

Review of: "Geopolitical constructs of international politics - their cultural & ideological roots"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The article aims to integrate a broader historical and cultural context into the geopolitical constructs that emerged in early modern Europe. The author intends to provide valuable insights and potential solutions for contemporary international issues related to the transformation of the international system, while also challenging the prevailing geopolitical perspective in the field of International Relations (IR). However, both the abstract and the introduction lack clarity in articulating this objective. The article is unclear and makes it challenging to grasp its core purpose.

The introduction should clearly outline the research objectives, the hypothesis or primary argument, the article's structure, the methodology employed, and the relevance of the study. While the author grounds the research in the geopolitical debate about the cultural and ideological constructs of international politics, there is a noticeable absence of a dedicated literature review section. The author should review the bibliography and justify why this article makes a novel contribution in this area of study. Incorporating references from the realm of critical geopolitics could substantially enhance this aspect of the study. Notably, several relevant scholars have previously explored the modern geopolitical gaze.

Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, London, Routledge, 1996.

John Agnew, *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*, London, Routledge, 1998.

Klaus Dodds, *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

The author delves into pre-modern experiences beyond the European region, exploring how traditional empires managed their interrelations. However, the author fails to acknowledge the distinct nature of empires, which typically sought universal dominion. Consequently, the argument is feeble in this section because empires are not comparable with the modern state. In addressing the characteristics of traditional empires and how they organized space, I recommend the author consult the following literature: Robert G. Wesson, *The Imperial Order*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967. Additionally, while the article mentions the Chinese system, particularly the concept of "tianxia," it is essential to highlight that Ancient China, particularly during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, exhibits significant parallels with the European experience, enabling certain comparisons. In this regard, I suggest the author review Victoria Tin-bor Hui, *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

The article examines the pre-Westphalian system in Europe and contends that the Church held supreme authority. However, this assertion is not accurate, as by the end of the Middle Ages, the influence of the Church had significantly waned due to the ascendance of monarchies. The peak of Church influence, exemplified by Pope Innocent III, marked a

high point, but the subsequent decline of the institution is evident. The author displays a deficiency in understanding the formation of the modern state in Europe, the emergence of the multi-state system, and the diminishing role of the Church and the Holy Roman Empire. I recommend a thorough review of the following bibliography to rectify these historical inaccuracies:

Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: A history of power from the beginning to AD 1760*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Henrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994.

Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Jonathan Daly, *The Rise of Western Power: A Comparative History of Western Civilization*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 55-86.

Markus Fischer, "Feudal Europe, 800-1300: Communal Discourse and Conflictual Practices," *International Organization*, Vol. 48, Nº 2, 1992, pp. 427-466.

Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction*, London, Hutchinson, 1978.

Joseph R. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011.

John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Stephen Hobden, *International Relations and Historical Sociology: Breaking Down Boundaries*, London, Routledge, 1998.

Concerning European colonization in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, the author presents an erroneous interpretation by asserting that it eroded the fundamental underpinnings of the Westphalian system. To facilitate a more informed geopolitical analysis of the colonization process, I recommend consulting the following sources:

Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of Jus Publicum Europaeum*, New York, Telos Press, 2006.

For insights from postcolonial and decolonial perspectives:

Cheryl McEwan, *Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Development*, Londres, Routledge, 2018.

Sidaway, James D., "Decolonizing Border Studies?," *Geopolitics*, Vol. 24, Nº 1, 2019, pp. 270-275.

Additionally, it is essential to note the absence of consideration for the anarchic nature of the international system in the analysis, which makes confusing the argumentation and results in misconceptions. The author appears to conflate changes in the organization of the international system with the erosion of the Westphalian system. To gain a deeper understanding of international anarchy, I suggest the following readings:

John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2014. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1979.

Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993.

While the text examines changes in the structure of the international system, it falls short in elucidating the underlying drivers of these transformations. It refers to competition among major powers but fails to delve into the primary factors

fueling this rivalry. The argumentation in this regard lacks clarity and coherence, particularly in its comparison of the current global political stage with that of Europe in 1648—an analogy that requires further explanation. To enhance the author's understanding of shifts in the international structure, I recommend consulting the following literature:

Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

William R. Thompson, *On Global War: Historical-Structural Approaches to World Politics*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1988.

Abramo F. K. Organski, *World Politics*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.

Ronald L. Tammen et al., *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*, New York, Seven Bridges, 2000.

The author's proposal in section five lacks clarity and requires further development. The text refers to "spheres of influence" without adequately defining this concept or exploring its historical origins. It is important to note that the term "sphere of influence" originated in the 19th century and was initially employed by Russia. Valuable insights into the historical context of this concept can be found in the following sources:

George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question*, London, Frank Cass, 1967, pp. 326 ff.

Curzon, *Frontiers*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1907, p. 42.

Moreover, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the notion of spheres of influence, the author should consider examining the contributions of Karl Haushofer and Carl Schmitt. They introduced concepts such as "Panideen" and "Großraum," which envisioned a multipolar world organized around different great powers and their respective spheres of influence. Relevant literature includes:

Karl Haushofer, *Geopolitik der Panideen*, Berlin, Kurt Vowinckel, 1931.

Carl Schmitt, "The Großraum Order of International Law with a Ban on Intervention for Spatially Foreign Powers: A Contribution to the Concept of Reich in International Law (1939-1941)," in Carl Schmitt, *Writings on War*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2011, pp. 75-124.

Schmitt, "Großraum versus universalism: the international legal struggle over the Monroe Doctrine," in Stephen Legg (ed.), *Spatiality, Sovereignty and Carl Schmitt: Geographies of the nomos*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2011, pp. 46-54

Stuart Elden, "Reading Schmitt geopolitically: nomos, territory and Großraum," in Stephen Legg (ed.), *Spatiality, Sovereignty and Carl Schmitt: Geographies of the nomos*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2011, pp. 91-105.

Mika Luoma-Aho, "Geopolitics and grosspolitics: from Carl Schmitt to E. H. Carr and James Burnham," in Louiza Odysseos and Fabio Petito (eds.), *The International Political thought of Carl Schmitt: Terror, liberal war and the crisis of global order*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2007, pp. 36-55.

John O' Loughlin and Herman van der Wusten, "Political Geography of Panregions," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 80, N° 1, 1990, pp. 1-20.

The conclusions drawn in the article do not effectively align with the central argument and the content presented in the body of the text. The author refers to the concept of multipolarity without providing references or critically examining this

concept and its application to the current global landscape. It is essential to acknowledge academic works that challenge the notion of multipolarity. Here are some pertinent references for consideration:

Yan Xuetong, "A Bipolar World is More Likely Than a Unipolar or Multipolar One," *China-US Focus*.

<https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/a-bipolar-world-is-more-likely-than-a-unipolar-or-multipolar-one/>

F. Lukyanov (ed.), "Война и мир XXI века. Международная стабильность и баланс нового типа," Россия в глобальной политике. <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/vojna-i-mir-xxi-veka-mezhdunarodnaya-stabilnost-i-balans-novogo-tipa/>

Sergei Karaganov, "Год побед. Что дальше?," Россия в глобальной политике. <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/god-pobed-chto-dalshe/>

Cliff Kupchan, "Bipolarity is Back: Why It Matters," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 44, № 4, 2022, pp. 123-139.

Øystein Tunsjø, *The return of bipolarity in world politics: China, the United States, and geostructural realism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2019.

Avery Goldstein, "US–China Rivalry in the twenty-first century: Déjà vu and Cold War II," *China International Strategy Review*, Vol. 2, 2020, pp. 48-62.

Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "China's Military Base in Djibouti: A Microcosm of China's Growing Competition with the United States and New Bipolarity," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 29, № 125, 2020, pp. 731-747.

The article falls short in delivering the promised analytical contribution as outlined in the abstract and the introductory section. It fails to achieve its stated objective. The argumentation within the text is marked by a lack of clarity, confusion, and a deficiency in coherence, with evident gaps in knowledge regarding the current state of research in the field. Additionally, there is a notable deficit in the bibliography. This article needs a substantial and comprehensive revision. In summary, it does not meet the scientific standards required for publication in an academic journal.