena (theory of 'moral inequity of political regimes'). The first ones have a right to affect the national and foreign policies of the last, in particular cases this right can extend to military invasion. At the same time non-liberal states have no moral claim for armed resistance or a comparable military capacity.

5. States stop being build-in entities (or 'billion-dollar balls') and have lost their integrity to the permanent struggle of elites. It turns out it is improper today to discuss issues of 'national interests' and 'national security'. From now on the subject of discussion is the security of certain elites. Accordingly, restriction of sovereignty meets interests of people in case the 'wrong elites' are in command of a particular country.

6. The USA remains the single option leader in the world for the foreseeable future. The US has a right to reinforce liberal world order, even forcefully if it is necessary. Naturally, the US can not execute it single-handed, consequently it has allies and use their help. However, it is not acceptable for any other country to place restrictions on the activities of Washington related to world liberalization.

7. After the collapse of the USSR, the character of international relations has drastically changed: bygone competition has been replaced with cooperative action against “new challenges”, which became a uniting movement under American leadership.

These premises are implicit to American research in political science – whether the object of the research is the Chinese economic upturn or a fight on transnational terrorism. The train of thought is encompassed within this particular framework. Here are some more examples proving the case. A particular US president could be criticized for exceeding the use of power-based methods, but the right of the States to use military force abroad could not be called into question. The issue of an increasing number of “new challenges” being a potential threat to American leadership could be reflected upon, but you cannot doubt that those challenges are a shared problem. The deployment of ABM systems could be criticized, but the modeling of a conflict where Washington sustains a defeat is not acceptable. It is not a mere coincidence that one of the favorite terms of American researchers is ‘responsibility’. The question of to whom and why we should be responsible is taken off the table.

There is a fascinating phenomenon that I’ve observed at different international conferences: a dialog with American colleagues is possible only if another party shares the set of seven premises mentioned above. If one of deliberators does not share the same sentiment (for instance, does not consider global warming to be the result of human activity or does not accept the inevitability of globalization), the chance for a healthy discussion fades away. American speakers shrug their shoulders at the participant, who gets discouraged with not being asked suitable questions, especially when he or she does not consider liberal democracy to be a progressive political regime or sees a possibility of the US military defeat in a conflict. The planned exchange of views turns into a polite, but quite uncomfortable silence.

The authors of the article discussed above notice that in the United States, ‘from the very beginning one of the main goals of a researcher is to represent an existing intellectual context and

bring to light the gaps and contradictions of previous academic studies, which should be filled in by a particular new study’ [Istomin, Baykov 2015: 126]. Interestingly enough in Russia such kind of meticulous analysis of sources is typical for graduate works and dissertations. It is quite difficult for me personally to embrace the whole value of those analytics if the third part of it is a ‘graveyard’ of names and quotes of established authors. Moreover, most of the works from the ‘gold reserve’ of American political science – from Hans Morgenthau to Joseph Nye and Fareed Zakaria – are characterized by succinct problem statement and unobtrusively mentioned methodological paradigm of work. Choosing the contrary method leads to a constant repeating of well-known theories, which have already paved their way to the text books.

According to Istomin and Baykov, the American approach to academic studies on international relations increasingly reminds me of Marxist-Leninist ideology in the USSR. The authors notice: ‘The reviewers mainly focus not on the depth of suggested conclusions and astuteness of observations, but on methodology of analysis, adequacy of collected empirical ‘field research’ materials, correspondence to the established Anglo-American tradition and normative structure of an article’. [Istomin, Baykov, 2015:133]

The stated problems or conclusions made by a particular researcher are not essential. The quotation of ideologically ‘suitable’ authors is much more important. The last, according to the mentioned article are K. Popper and I. Lakatos. Although, you may wonder why Popper’s point of view is the ultimate truth for a political scientist involved in the research on international relations? There’s no answer to that. I recall some Soviet text books on history of Middle Ages, where the bibliographical section started from the Marxist-Leninist classics, including the letters of K. Marx and F. Engels. Do American bachelors display the irony, similar to demonstrated by the Soviet students of the 1970’s in relation to K. Marx, generously quoting K. Popper, ‘who is always right’?

Ideological axioms, underlying multiple theoretical constructs are left aside from critical reasoning. The ‘security dilemma’ popular

in the United States refers to a paradox situation when the reinforcement of national security as well as its weakening can cause a conflict with other states. There are many adherents as well as opponents of this theory. Meanwhile, if an author considers annexation or war indemnity to be adequate measures of international relations, then the discussion turns to nonsense. The same thing could be said about the theory of democratic peace. There is a popular view in the United States that liberal democracies do not fight against each other. Let us accept that this is the case. It is also possible that the true reasoning behind it is not shared liberal values, but the fact that they belong to the same military alliance and project their aggression on the outer world. In this case the theory of democratic peace appears to be hollow.

Hence, their great enthusiasm for mathematical methods, successfully described by Igor Istomin and Andrei Baykov. Quantitative methods are efficient in international relations only if the following three problems are solved.

1. Existing norms of interstate interaction will remain unaltered for a long-term perspective because a quantitative model could only be built in accordance with standing rules. But if we make an assumption about 'a war annulling all the forecasts' then no adequate mathematical model can be developed. Similarly, in chess the rules are set a certain way: we play black and white figures, using a chessboard with 64 squares. But if a random group of players claimed to play blue and yellow figures and with a board of 100 squares, no model of the game would work.

2. There is an assurance that no major disasters will happen in the future. Another issue is that mathematical modeling follows the logic of exceedingly consistent international relations and does not include a whole scope of unpredictable events like crises, wars, revolutions or new charismatic and aggressive political leaders involved in international relations. Only then you can build a long-term quantitative forecast, otherwise the events are predictable for only 2-3 years, the rest would remain mystified under multiple mathematical equations. If a possibility of a major military conflict was left open, all the forecasts on human population in 2050 are unrealistic. In case we are not satisfied

with existing political landscape and prepare ourselves for its renegotiation, mathematical projects also become a mere waste of time.

3. The third issue is the underlying system of values. The vulnerability of mathematical modeling lies in the fact that it has an unclear relation to moral criteria. They have a subjective nature and nothing in common with actual mathematical variables. Calculation of sustainable development indicators is valuable only in relation to a situation where developed countries ought to help underdeveloped ones. Otherwise mathematical techniques of analysis are inefficient. The arranging of countries according to their per capita gross national product (GDP) is pointless without taking into account the value of consumption standards. Calculation of a country's vulnerability to terrorist threat is meaningless if a researcher thinks that the Arabia Gulf monarchies are the main sponsors of terrorism and the US is their supporter. In conclusion, the use of mathematical methods in international relations could only be possible together with a convention on general moral criteria and realization mechanisms first.

At the end of the 19th century the English poet Rudyard Kipling proclaimed 'the white man's burden'. General public of Great Britain and the United States accepted this notion right away, stressing that Europeans have a right to civilize their colonies forcefully. Though for Germany, which was preparing to defeat Great Britain, this right was completely unimaginable. The Germans were interested not in the right of GB to rebuild colonies according to their preference, but in sinking their battle ships. A discussion on effective predictive mathematical models between the Englishmen and the Germans was impossible at that point. The condition for it was the common ideological paradigm. Otherwise, quantitative methods are nothing more than a guessing game.

All American science magazines, publishing corpses, article theses have a certain editorial policy, which is not necessary ascribed by a certain person in charge. Essentially, it is the paradigm defined by the list of seven premises mentioned above. A specific world order is noticeable through the works of most of American authors. The main features of its political landscape are

the following: it is a world of hegemonic stability where the USA takes the leading role; the United States' prospective enemies do not possess a comparable level of military and economic potential; the Americans lead the rest of the world in a fight with 'new challenges' and suppress intrastate conflicts. The authors, who do not share this view (not its particular premises, but the whole picture) are driven out of the intellectual field and treated as marginal researchers.

A famous American political scientist Robert Kagan expressed his opinion on the current situation and said that from the standpoint of the countries who share liberal values, adopting an aggressive foreign policy or even going to war for the sake of defending democratic values (as in Kosovo) is justified even when countries do comply with international law. However, from the standpoint of the Russians, the Chinese and other nations which do not share this world view, the United States and their allies are successful at imposing their views on the others not because they are right, but because they are strong and powerful enough to perform those actions [2008]. It is very unlikely that an article expressing this point of view would be welcomed with enthusiasm by American publishers.

2

The most part of Russian specialists on international relations happen to be a part of a secret or open opposition to American world-view. The 'absorption (learning) paradigm' as A. Bogaturov named it, dominated in Russia up until 2006. Researchers were studying American works and were enthusiastically getting scholarships to study in the United States, were embracing the culture of writing articles and publishing in magazines. For a fifteen years period the main criterion of quality was extensive quotation of English-language works and interpretation of new terminology.

National research on major issues of international relations was 70-80% full of information somehow related to the United States. This kind of 'Americanophilia' looked grotesque and resulted in open sarcasm.

Nonetheless, a careful revision of western works on international relations has not driven Russian scientists closer to full understanding

of suggested political landscape or its acceptance. The minority which did accept it either left for the USA or became part of marginal academic opposition.

Firstly, almost no one from a number of national researchers considered the new political landscape, which took shape after 1991 as positive. The results of the USSR collapse influenced Russia as no other country in the world. Accordingly, the new order was considered to be unfair or at least not suitable for Russia. Hereof, national researchers took a critical view on the new 'unipolar' Americano-centric world and the results of the USSR collapse.

This explanation gives a broad context which explains the reluctance of national researchers to use quantitative methods to study international relations. Moreover, Russian research does not consider the existing world order as inevitable. In case of its revision, mathematical modeling would not be able to provide long-term forecasts. Russian authors are quite skeptical about modeling of international relations. Although, the skill of building these models has been mastered fairly well, researchers doubt their predictive potential and even find them naïve.

Secondly, the principle of listing states according to their ability to absorb the ideas of American democracy did not take hold in national political science. Starting from the middle of the 1990s the proposed global order was widely criticized in the framework of the 'civilizational approach'. At the same time, the Chinese concept of 'multipolar world' was accepted with great enthusiasm and, starting from 1997 became the main concept of Russian foreign policy.

In the third place, Russian scholars have not acknowledged the US right to play the role of a legitimate world leader, although, after the end of the Cold war, the total amount of resources allowed the US to call themselves a leader. At the same time two crucially important points were stressed: (1) American leadership is temporary and (2) there are other world powers able to circumscribe the influence of Washington. With Russia strengthening, it became once again the key opponent of the US. The authors remind that only Russia has a comparable military po-

tential and a status of a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The fourth, Russian academic papers deny the right of the US and its allies to limit the sovereignty of other states. The concept of 'humanitarian intervention' was one of the reasons for a broad criticism of the USA in Russia. It was noticed that Washington has turned human rights discussion into the ground for military intervention. That strategy was understood as a threat for Russian security.

National studies on international relations are divided into two main groups. The first group of authors brings to light tendencies, which in the foreseeable future could put the USA leadership into question. The second describes and analyzes events which already confirmed those tendencies mentioned above. Along those events which finished the USA predominance started in 1989 were: American invasion of Iraq (2003), DPRK nuclear test (2006), President V. Putin's Munich speech (2007), five-day war in South Osetia (2008). It provoked a scarcely disguised annoyance of the USA [Gati 2007]. No one in Washington could forbid the researchers to write or to think in a particular way, but at the same time they cannot be blamed for their lack of enthusiasm to put it in print.

By 2007 the situation started to change. An intensified confrontation in the Russian-American relationship coincided with the end of 'learning paradigm'. The Russian expert community after successfully assimilating the western scientific approach decided to change direction. It was time to stop retelling American articles and start creating original concepts. The stiffening of relations of two countries showed a deep misunderstanding and difference in their world building and strategies of international relations.

This tendency was fostered by a growing ideologization of political science in the USA. American researchers were more often interpreting modern global order as an antagonism of liberalism and autocracy. This fact closely echoed the ostentatious USSR ideology of the Brezhnev epoch. After the introduction of Soviet troops to Afghanistan in 1979, American political analysts rebuked soviet experts for 'getting stuck' in the past and turning a blind eye to the negative shifts in the USSR foreign

policy. Nowadays the Russian academic community gets the same sense about American political activities. The time period after the invasion in Iraq and the disintegration of the anti-terrorist coalition was perceived by the Americans as 'uncomfortable' and 'aggravating'. It is meaningful that after 2003 the US mantra about leadership started to be chanted only to blench their negative shifts.

I call it a unique historical situation: all the while proclaiming integration into the Anglo-Saxon scientific world, Russian scholars were rapidly dissociating themselves from that tradition, especially in comparison with the early 2000s. The symptoms of that tendency were diverse: from the shut down of multiple offices of American funds to broad discussions of possible scenarios of military conflicts between Russia and the USA, written on the pages of respectable journals and magazines. That was the time of developing a new approach to international relations, which was based on the following premises:

- the idea of a deep crisis of American leadership and probable loss of its leading position in international relations;
- the idea of Russia regaining its status as a great nation compared to the decline of the 1990s;
- acceptance of growing multipolarity of the world;
- doubt in non-alternativeness of the globalization process;
- questioning the objective nature of the 'new challenges'.

The 2012 presidential election in Russia exacerbated the tendency for isolation. It was not the electoral system which caused so much commotion. The ostentatiously cold treatment of V. Putin's reelection by the B. Obama administration in Washington meant crossing of the 'red line': until then the White House had never put bilateral relations into direct correlation with a particular political leader. The following year and a half proved the US reluctance to build a dialog with V. Putin, who returned to the Kremlin. 'The Magnitsky Act' and 'Viktor Bout case' showed that the US does not accept the Russian political establishment and cannot guarantee its security. For

national experts that meant the end of illusion of our national elite being part the global order. The US was as hostile to the elites as to Russia itself. The Ukrainian crisis proved this tendency but by no means launched it.

Andrei Baykov and Igor Istomin pointed out the growing integration of academic communities in the world. But in the last four years we observe directly the opposite, which is an accelerated renationalization of academic and research fields in Russia as well as in the USA. There is a certain level of animosity between the two countries and obvious mutual reluctance to have a constructive dialog on a number of subjects. All the previous attempts to write programs and roadmaps together are history now. We observe a dominating discourse of mutual intolerance expressed in:

- suspiciousness towards its own establishment if it starts a dialog with Russia/ the USA;
- distrust towards colleagues working for Russian/ American organizations;
- distrust for each others informational resources automatically perceived as lies/attacks;
- forecasting a possibility of military conflict.

The given situation significantly differs from the Détente of the 1970s. Back then the leitmotiv of Russian-American negotiations was getting the message across, to hear the counterpart and to be heard by it. Today, at a rare Russian-American meeting disputes are rare, too. The sides only exchange official positions and walk away from any arguments. This animosity not only destroys enthusiasm to publish each other's works, but even to hear each other out. The main question is: what do we want to tell to the American audience? There's no

need to show them once again the hostile relations between two countries. Probably, this kind of information is already widespread in the USA. Vice versa, what American research could be presented in Russia? The frameworks of perception are limited by the established images of each other.

The sanctions have almost reduced to zero the economic and educational partnership of Russia and the United States. Most probably the next step is going to be a lessening of scientific/academic networking. Under the conditions of sanctions and contrasansctions the world atmosphere is progressively becoming poisonous. The following situation could be imagined as an extreme case: if one day it would become *mauvais ton* for a Russian researcher to be published in American magazine and vice versa. The key question is would we be willing to read each other under the circumstances of evident animosity and negative rhetoric?

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Russian researchers are rarely published in the USA not because of low quality of works or wrongly used citation. The true reason is that the ideology of Russian research on international relations does not correlate adequately with the American world view. This difference creates a great chance for antagonism between our countries. We cannot exclude the possibility of greater isolation of the Russian academic community under the pressure of growing animosity and renationalization. But in the context of existing bilateral relations this is not a painful revelation.

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