

THE NOTION OF WORLD POLITICS IN THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The present paper addresses the complex relationship between the traditional study of international relations within international relations theory and the nascent discipline of world politics both within the global academic community and in Russia. The author sees the two disciplines developing and evolving alongside each other as disciplines that are interrelated, both instructive and flawed in their own way. The discussion of the status of world politics largely remains a Russian domestic one mainly owing to the discipline's politicization and a lack of international relations experts.

Keywords

International relations; world politics; notion; subject matter; approach.

The phenomenon of world politics is one of the most important and crucial for understanding the global context of events. Despite the inflow of foreign ideas and multiple publications of Russian authors on the subject of world politics, its self-determination as an independent academic discipline is not complete. There is now a degree of agreement on issues considered to be part of world politics, rather than part of international relations. The materials relating to these issues have been classified into subject groups, and these now make up a unit, making it possible to create coherent university courses. There is now an established discourse, which, by acting on the listener's or reader's consciousness (and even more so, subconsciousness), pushes him/her towards a 'liberal-intuitive' understanding of world politics. In 2002 we witnessed the publication of the first Russian textbook on world politics authored by M.M. Lebedeva¹. All of the above are solid achievements that came at the price of great effort.

It is important to keep in mind that the process of establishment of world politics as an independent research field is more typical for Russia than for Western countries where the subject of world politics is present in international relations research on international relations, but does not claim any kind of autonomy. In the American academic community there is no issue of division between world politics and international relations. They co-exist and can belong to both international politics and political science blocs.

This quite different reaction towards self-determination of world politics could be explained in part by the ironic attitude towards attempts to philosophize (in the European sense of the word) the subject of international relations. But the truth is that most Western research is analytical and objective, unlike Russian research, and world politics is considered to be a highly politicized and liberally inclined sphere of knowledge quite foreign to Russian science. The result is the aspiration of

¹Lebedeva M. M. *World Politics*. Moscow, 2003. A number of important first steps towards the world politics approach were undertaken in a successful collective paper 'Categories of political science' written under the supervision of Melvil A. U. (M., 2002)

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world politics as a theoretical field to detach itself from international relations and potentially take a leading position.

Spontaneous self-structuring of world politics as an autonomous subdiscipline has become a distinctive feature of Russian political science which is not typical for its Western counterpart. This way after a decade and a half of institutionalization, political science in Russia has formed its own identity.

This was the starting point for taking the world politics approach seriously. More importantly, this approach has great potential to enrich Russian political science. For this purpose, it needs to become an analytical concept that absorbs the methodology of traditional disciplines, including the historico-political approach. The main goal of this article is to enhance the notion of world politics based on the comparison of methodological analysis of world politics, on the one hand, and international relations, on the other.

In the tense political situation of the early 1990s the political science community was divided into two camps (something that would never have happened in different historical conditions). The first camp espoused the world politics approach. Those researchers came from the sociological, psychological and, to a lesser extent, philosophical schools of Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU). International relations research was quite new to them. This branch of research could be called world politics, although in the Western tradition it corresponds to political sociology which uses a sociological approach.

In 1991 the second camp was already completely formed and included the researchers from Moscow State Institute for International Relations, the history department of MSU and partly the research of regional universities of Tomsk, Irkutsk, Nizhniy Novgorod, etc.

Scholars of the first group started from scratch. Unburdened by traditional approaches to applied international analysis, they elect-

ed a sociological approach, which could be considered as their primary methodological contribution. Considering that the domestic school of sociological analysis had only started to form back then (around 1991), the methodology they used was mostly borrowed from foreign schools of research.

The second camp was more conservative because of the long history of research (over 50 years) carried out at MGIMO, IMEMO RAS, ISK RAS and relevant analytical and methodological heritage in part applicable to the new intellectual environment and international political situation² (including the well-known project of 'modernization').

The first camp criticized the second for being too conservative, while the second one accused the first one of amateurism. P.A. Tsigankov's attempt to make sense of this opposition in the spirit of western political communities as a division between 'liberals' and 'realists' was not too instructive³. It turned out that one part of the supporters of the second approach (based on the historico-political method) joined the first camp of world politics (using the methods of political sociology). Another group preferred to research international relations by taking into account philosophical and sociological factors, while not completely dismissing historico-political methods.

Russian international relations experts gravitate towards two main approaches: the 'horizontal' and the 'vertical'. The horizontal approach of world politics is based on 'grasping' the reality of current foreign affairs, the vertical – on the global approach and taking into account long term historical processes.

However, neither the first camp, nor the second had a solid understanding of the methodological issues. The reason for that was the difficult political situation of the 1990s in Russia. Massive borrowing from Western theoretical thought followed by its adaptation and assimilation was common practice⁴. It was a

²Tulin I. G. *International Relations Research in Russia: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*// *Cosmopolis*. Almanac. M., 1997, pp. 18–28.

³Tsigankov A., Tsigankov P. *International Relations Theory in Russia: why are the schools in no rush to be established?* // *International Trends*. 2003. #3.

⁴The article of Bogaturov A. D. 'Ten Years of the Assimilation Paradigm' ('Pro et Contra' journal, 2000, #1) on this topic opened a discussion on the pages of the journal that lasted for almost two years.

decade of the ‘assimilation paradigm’ – unbearable materially and destructive professionally. The main scientific processes included massive retraining and enlightenment, reading and retelling of Western research results, which was considered sufficient for scientific success.

We have to admit that despite all troubles, the period described above was rather fruitful for domestic science. New theoretical and methodological approaches of general political science were incorporated into Russian research. The Russian experts’ awareness of international issues grew. It was at that time that the school of political sociology started to institutionalize. The process took place at the new political science department of MGIMO (I. G. Tulin, A. U. Melvill, etc.), the sub-department of sociology of international relations of the philosophy department at Lomonosov Moscow State University (headed by P.A. Tsygankov), the Novgorodsky Linguistic University with the international relations sub-department (A. A. Sergunin). These shifts had created the background for the institutional (but not yet methodological) organization of the school of world politics.

The issue of theoretical self-identification in world politics research was not clarified back then. Although there were some fragmented descriptions of the subject, there was no operational definition of the discipline. The main issues—of the object and subject—examined in the framework of the discipline were not established. Likewise, there was no obvious overlap between the subject fields of ‘world politics’ and ‘international relations’. Even today this distinction is more intuitive than factual.

It is important to note that all the issues mentioned above have not been solved yet in Western academia either. First of all because they were not the main focus of research, as it happened to be in Russia. Therefore, it is a fascinating and interesting task to find the answers to the most fundamental questions of theoretical self-identification of world politics. That is why one of the crucial challenges was to

find the basic definition by referring to the general theoretical context.

The term ‘world politics’ has a long history in Western and Russian academic literature. Throughout multiple stages of research, it has had a meaning synonymous to ‘international relations’. In all fairness it has to be added that gradually the conditions for the change of the word usage started to come about. The ‘Third wave of democracy’ of the early 1990s started alongside the elaboration of the Washington concept of ‘democracy promotion’ (1993), which implied active participation of the USA in the political processes of the former socialist countries. The ‘iron curtain’ was demolished and the former socialist camp greeted the intention of Western countries to take part in their transformation, not considering their actions as interference into domestic affairs. This is how the phenomenon of ‘softened sovereignty’ emerged in Eastern Europe.

A seemingly similar but substantially different process started in Western Europe. Due to the accelerated integration process Western countries began to renounce their individual sovereignty. The similarity of trends in Western and Eastern Europe called for broad generalizations.

The processes mentioned above led to a widening of the scale of comparison. The new focus was on developing countries. The thesis of the uselessness of sovereignty was confirmed when working on ‘third world countries’: because of their economic and political weakness their sovereignty was only technical and they lacked the capacity for assertive behavior, not only in the face of powerful Western countries, but also large multinational corporations.

All the collected materials related to Western Europe, the former ‘socialist camp’ and the ‘third world’ provided grounds for a radical theoretical conclusion about ‘softened sovereignty’ as a global trend. Books promoting this idea flooded the market and had a wide circulation up until the Afghan war. Among them were the works of prominent authors like S. Krasner, J. Hobson, S. Lawson⁵.

⁵Krasner S. *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999; Hobson J. *The State and International Relations*. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001; The New Agenda for International Relations / S. Lawson. (ed). Malden, MA: Polity, 2002.

The use of the ‘softened sovereignty’ concept was justified, but the concept was not as broad as its disciples had hoped. They turned a blind eye to the obvious: the sovereignty of the USA, China, India, Japan and other ‘old’ countries stayed strong, and new states (countries in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia) fought for the affirmation of their sovereignty, not putting up with its decline.

Nevertheless, the concept of ‘softened sovereignty’ prevailed in domestic political science during the 1990s and acquired passionate proponents in Russia⁶. The conjecture also played an important part. Skepticism towards sovereignty emerged at the time of Democratic Party rule in the USA (1993–2000), when intellectual liberalism could rely upon political liberalism.

The dominance of the liberal tradition resulted in the development of two schools. The first one was interested in researching world civil society⁷, the second one in world governance⁸. The intellectual framework of both schools was globalization, which towards the end of Bill Clinton’s administration was granted the status of semi-official foreign policy doctrine of the USA. The concept of globalization was extremely popular, but quite unstructured and amorphous⁹, providing the opportunity for both liberals and ‘soft’ realists to build on it in their research¹⁰.

Despite the interest of both schools in the concept of ‘softened sovereignty’, Western researchers carefully avoided this topic and were not willing to discuss the applicability of this concept to the USA itself¹¹. This situation

made researchers reluctant to express any ideas on the matter of ‘world politics’ as a notion¹².

The use of this term required a unification of spheres of foreign and domestic policy into one – the ‘unified world-political sphere’. But researchers showed no enthusiasm concerning this subject. Americans had their reasons: in this case the usage of the term would inevitably generate discussing about the coming of a world-empire age with the US at its center. Liberal intellectuals were not comfortable with this.

Western Europeans did not attempt to develop the idea of the ‘unified world-political sphere’ either. Aware of the consequences of supporting this approach, they avoided apologetics of the concept of ‘American benevolent hegemony’, which most educated Europeans by the 1990s had already started to dislike.

As a result, Western colleagues did not choose to clarify definitions. Accordingly, the notion of ‘world politics’ circulated in professional discourse de facto as a euphemism for something that in the early 2000s without any shame was called ‘American empire’.

There were no clear institutional conditions for developing world politics as an independent subdiscipline. High mobility and flexibility of research systems, regular changes in the subjects of scientific programs, as well as constant movement of scholars between universities and research centers discouraged the process. In the end, the research of the USA, Great Britain and Australia, essentially related to the subject of world politics, evolved within a framework of globalization analysis. It is these works in

⁶The book «Beyond Westphalia. A State Sovereignty and International Intervention» (G. Lyons and M. Mastanduno (eds). Baltimore – London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) had a great impact on the Russian community of international experts and generated a number of conferences, articles and textbook chapters.

⁷The Rise of Neoliberalism and Institutional Analysis / J. Campbell and O. Pedersen (eds). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

⁸Shaw M. Theory of Global State. Globalization as an Unfinished Revolution. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

⁹Governance in a Globalizing World / J. Nye and J. Donahue (eds). Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2000; Irie A. Global Community. The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

¹⁰Globalization and Human Rights / A. Brysk (ed). Berkeley: [б.и.], 2002.

¹¹Faulks K. Political Sociology. Critical Introduction. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

¹²International Order and the Future of World Politics / T.V. Paul and J. Hall (eds). Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

these countries that made up what came to be known in Russia as world politics research.

Eschewing established theories, foreign authors preferred ‘symptomatic analysis’. They emphasized certain aspects of reality, compared them to the bipolar period, stressed the growing significance of some tendencies and the decline of others. Democratization and social aspects fell within the remit of liberal researchers, while research on global governance lay with the moderate realists (J. Nye, R. Keohane, G. Allison, G. Donahue).

No one in the West set out to specifically craft a theory, but it was easy to find features of world politics in papers on globalization, such as: the political – the democratization of totalitarian regimes and their ‘transition to democracy’¹³; the social – the creation of ‘global civil society’ through democratization of international politics and expanding the role of non-governmental actors in it; the institutional – the increasing role of global governance through the strengthening of universal international organizations, such as the UN, IMF, WTO along with such closed organizations as NATO¹⁴; the ideological – the spread of liberal values as an ethical and cultural foundation of future global civil society.

All globalization schools of research¹⁵ based their analysis on the acknowledgement of the victory of the US (for realists) or of ‘democracy’ (for liberals) in the confrontation with the USSR, on new opportunities for the West to influence the political situation in formerly closed-off countries (except China and some others), the necessity to take a ‘historical chance’, to reaffirm the prevailing role of the US (for realists) and of the ‘community of developed democracies’ (for liberals). In the

1990s Western schools intuitively tended to understand international relations as deriving from US domestic policy, and domestic affairs, *ice versa*, as a ‘transmuted sphere’ of Washington’s competence. In the 2000s this propensity became a fully conscious one¹⁶.

Researchers of globalization have recoded the main idea from Hedley Bull’s seminal work on world society as a union of the chosen – democratic countries – surrounded by the rest of the countries. It was given an aggressive and proselytizing tone. Democracy needed to be promoted around the globe with the promise of its worldwide victory. The limits of world society appeared to be congruent with the limits of the world, including not only democratic but also non-democratic countries of the world.

H. Bull’s understanding of world and international order had been also reversed. According to him, world order was a narrower concept than international order and included only the relations among the members of the world community. The international order according to H. Bull, includes the relations between all countries in the world – the “chosen” democracies, as well as the rest of the world.

In the globalization research of the 1990s world order meant the same thing as what H. Bull referred to as international order. It was believed that all the countries of the world were *de facto* part of it. The experts’ line of thought implied that the process of globalization and dominance of the ‘democratic core’ would force all the other subjects of international relations to determine their place in the system in reference to the mounting ‘world order’. It means that all international actors are objectively parts of the mentioned order.

¹³In Russia the field of transitology was developed by Melvil A. U. (Melvil A. U. Democratic Transits (theoretical and methodological aspects). M. 1999, also Ilyin M. V., Melvil A. U. Fedorov U. E., Democracy and Democratization // Polis. 1996. #5. Kapustin B. G. Discussed with the transitologists. Kapustin B. G. The End of Transitology? // Polis. 2001. #4. pp. 6–9; Postcommunism and Postmodernity // Polis. 2001. #5 pp. 23–24

¹⁴Governance in a Globalizing World.

¹⁵In the 2000s the decline of interest for globalization became obvious. The subject of globalization thus moves to the sphere of economic research, where it was supposed to be. The attitude towards globalization was quite critical. For instance: James H. The End of Globalization. Lessons from the Great Depression. Cambridge: The Harvard University Press, 2001.

¹⁶Cameron F. US Foreign Policy after the Cold War. Global Hegemon or Reluctant Sheriff. London – New York: Routledge, 2002.

Paradoxically, the new school, originally based on moderate and liberal of globalization research, started to lose its liberal nature while its proponents turned to the concept of 'democratic empire'. By the middle of the first decade of the 21 century it replaced most research on globalization.

Until the end of the 1990s the word 'empire' carried a tinge of negativity in the USA. It was used in relation to the USSR, emphasizing the repressive nature of the latter. Nowadays the usage of this term in American political science is quite neutral and similar to the one it had 10 years ago in Russian science among liberal and patriotic authors, meaning a certain type of political organization of a multi-ethnic society. In the new subject structure of political science, it was the issue of recourse to force and of transnational wars that became the most prominent. Unlike during the previous decade, the process of globalization lost its positive function: 9/11 showed the dangers of globalization, even for its very country of origin, which had made the most serious effort to promote it around the world. Within this framework formed a new direction of analysis of current international affairs related to the world-wide 'democratic empire', which according to American political scientists, the republican administration intended to build.

There were two groups of researchers within the 'democratic empire' approach: the apologetic and the critical one. The first group is quite small and analyses current affairs in the militant conformist spirit. The members of this group left behind all romantic illusions typical for researchers of global democratic society¹⁷, but rather adopted the idea of democracy's universal self-expansion. They changed two of

the most crucial premises of the old doctrine. The first one includes the thesis that the main actor of 'promoting democracy' should be the USA, not the 'society of democracies'. The second one says that the USA, not international organizations, should become the centerpiece of global governance¹⁸. The world became conflated with with the space of "natural" American leadership, while the idea of global democratic society has been transformed into the idea of total (totalitarian – according to T. Alekseeva, who rethought the usage of J. Talmon's term¹⁹) democracy.

The second group of critics is quite numerous. It recognizes the movement towards a 'global democratic empire', but does not accept it. This group includes serious researchers on international relations such as S. Brown, R. Falk, S. Talbot, etc.²⁰. They find the current situation favorable not only to the USA, but also to the process of world democratization in general. These scientists accept the logic of the 'unified world-political sphere', but criticize the policy of the US administration, which has taken too much responsibility without taking into account the interests of other countries, and especially the interests of its own allies²¹. Representatives of this approach are critical of the role that force can play in modern international politics without the complex use of political actions and cooperation with other countries. States cannot achieve their goals in international relations by military force alone. Moreover, force tends to disorient the US in questions of national security²².

Without going into specifics which are typical for analytical approaches of the 2000s, methodologically speaking, researchers of 'democratic imperialism' have not contributed

¹⁷Lawson S. *International Relations*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.

¹⁸Art R. *A Grand Strategy for America*. Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 2003. To compare: Bogaturov A. D., Kosolapov N. A., Khrustalev M. A. *Essays on theory and political analysis in international relations*, M., 2002. pp. 253–265.

¹⁹Talmon J. L. *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*. London: Secker and Wartburg, 1955.

²⁰Brown S. *The Illusion of Control. Force and Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*. Washington: The Brookings Institution Press, 2003; Falk R. *The Great Terror War*. New York: The Olive Branch Press, 2003.

²¹See also: Daalder I. and Lindsay J. *America Unbound. The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2003.

²²Byman D. and Waxman M. *The Dynamics of Coercion. American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

much to advance the subject of ‘world politics’. Only the authors of the structural realist branch of ‘pure’ international relations theory have demonstrated some conceptual and fundamental potential. Their papers contained methodological concepts, which helped identify the position of world politics inside a complicated intersection of disciplinary fields.

From the early 1990s the American and British structural realists, the successors of K. Waltz, grouped around B. Buzan and consciously stayed away from theoretical battles on the subject of globalization, ceding this argument to liberals and ‘soft’ realists of the global governance school. Neither did they enter into dialogue with either of the ‘democratic imperialism’ schools.

Distance from the mainstream allowed structural realists to save their skepticism for the ideas of the globalization school, as well as for the ‘democratic imperialism’ approach. Structural realists did not question globalization or the idea of American predominance, but they denied the ‘revolutionary’, ‘sacredly transformative’ nature of the former, stressing the transient character of the latter²³.

Exhilarated by being part of the mainstream, the researchers of global democratic society strove to underline the explosive nature of early 1990s world politics, thereby parting with the logic and evidence base of theory developed earlier, consequently undermining the justification of their own constructs.

Structural realists considered previously obtained knowledge of the international system with care and attention, which allowed them to perceive reality through balance of change and continuity in global phenomena. Owing to this fact, highly complicated developments of the 1990s and 2000s could be integrated into the context of long-term trends and tendencies.

Similar to researchers of globalization and ‘democratic imperialism’, structural realists did not try to conceptualize world politics. However, their analytical position objectively required them to lock together vertical (his-

torico-political) and horizontal (socio-political) parts in order to arrive at a synthetic understanding of the phenomenon of world politics.

The theoretical context of intellectual life in Russia was strongly influenced by Western development. Russian processes were rather different from Western ones and quite complicated in their own manner. Research on globalization appeared in Russia quite late (not earlier than 1997–1998), first gained popularity and later lost it, the same way this occurred in the West early in the 21st century. That was the first case of synchronization of Russian and Western scientific interests.

However, home-grown ideas about globalization did not replace research on world politics. In the latter half of the 1990s in a number of Russian universities new institutions were created and prompted to work on the subject of world politics. Thanks to this, world politics was cast out and reduced to a proto-discipline. If in the West globalization diluted the subject matter of world politics, in Russia it became a part of its research object. Consequently, in Western countries the waning of interest towards globalization led to world politics being downgraded as a subject. In Russia, nevertheless, there was no such correlation. On the contrary, decreased popularity of globalization as a topic only sharpened the need for a methodological justification of the ‘world politics’ approach.

Under these circumstances, the absence of relevant concepts in Western science did not leave any room for simply using foreign experience. There was much independent work ahead, based on various contributions to Russian science over the past ten years, including the latest domestic developments.

Over the last ten years the context of world politics research was marked with the existence of three separate groups of authors. The first and the most productive one was a group of ‘pragmatists’, which included representatives of both schools of political sociology and his-

²³Donnelly J. *Realism and International Relations*. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003; Buzan B., Jihnes C. and Little R. *The Logic of Anarchy. Neorealism to Structural Realism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

torico-political strands interested in the issue of world politics. The pool of authors was not related to their affiliation with any particular research institution and the group itself was quite heterogenic. Some of them had a critical comprehension of reality (N.A. Kosolapov, A.G. Volodin, G.K. Shirokov, V.B. Kuvaldin, B.G. Kapustin, A.C. Panarin), others tried to approach it with formal neutrality (M.A. Cheshkov, N. A. Simonia, V.G. Khoros, A.D. Bogaturov), and the third group would make peace with it (A.U. Melvil, M.M. Lebedeva, V.V. Inozemtsev, V.V. Mikheev, V.M. Kulagin).

Reading the new situation differently, all researchers sought to find a novel alternative of conceptualization that would be true to reality with no intention to 'rebel' or isolate themselves from it. The idea of world politics, modified through methodological synthesis, was a key component that appeared at the intersection of a number of views.

In fact, the 'pragmatists' were confronted by 'reactionary fundamentalists' – members of the vulgar geopolitics group formed around A. Dugin. Stressing their national patriotic identity, this group is strongly affected by Western ('the new' American and 'the old' German) political science, but above all else by the school of brazen geopolitics of Z. Brzezinski²⁴. The disastrous abundance of Russian and American literature on vulgar geopolitics of the aforementioned authors still shapes Russia's intellectual environment, especially in the regions, where the understanding of world politics as a concept is limited.

Other researchers who joined the 'reactionary fundamentalists' were a group of profes-

sional conservative historians who found it possible to analyze contemporary international relations by means of 'literary-editorial correction' of the concepts that had been used by the Russian academic community from the 1940s to the 1980s. These papers were based on severely edited versions of 'History of Diplomacy', the three editions of the 'History of International Relations and Foreign Policy of the USSR' textbook, and two volumes of 'Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union'. Without a doubt, the popularity of these books had to do with the lack of new fundamental works on international relations. It is difficult to admit this, but all attempts to understand international relations of the last several decades failed in the methodological and substantial sense²⁵.

The third group of authors included those espousing a historico-political approach. They did not reject political science, but in terms of methodology felt themselves more comfortable with liberal 'political historicism'. This school enriched the science of the 1990s with a number of valuable works. Their members worked at the Institute of World History and Institute of Russian History RAS under the supervision and direct involvement of A.O. Chubarian, M.M. Narinsky, L.N. Nechinsky, A.M. Filatov, N.P. Egorov, Art. A. Ulyanin²⁶. Their works were an important step towards an optimal combination of classical history with political science and the prevailing methodology of history.

Finally, there is a group of researchers working at the intersection of interests of the 'pragmatists' and the advocates of the historico-political approach which is hard to clearly identify. They tend to research world politics, but also write classical historical works. In

²⁴Dugin A. *The Basics of Geopolitics*. M., 2000; Brzezinski Z. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*. M., 1999. We need to separate the vulgar geopolitical publicists from respectable academic researchers on geopolitics (Mironenko N., Kolosov V., Zamyatin N., partly Ilyin M), as well as a talented geopolitical writer Tsimbursky V.

²⁵Protopopov A. S. and others. *The History of International Relations and Foreign Policy of Russia (1648–2000)*. M., 2001; Ivanova I. I. *The History of International Relations from the Ancient Times to the End of World War I*. Textbook. Part 1. Vladivostok, 2001.

²⁶Narinsky M. M. *The History of International Relations (1945–1975)*. M., 2004; *The Soviet Foreign Policy During the 'Cold War' (1945–1985)*. New Edition. / Edt.: Nezhinsky L.A. M., 1995; 'Cold War': New Approaches, New Documents / Edt.: Narinsky M. M., M., 1995; Chubarian A. O. *The New History of the 'Cold War' // The New and Contemporary History*. 1997. № 6; *Stalin Decade of the 'Cold War'* / Edt.: Egorova N. I., Chubarian A. O., Gaiduk I. V. M., 1999; Zlobin A. A., Kleimenova N. E., Sidorov A. U., *Syllabus for the course 'The History of International Relations and Foreign Policy of Russia (1648–1945)'*. M., 2000.

Moscow this group is represented by a large conglomerate of authors of the published 'Systemic History of International Relations, 4 volume edition' (M.A. Khrustalev, T.A. Shakleina, A.D. Voskresensky, V.I. Batuk, B.F. Martynov, S.I. Lunev, P.E. Smirnov, D.V. Policanov, etc.)²⁷.

The international relations department of Saint-Petersburg State University under the supervision of K.K. Khudoley is focused on combining political science with historically oriented educational programs and research. Other Saint-Petersburg specialists who work within the same framework are A.S. Kuteinikov, S.L. Tkachenko, N.A. Lomagin, V.E. Kuznetsov.

The following notable historians successfully combine the historico-political approach and methods of political science in their research – A.S. Khodnev and V. A. Baburkin (in Yaroslavl), G. N. Novikov (in Irkutsk). Although there have been some complications, the Volgograd school is still being formed and is represented by A.S. Kubyshkin, I.I. Kurilla and S.V. Golunov.

There is a much more ambiguous vision (especially in terms of methodology) imposed by multiple books of international relations of the department of Nizhny Novgorod State University. There work the followers of O.A. Kolobov – D.G. Baluyev and M.I. Ryhtik, on subjects at the intersection of political science and history.

The lack (or absence) of specialized works on the subject complicates the assessment of educational and scientific processes at the departments of international relations of the Far-Eastern (Vladivostok), Ural (Ekaterinburg), and Tomsk state universities.

Although the research context of world politics theory is determined by three platforms (groups) mentioned above and a scientific

group at the intersection of these fields, the research itself was performed by a small group of authors working in different professional areas unrelated to each other. Together they could probably have achieved a lot, they could have built an instrumental concept of world politics. But their separation did not allow them to create a complete picture of world politics. Political sociology had better institutional organization and was the first to make an attempt to create a general vision of the subject, but the results were still quite fragmented²⁸.

The resulting scheme turned out to be structurally sound. As to its substance, it came to be excessively argumentative with a strict selection of materials typical for foreign schools of global civil society. This 'disadvantage' could be easily turned into an 'edge'. Thanks to the school's research, Russian readers can familiarize themselves with Western analytical norms, understand the importance of issues related to personality, political psychology, foreign policy and institutional structure of international relations. What is more important, it accepts—typically for world politics research—an emphasis on freedom, individual rights, morals and cultural distinctions.

At the same time the understanding of world politics offered by political sociology neglected the world as a whole with its controversies, systemic phenomena and political intricacies of international cooperation. The approach of political sociology happened to be rather formalist regarding the 'realistic' notions such as national (state) interest, power, force, etc. It underestimated the necessity to relate the conclusions made after specific events to the current state of international relations, which was also typical for the school of political sociology²⁹.

Recognizing the necessity to perceive world politics as a phenomenon distinct from international relations with no satisfactory differen-

²⁷The 4 volumes of 'Systemic History of International Relations' have finally been published by the Scientific and Educational Forum on International Relations, which constitutes the first Russian attempt at rethinking the subject matter of a traditional historico-political discipline from the point of view of political science. 'Systemic History of International Relations in 4 Parts' 1918–2003. Events and Documents Vol. 1, 2. M.: Moskovsky Rabochiy, 2000; Vol. 3. M.: NOFMO, 2003; Vol. 4. M.: NOFMO 2004.

²⁸Lebedeva M. M. Works mentioned above.

²⁹Tsigankov P. A. Political Science and the Science of International Relations: the Issue of Separation of Object Fields // Socio-political journal. 1995. № 5. pp. 57–65.

tiation of their object fields created an impression of an invasion, an attempt to change the 'genetic code' of 'international relations' as a specialization. Meanwhile, research on international relations was inclined towards fundamental sociology and general political science could detach it from reality which could lead to losing applied techniques of international relations analysis that remain the most required practices of foreign policy.

This line of argumentation was not persuasive enough. The main premise of political sociology for separating world politics from international relations was the thesis of 'subject matter change'. It was based on a fair observation that nowadays the main subjects of international relations are not only governments of countries themselves, but transnational corporations, international organizations, movements, dispersed network subjects³⁰ and individuals altogether known as non-governmental actors.

Certainly, the thesis of the changed nature of the subject matter was irrefutable. But there was no need to prove it was wrong. One thing that needed to be called in question was its novelty. Transnational corporations had become key players of international politics towards the end of the 1960s. Starting from the mid 1980s this idea was extremely common for domestic publications on the subject³¹.

Another key argument was the fact that the school of political sociology referred to the world compressed in time and space as its main premise. The consequence is that events in one part of the world are objectively dependent on the processes in other parts, making state sovereignty even more symbolic.

The skeptics had accepted this conclusion, but once again noticed the lack of its novelty. The first concepts of interdependence in international relations date back to the late 1950s.

There was no productive academic discussion, because all authors preferred to write and publish their works separately, without interac-

tion or networking with each other. This situation was similar to the fragmented and puzzled practice of Western science. The situation was not the most desirable one, because with the tradition of political theory still weak in Russia this tendency would have led to a waste of intellectual potential.

A new synthetic platform, which seamlessly aggregated all positions developed in the framework of various schools, including the warring ones, into one instrumental concept could have been an alternative. Maybe this type of approach would not seem to be essential, but for the sake of clarifying the situation and performing a proper application study, this strategy could have been used. Moreover, many Western colleagues were also working in the similar sense of 'synthetic revisionism'. For instance, the analytical matrix of J. Ikenberry³² built at the intersection of historical, political, institutional and globalized approaches is relatively productive in international relations analysis.

Although the 'symptomatic' descriptions of world politics are well developed in Western science and adequately reflected in the works of the domestic school of political sociology, this is not the best place to start from concerning the validation of the concept. First of all, substantially they are particular, fragmented, accidental cases in the postmodern sense. Therefore we can not consider them as fundamental, and suitable as basis for a theory.

Secondly, in the Russian professional community the mentioned 'symptoms' are not fully accepted as elements of a theory. Specifics of the Russian intellectual thought based on the transfusion of classical German philosophy, Berdyaev's totality of consciousness and eighty-year-long 'Leninization' make the mind more receptive for general 'big' ideas.

Following the particular logic of domestic perception of professional environment, the following alternative of the concept of world politics is presented in 7 theses.

³⁰Networks and Netwars / H. Arquilla and D. Ronfeld (eds). Santa Monica: Rand, 2001.

³¹The System, Structure and Development Process of Modern International Relations / Edt.: Gantman M. M., Science, 1984.

³²Ikenberry J. After Victory. Institutions, Strategic Restraints and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars. Princeton, 2001.

1. Thesis one. Epistemology. The most persuasive and clear thought is that world politics characterizes a new qualitative state of the international environment where the main actors of interaction are traditional (states) and new (the rest) subjects. This thesis is considered to be the fundamental one. Firstly, because of its rich philosophical and semantic weight. Secondly, for its comprehensibility for the main schools in Russia, starting from liberal sociologists to radical Marxists.

This does not mean that the suggested interpretation is universal. However, the next step to be made to overcome the 'methodological handicraft' is a full-fledged adequate scientific discussion with common terminology and methodological framework. Over the past 20 years neither the West, nor Russia has proven the fruitfulness of postmodernism, so there is no further need to adhere to its logic and methodological ('anti-methodological') base.

The fact that the notion of 'world politics' embodies a new qualitative state of the international environment is methodologically and epistemologically crucial for the concept, considering that it allows to avoid identification of world politics with international relations of the period right before the 1990s.

Posing the question in such a manner, it is possible to avoid the attacks from the proponents of the historico-political approach. It would be clear for the critics that the thesis about the new qualitative state of international environment 'works': the new state shows different patterns of behavior of the world's leading countries in two seemingly similar cases: in the 1970s (with a low chance of a nuclear threat) and with the same conditions in the 1990s.

This scheme holds the potential to incorporate two symptomatic tendencies ('change of subject' and 'compression of the world') so popular among political sociologists, but less prominent among researchers of the political and historical approach. It is undeniable that two of these tendencies fostered development of the new state of the environment, but can not fully demonstrate its particular characteristics.

2. Thesis two. The parameters of a new quality. Novelty is determined by the fact that the

estimation of the current state of international environment as a whole is more important than the evaluation of its select actors, even if they are the most powerful ones (old or new ones, democratic or authoritarian, national or transnational). Metaphorically speaking, the environment is like the grass breaking through the 'concrete' of community of states, twisting around them and in a way limiting and subordinating their actions.

Of course, the quality of the administration in Washington whether it is forceful and nationalist or moderate and liberal is of importance. But the environment is more important for international relations because it shapes the way the environment will respond to the incoming American impulses.

From the standpoint of world politics the key parameters of analysis are: the features of evolving armament systems and the speed of distribution of technology production worldwide; the index of transnationalisation of international economics; the features of the world cyberspace, including global systems of missile guidance; limits of the spheres with unified understanding of morals and law; the indicators of transport (including military transport) accessibility of the planet; ecological conditions and finally the balance of earth/space activities (fortunately hidden from political analysts).

The following thesis is rooted in the analysis of world politics, but it will not hurt to complete it with a historico-political grounding.

The establishment of world politics is related to the tendency of densification of international environment and rising of transparency for the exchange of the impulses of power among different actors. Fifty years ago the environment was not so dense and states had more freedom of action. In Western Asia this phenomenon was described back in 1996, but the author of the paper considered that to be a regional case, without referring to the worldwide trends. Something that would be a proper thing to do nowadays.

The tendency for the densification of the international environment has been forming for centuries. On the one hand, there is the mutual interdependence of states, limited free-

dom of action under pressure of restrictions and self-restrictions. On the other, there is the growing impact of external factors on domestic affairs.

The mentioned restrictions and self-restrictions had a different nature. In the Europe of the 1950s–1980s it was the ‘block system’. At the same time in Eastern Asia restrictions came from the highly active small countries, which were manipulating the fear of powerful countries to provoke a ‘big war’ to solve their local issues. In the 1990s the universal tool of densification of the environment became the process of financial, economical and informational homogeneity.

3. Thesis three. Gnoseology. In a way globalization meant the densification of the environment itself, although there is another opinion that considers them to be different phenomena. Much more important is the fact that globalization is not only an organic part of the school of political and historical approach, but also easily fits into the logic of world politics. Inherently, globalization is the process of establishing the new quality of international environment, and world politics is the result of this process. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider globalization as a tool for transformation of traditional international relations into world politics. In this manner scientific interests of both historical and socio-political schools find common ground.

Accordingly, from the gnoseological standpoint world politics is nothing but a current stage of an institute we call international relations responsible for relations of independent states. There is a gnoseological relationship between world politics and international relations, although the first one recently obtained a significant field for research.

4. Thesis four. The difference of objects. No complete clarified definition of world politics could be found neither in Western, nor in domestic research papers. Although to find a definition would mean to free world politics of its dependence on the proponents of traditional theory of international relations. The search for the definition inevitably affects both the context of world politics and international relations. It would be reasonable to revisit the

differences in subject matter between world politics and traditional international relations.

According to traditional theory of international relations and the sovereignty principle of non-intervention there is a strict separation between foreign and national affairs of states. From a legal standpoint the object of discussion was solely interaction between countries, but not the way these countries treat their citizens. Correspondingly, the object of research was the interaction between foreign policies of particular states.

The situation shifted in the 1960s. Thanks to the expansion of the systems approach one of the most important ideas was that the qualities of international relations are irreducible to a sum of foreign policies of various countries. Respectively, the object of research was not only that sum of interactions, but consistent patterns of development of the world system as a whole. According to systems approach, the latter has specific autonomous features underlying its unique nature. On top of that, there was a new element of the object of research, the so-called global issues of international relations. Some of them are: arms control, energy supply, underdevelopment of former colonies, cultural exchange, humanitarian aid, etc.

As a result, the main objects of research in international relations in the early 1990s were the following. The first one - the political relations among the traditional and the new subjects of international interaction regarding their actions towards each other. The second one was intersubjective cooperation concerning global issues. The third one had to do with the autonomous qualities of the system of international relations as a whole (qualities of the systemic level).

The new international political reality of the 1990s led to a sharp shift in interaction of subjects of the international system. Not only the new subjects of interaction, but also states themselves were getting into different relations, including their own and other countries’ policies. The latter practice has received moral and partly political legitimacy.

It would be reasonable to say that the estimation of internal policies of other countries

has been a common practice in international relations for centuries. It is so, but since the Westphalian system had been established it became illegal to invade the territory of another country and could be possible only in exceptional cases. The situation significantly changed in the 1990s: intervention turned into a new norm of behavior – a rule that claimed to become a universal one, especially when supported by NATO with its military force. The 1990s were crucial for legitimization of the right for intervention – something that was unlawful according to the Westphalian norms and considered as an intrusion into the internal workings of sovereign states. Only in the 1990s the principle of sovereignty was openly and systematically put in question multiple times. It was then that the principle got its international political and legal rationale³³.

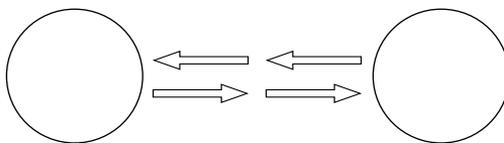
In 1992 the leaders of the Russian Federation and the USA signed the Camp David Declaration and the Washington charter of Russian-American partnership and friendship, documents thought to be inconceivable before. Most of these documents included modified obligations of the Russian counterpart to carry out its domestic policy in conformity with the new political principles of democracy and human rights, collaborating with the USA and other foreign partners. The interesting part of it was not that domestic issues were discussed with the US (multiple times during unofficial meetings), but that Moscow, in fact, acknowledged this practice of international interaction as a norm.

As can be seen, the new object of international relations was domestic policy, along with traditional exceptionally foreign political interaction. Before that, international relations took place on the surface or 'outer rim', but from the 1990s onwards it started to affect the whole scope of state policies.

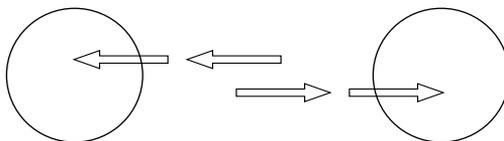
The object of international interaction at once drastically changed and this is when the new subject of research appeared and gave start to a new discipline. In respect to Russia, the establishment of the new discipline of world politics dates back to 1993.

Picture 1

Graphic representation of subject interaction for traditional international relations (a) and world politics (b)



a) The interaction of actors according to traditional international relations. The impulses of mutual influence stopped at the 'outer rim' of relations (interaction of foreign policies).



b) The interaction of actors according to world politics. The impulses of mutual influence freely spread throughout foreign and domestic policies of subjects.

5. Thesis five. Definition. Therefore if traditional international relations are the relations of states concerning their policies towards each other and global issues, then world politics is a sphere of undivided interaction among subjects of international relations with regard to their mutual actions and global issues as well as individual policies of each actor with reference to domestic issues and situations.

In this context humanitarian interventions cease to be an anomaly outside rational theoretical justification. They are showed as specific methods of regulation, aiming to become a universal norm at the stage when traditional international relations are transforming into relations in the sphere of world politics.

Obviously, the subject matter of world politics is wider, more heterogenic and complex than the one of traditional international relations. The question is if there is any chance of international relations being 'absorbed by the new discipline of world politics? I would not completely rule this possibility out. At the same time, this perspective is quite questionable if we accept the existence of a number of unpredictable factors and obstacles.

Along with the tendency of 'overcoming sovereignty' emerged the counter-tendency of

³³Details in: Bogaturov A. Modern International Order // International Trends. 2003. № 1.

its consolidation. The passive acceptance of sovereignty dying out by the Russian authorities of the 1990s was reversed and denied in the early 2000s. In 2003, Vladimir Putin offered a negative view of the American-British occupation of Iraq. This opinion was supported by a great number of states. It means that the merger of foreign and domestic policies is unlikely to become a major trend, although this trend will probably become more present around the globe.

It appears that in the foreseeable future world politics, having grown out of the science of international relations, will continue to develop as a close subdiscipline, partly dependent on traditional international relations in its subject matter and more importantly in its methodological approach to verification.

6. Thesis six. Verification. Let us not beat around the bush: the traditional science of international relations as well as world politics are vulnerable to criticism. Yet the ‘old school’ of international relations with all its downsides (such as conservatism, prejudice towards sociological analysis) has some serious advantages.

Political sociology is the origin of research on world politics but it does not have its own results verification tool. The only possible instrument is opinion polls. They serve as a

means of assessment of the political environment. If the procedure is performed consistently it can prove or refute analytical conclusions.

The old historico-political science of international relations of MGIMO-IMEMO uses the method of retrospective comparison as a tool of verification. It is less sustainable than the sociological method mentioned above, but it allows us to validate conclusions of research even if it happens over time. In light of the above, a need for revising the ideas and tendencies manifests itself within a certain time period (at least once in 15 years).

World politics in the current condition, especially being isolated in its own field of research from the science of international relations, does not have a verification mechanism at all. It can not use sociological tools to measure the state of the global political environment on the planetary scale while rejecting the historico-political approach.

7. Thesis seven. The level of subject matter. Although it is not difficult to distinguish the two disciplines mentioned above at the object level, this task becomes much more difficult at the subject level.

Without repeating the outdated subject lists of Ministry of Education state standards, let us

Table 1.
The subject matter of international relations and world politics

International Relations (IR)	World Politics	Shared subject matter
Historico-political aspects of IR	Sociological and politico-psychological aspects of IR	Philosophy and IR theory
Arms control, proliferation issues	Control over international activities of criminal networks	International negotiations on combating international criminal networks
Hard security	Soft security	Homeland security and transnational threats
Official Intergovernmental organizations (UN, NATO, CSTO)	Unofficial international organizations, including network-type organizations ('network' anti-globalism, Amnesty International, Greenpeace)	International organizations of transitional or mixed type (G8)
International integration	Fundamentalist movements and NGOs	Cross-border cooperation of any kind
International ecological cooperation	Ecological movements	Eco-holism
State and intergovernmental participation in conflict resolution	Participation of transnational corporations in development	Global aspects of the "development gap"
Unification of international human rights standards	Comparative human rights law	Codification of activity of human rights institutions

look at the table below with three columns: the first one shows the subject matter for international relations, the second one for world politics and the third shows their shared subject matter.

It would be easy to expand this table into a more detailed one, but the comparisons provided are already convincing. They confirm that the subject matter of international relations and world politics are highly specific, but also objectively interconnected.

This is why the optimal mode of interaction between international relations and world politics is thought to be their balanced and equal development alongside each other alongside one another as subdisciplines in the future and as analytical schools at present. Every field has its flaws and advantages.

Whether the demo-imperialistic world will ever come to be or not, leading states ranging from the USA and France to China and Russia will not yield any ground. On the contrary, the global threat of terrorist networks and corruptness of transnational financial networks supported by drug money could become the necessary incentive for all states to join efforts in the fight against transnational

criminal networks thereby hardly diminishing the 'state-centrism' of the international system. This prompts us to be both more alert and coolheaded about the various interpretations of international relations theory's future evolution.

* * *

The discussion on the subject of world politics in Russia is a domestic phenomenon mainly related to an insufficient number of international relations experts, as well as its excessive politicization. World politics as a subdiscipline is to a greater extent established through the state standards of the Ministry of Education rather than through dialogue and fundamental works on the subject. These fundamental works could be used in applied analysis and would help the scientific community validate theoretical arguments or refute them. The current situation demonstrates that the process of establishing a Russian international relations school of research is incomplete. The acceleration of this process is one of the principal tasks of this paper, which together with the release of the first book on world politics has unofficially started this process in Russia.

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