
GEOGRAPHY, REGION, SPACE: THE EVOLUTION AND REFLECTION OF GEOPOLITICAL THEORY

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ABSTRACT. This paper compares the development of geopolitical theories and divides them into three categories according to their characteristics: offensive, defensive, and normative. *Time* is a dimension that must be considered in any theory. This paper argues that geospatial characteristics and national development methods determine the changes in geopolitical competition, and force's effectiveness is an intervention variable. The three variables lead to the evolution of geopolitical theory from conflict to defence to institutional cooperation. The emergence of virtual spaces such as the Internet has changed the contradiction between limited geographical space and unlimited national development in geo-competition and provided an opportunity for geopolitical theory to break through power theory. The complexity of the geo-environment that countries face when participating in geo-competition determines the necessity of establishing a united geopolitical view. This paper divides a country's diplomatic environment into three categories: geo-environment, regional environment, and space environment. Distinguishing these three environments can help to think about the focus of a country's foreign strategy. The country must make a difference in the geo-environment, be active in the regional environment, and work hard in the space environment.

Keywords: geopolitical evolution, geographical environment, national development model

The development of geopolitical theory

THE GEOPOLITICAL THEORY IS A PRODUCT OF THE TIMES, AND its definition changes accordingly with the development of the times. Rudolf Kjellen, who was the originator of the concept of geopolitics, defined it as "the theory of the state as a geographical organism or a spatial phenomenon" (Weigert 1942: 106-9). German geopolitics scientist Karl

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Haushofer believes that geopolitics is a national science about national interests, which takes geography as a broad basis (Gyorgy 1944: 183). Richard Hartshorne defines *geopolitical theory* as geography used for profit-seeking purposes other than intellectual purposes (Hartshorne 1939: 404). The above definitions have in common that they link the content of the geographical environment with the use of political power and analyse the influence of the geographical environment on national politics. However, with the development of the times, the ability of human beings to shape the geographical environment has been continuously enhanced, and the geographical environment has also been continuously shaped by political power. Therefore, this paper defines *geopolitical theory* as the interactive analysis of the geographical environment and political processes. This interaction is dynamic and two-way. Geographical environment includes objective geographical features and man-made environments endowed with economic and social significance.

Geopolitical thought can be traced back to Aristotle, Strabo, Bodin, Montesquieu, Kant, and Hegel; for example, Aristotle, in his *Politics*, uses geographical factors to explain why the Minoan city-state can become a hegemonic country: "Crete dominates the sea, and the coastal areas of the entire island are densely covered with cities transplanted by the Greeks; its west is not far from the Peloponnese Peninsula, approaching the Cape Trio and Rhodes on the corner of Asia (southwest) to the east (Aristotle 1965: 93). Geopolitics was still in its infancy, and a perfect theoretical system had not yet been formed. Friedrich Ratzel published 1897 his "Political Geography", which is considered a symbol of the formation of geopolitical theory.

According to the characteristics of geopolitical theories, this paper divides them into three categories: offensive geopolitical theory, defensive geopolitical theory, and institutional cooperation geopolitical theory. By sorting out the development of geopolitical theory, we find the evolutionary logic behind it and discuss the future development direction of geopolitical theory.

(1) Offensive geopolitical theory

Traditional geopolitics is attached to power politics, focusing on the impact of an objective geographical environment on national power and discussing how to obtain world dominance through geographical factors.

Theoretical Name	State organism theory, Living space theory	Heartland theory	Sea power theory	Marginal zone theory	Sky power theory
Representative	Lazell, Chiron Haushofer	Mackinder	Mahan	Nicholas Spykman	Alexander Seversky
Key Concepts	State organisms; living space; absolute rule	heartland	sea power	fringe	Air rights
Concern	land	land	Ocean	Combine land and sea	Sky
Common Feature	Geo-confrontation, zero-sum game, state centre, war effectiveness				

Table 1: Traditional geopolitical theories

The state organism theory was proposed by Ratzel, who believed that the state is a biological organism that needs a certain living space. It is inevitable that the state, as a healthy space organism, will increase its strength by expanding its territory. Rudolf Chillen accepted Ratzel's concept of the organic state, agreed that the political process is determined by space, and regarded geopolitics as a science with the state as its object. The representative of the living space theory is Karl Haushofer (Parker 1988: 10-19). Based on the works of Chiron, Ratzel, and Mackinder, it regards living space and absolute domination as its core concepts and endorses pan-continentalism based on complementary resources and human resources to satisfy national expansion and imperialism. Haushofer believed that gaining control of the World Island, controlling the Soviet Union and destroying British sea power was necessary and that organic expansion of Germany to the west and east was inevitable (Cohen 2011: 24).

Mackinder, characterized by the impermeability of sea power, regards the inner region of Eurasia as the hub of world politics and puts forward the heartland saying: "Whoever rules Eastern Europe rules the heartland, and whoever rules the heartland rules the world island."; whoever rules the World-Island rules the world" (Mackinder 2010: 30). Mahan believes that the extensive areas reached by the Panama Canal and the Suez Canal are the key to world power and that sea movement is better than land movement, and he puts forward the idea of sea power (Mahan 2014: 28). Speakman's marginal zone theory absorbed Mahan's worldview and tried to correct Mackinder's heartland theory. Speakman believed that the key to controlling the world lies in the coastal areas of Eurasia because of their population, abundant resources, and control of inland access to the sea (Spykman 1942: 457-472).

Scholars who support the theory of air rights discuss the control of key areas of the world from the space perspective. George Rayner

believes that air routes have connected the heartland of Eurasia with the Anglo-American regions across the Arctic region, forming a new one in the northern hemisphere. Expanding the heartland, the Arctic is the key to the heartland (Renner 1942: 152-154). Seversky made an equidistant azimuth projection with the North Pole as the centre and regarded the place where North America and the Soviet Union's air-ruled area overlapped as the "decision area" to control the world (Seversky 1950: 11).

The focus of the above geopolitical theories has been changing from the heartland, the fringe, the sea, the combination of sea and land to air power, etc., and the research methods and conclusions are also different (Weiwei 2010: 70). Traditional geopolitical theories believe that geographical location and distance will greatly affect state behaviour. The discussion aims to determine how countries can enhance national power and gain global dominance by occupying favourable geographical spaces. These theories can be attributed to geo-conflict theories. Conflicting concepts are attached to power politics. Looking at the evolution of traditional geopolitical theories, they all serve the competition for national power. Speakman believes that political ideas that power cannot support have no value (Thompson 2003: 107). Gankov believes that the greed for power induced by conflicting worldviews prevents geopolitics from becoming a scientific theory. The theory of national organisms and living space theory promote the inevitability of national expansion. This powerful view of geopolitical conflicts can easily lead to territorial expansion reasonable risk assumptions.

There are two root causes of geopolitical conflicts: first, due to the limitations of technological means at that time, before the emergence of long-range weapons, the objective geographical environment played a decisive role in national security. Hamilton believed that it was a threat to his security, and Hamilton proved this conclusion through his long-term observation of social development (White 2004: 106). If a country feels threatened by its neighbours, it will act on the principle that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend (Nye 2002: 51)." Second, the contradiction between the limited geographical space and the infinite development of a country runs through the traditional geopolitical theory. Whether it is worrying about neighbouring countries in the early stage or expanding outwards to compete for world hegemony in the later stage, this kind of competition for limited objective geographical location is a zero-sum game of "what you gain is what you lose" that has led to inevitable geopolitical conflicts.

(2) Defensive geopolitical theory

Wars between states resulted in a large decrease in the number of states and an increase in the average state size (land, population, and resources). The expansion of states in terms of territory, population, and resources meant that defence became relatively easy while conquest was getting harder and harder. In addition, the concepts of sovereign state and nationalism are deeply rooted in the people's hearts, and territorial occupation's cost has become more expensive. After World War II, the destruction of countries due to violent conquest stopped, and international politics irreversibly changed from Mearsheimer to Jervis World (Tang 2009: 11). The defensive geopolitical theory of this period was the theory of containment aimed at countering the Soviet Union and the communist bloc of countries to which it belonged.

Representatives of this period included George Kennan, Bullitt, Kissinger, and Brzezinski. They introduced concepts such as containment, domino theory, the overall view of the balance of power, and key countries into geopolitics, greatly enriching geopolitics and political theory. In 1964, George Kennan wrote a long telegram suggesting peaceful "containment" of the Soviet Union, becoming one of the United States' containment policy representatives during the Cold War. He believed the world after World War II was when sea power confronted land power. If land power is to be defeated, the principle of restricting land power by land power must first be adopted, that is a comprehensive strategic containment of the Soviet Union (Kennan 1947: 566-582). William Bullitt proposed the Domino Theory. He worried that the communist power of the Soviet Union would spread to Southeast Asia through China and pointed out that the loss of the dominance of the previous country in the geopolitical confrontation would produce a domino reaction in the region. This theory became an important argument for American intervention in Southeast Asia and Central America at that time. The big picture concept was introduced into geopolitics by Henry Kissinger (1979: 127-138). The core of the big picture is that conflicts in each region need to be considered from the perspective of the global balance of power politics, and the impact of the local on the overall situation should be observed. Brzezinski's geopolitical theory introduced the concept of "key countries", which refer to countries in key geographical locations that can exert economic and military influence on surrounding areas. Countries that meet these conditions include Germany, Poland, Iran or Pakistan, Afghanistan, South Korea, and the Philippines (Brzezinski 1986: 52-56). Samuel Huntington believed that the

differences between people after the Cold War were no longer ideological, political, or economic but cultural differences. A clash of civilizations will dominate global politics, and the fault lines between civilizations will be the future battle lines. Huntington established the geopolitics of "West versus East" through the "Clash of Civilizations" (Huntington 2010: 161).

(3) Composite geopolitical theory (Institutional Cooperation/Rule)

The end of the Cold War era brought some new geopolitical research methods. Although geopolitical scientists represented by Brzezinski continued to explore the geopolitical prescriptions for maintaining US global hegemony, more scholars began to explore the emergence of various geopolitical theories. Representative theories include geoeconomics, universalist geopolitics, critical geopolitics, network geopolitics, etc.

Theoretical name	Geoeconomics	Universalist geopolitics (Regional Geopolitics)	Critical geopolitics	Geo-Network Theory
Representative	Robert Kaplan Wallerstein	Saul Cohen Gerald Roe Crone Peter Taylor	John Agnew Ottowatel	Arthur Sebrowski
Key Concepts	Society, economy North-South confrontation	Geopolitical system Multipolar world model	Knowledge-power Social movement geography	Virtual space Information symbiosis

Table 2: *Composite geopolitical theories*

Immanuel Wallerstein believes that the changes in modern society do not occur in the country's unit, and the whole world is a single society, a social system. Wallerstein replaced the North-South contradiction with the East-West contradiction to reconstruct the overall cognition of the world (Flint & Taylor 2016: 12-13). Saul Cohen analysed geopolitics from the perspective of regional structure patterns and characteristics, regarded the world geopolitical structure as a system composed of multi-level hierarchies, and divided it into geostrategic jurisdictions, geopolitical regions, and ethnic groups according to geographic characteristics of the country and other spatial levels (Cohen 2011: 9).

The representatives of critical geopolitics, Ottowatel and John Agnew, regard geopolitics as a kind of discourse, a multicultural and political description. Ottowatel believes that the geopolitical theory of MacKinder and others is based on the neutrality of the subject's world

observation. However, such neutral observation does not exist, and geopolitics is actually a kind of "knowledge" -power" relations, geography is the writing of the earth by the expanding imperial state, not a static term (Ó Tuathail 1996: 1-2). Based on this theoretical assumption, Agnew proposed the concept of "modern geopolitical imagination" to illustrate a constructed system of world representation. Criticism of geopolitical theory emphasizes the practice of geopolitical discourse and writing and criticizes existing theories' Western-centric and state-centric perspectives, opening a new direction for geopolitical research.

The theory of network geopolitics was first produced in the military field. Admiral Jay Johnson, the Chief of Naval Operations of the United States, formally proposed the network-centric warfare theory in 1994. "Network-Centric Warfare: Origins and Future" has become the foundational work of the network-centric warfare theory. With the development of network technology, countries are paying more and more attention to cyberspace issues, including the scope of cyberspace, the sovereign rights of countries in cyberspace, and the rights of individuals in cyberspace. The biggest difference between cyber geopolitical theory and previous ones is that cyberspace is a virtual space, and the infinity of virtual space and the characteristics of information symbiosis have become the direction of geopolitical theory innovation.

Geo-economics adds economic and regional factors to geopolitical analysis, and critical geopolitics focuses on pursuing the context of "knowledge-power" in geopolitical theory. The above theories provide a new understanding of the increasingly complex international political reality brought about by economic globalization. This theoretical paradigm contains the concept of geography guided by regional differences and belongs to the traditional geography method. Although it is good at the static description of world politics, it needs more grasp of the dynamic process (Lu 2007: 109).

Exploration and Analysis of the Motives of Geopolitical Theory Changes

Time is a dimension that must be considered in any theory. From the perspective of time, there are two basic categories of international relations theory: circulation and evolution (Qin 2003: 1). Social sciences have formed different basic paradigms Around the distinction between circulation and evolution (Tang 2001: 84). This paper looks at the evolution of geopolitical theories based on "scientific realism". The second,

mechanism is the deepest level of ontology, and the world is composed of “mechanisms”, and social sciences, like natural sciences, should explore “generative causal mechanisms”.

The core of the geopolitical theory is to explore the geopolitical competition of countries. This paper argues that geospatial characteristics and national development methods determine the changes in geopolitical competition. Among them, the effectiveness of force is the intervention variable. The three together lead to the transformation of geopolitical theory from conflict to the evolution of defensive to institutional cooperation theory, which is shown in Figure 1.

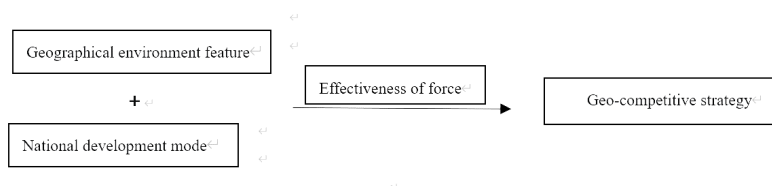


Figure 1: Drivers of Geopolitical Evolution

(1) The characteristics of the geographical environment determine the main stage of geo-competition and affect the degree of conflict in geo-competition.

To participate in geo-competition, a country first needs to select a stage for geo-competition, and the characteristics of the stage determine the main means by which a country participates in the competition. With the development of productivity, the stage of national geo-competition has undergone a transformation from an objective geographical environment to a man-made geographical environment, as shown in Table 3.

The objective geographical environment refers to the objective and realistic environment before human society. Human exploration of the objective environment has changed from land, sea, and sky to space. The occupation and zero-sum game of the objective geographical environment have led to the means of war. Effectively, the degree of conflict in geo-competition is high. The objective geographical environment can be quickly occupied and controlled by employing war, and the land, sea, and sky currently fully utilized by humans are limited spaces. This limited geographical space and the unlimited development of countries constitute a fundamental contradiction in geo-competition. The competition among various countries in the objective geographical environment is a

zero-sum game. The means of war often become the main way to compete for the objective geographical environment, and the degree of geo-competitive conflict in the objective geographical environment is relatively high. The spatial change of the objective geographical environment determines the shift of the focus of geopolitical theory. The geopolitical theory has experienced the evolution of land, sea, and air power theories. These theories are all classified as conflicting geopolitical theories.

	Type	Spatial features	Effectiveness of force	Degree of geopolitical conflict	
Objective geographical environment	geo-environment	land, sea, sky, space	finiteness	powerful	powerful
Artificial geographical environment	geo-environment	economic Society, thought, network	infinity	weak	weak

Table 3: Geographical environment characteristics

The man-made geographical environment refers to the new complex environment shaped by the objective geographical environment in human development, including economic, social, ideological and network environments. The man-made geographical environment has changed the limitation of geographical space and the effectiveness of using force. The man-made geographical environment relies on human activities in the objective geographical environment, and it is more difficult to be directly occupied by force. The role of war in occupying territory in the man-made geographical environment is becoming less effective, reducing the degree of conflict in geographical competition. In addition, the man-made geographical environment is in the process of dynamic change and will continue to expand with the development of productivity. The contradiction between the limited geographical space and the unlimited development of the country will continue to decrease with the expansion of geographical space. The degree of dependence is deepened, and the competition among countries in the artificial geographical environment is mostly a "non-zero-sum game", and the conflict intensity of geopolitical competition is reduced. The higher the infinity of geographic space, the lower the effectiveness of the use of force and the lower the degree of conflict in geopolitical competition. The emergence of virtual spaces such as the Internet has fundamentally changed the premise of limited geographic space and the development direction of future geopolitical theories.

(2) The country's development mode determines the means of national wealth acquisition and the goal of geo-competition and affects the preference for geo-competition methods.

National development mode refers to the dominant economic growth dynamic mechanism in the process of national economic development, which determines the means by which a country obtains wealth, and then determines the goal of geopolitical competition. According to historical experience, national development modes can be divided into four types: resource-oriented, trade-oriented, capital-oriented, and information-oriented, as shown in Table 4.

Type	Time	Competition target	Method preference
Resource -oriented	Before the 1760s (primitive accumulation of capitalism)	Looting resources	War
Trade- oriented	1760s - 2050s (Liberal Capitalism and State Monopoly Capital)	Broad market Transportation channel	War system
Capital-led	1950s - 21st century (Social capitalism)	Stable environment	System specification
Information-driven	21st century	Information	Specification

Table 4: *Evolution of National Development Models*

The resource-led model mainly occurred before the 1760s. Capitalist countries mainly relied on the coercive power of the regime and used war to colonize and plunder foreign countries to accumulate primitive capital (Gu 2001: 13). During this period, the goal of geopolitical competition was territory and resources. Mainly war. The trade-led model occurred during the period of free capitalism and state monopoly capitalism from the 1760s to the 1950s. National economic development required a broad market and stable transportation channels, and the focus of the geopolitical competition was on key areas the competition for transportation nodes, the geopolitical competition is mainly based on war and supplemented by the system. The capital-led model occurred from the 1950s to the 21st century. At this stage, the degree of socialization of capitalism is getting higher and higher (Lu 1989). Social capital plays an important role in promoting the country's economic development. The effectiveness of the war on the operation of social capital is greatly improved. Reduced, institutional norms have become the main way of geo-competition. The information-led model is the

trend of future economic development. After the 21st century, human beings have entered an economic society based on the creation and distribution of information from the industrial society, that is, the information economy society, which can also be called “post-industrial society” (Naisbitt 1984: 1-10). And distribution has become the main content of economic development, the characteristics of symbiosis between countries are obvious, and the setting of information norms has become the main way of competition in cyberspace.

(3) The characteristics of the geographical environment and the mode of national development determine the evolution of geopolitical theories

The country's development mode determines the goal of geo-competition, and the characteristics of the geographical environment determine the means used to achieve the goal. The objective geographical environment can be occupied and zero-sum games lead to higher effectiveness of war means, and the artificial geographical environment is difficult to conquer and coexists. Sexuality has led to a reduction in the effectiveness of means of warfare and a reduction in the degree of conflict in geopolitical competition, as shown in Table 5.

	Objective geographical environment (force is effective)	Man-made geography (reduced effectiveness of force)
Resource-oriented	Offensive Geopolitical Theory	Defensive geopolitical theory (non-mainstream)
Trade-oriented	Offensive Geopolitical Theory	Defensive geopolitical theory
Capital-led	Offensive Geopolitical Theory (non-mainstream)	Defensive geopolitical theory institutional geopolitical theory
Information-driven	Offensive Geopolitical Theory (non-mainstream)	Normative geopolitical theory

Table 5: *Evolution of geopolitical theories*

Before the first industrial revolution in the 1760s, the stage for countries to participate in geopolitical competition was mainly the competition for land resources in an objective geographical environment. Before the emergence of long-range weapons, territorial security was the primary guarantee of national security. The countries before this period were mainly divided into agricultural countries and early capitalist countries, relying on the coercive power of the regime and means of war to obtain resources and develop the economy. Therefore, the mainstream geopolitical theory at this time was the offensive geopolitical

theory. Early geopolitical thought can be traced back to Aristotle, Strabo, Bodin, Montesquieu, Kant and Hegel, who believed that the objective geographical environment plays a decisive role in national security, the most typical of which is with the "distance-distance and close-attack" strategy, neighbouring countries will naturally be regarded as threats to their own security. The offensive geopolitical theory after the emergence of capitalism is attached to power politics, focusing on the impact of objective geographical environment on state power. Representative theories include state organism theory and living space theory.

From the 1860s to the 1950s, due to the advancement of scientific and technological means and weapons, human exploration of the objective geographical environment expanded to the stage of ocean and sky. At this time, the national development model was a trade-led economy, and capitalism entered commodity capitalism. In the stage of monopoly capitalism, geopolitical theories at this time include offensive and defensive geopolitical theories. On the premise that the war is effective, the contention for the objective geographical environment such as the sea and the sky is an offensive geopolitical theory. Representative theories include the theory of sea power, the theory of the heartland, the theory of the periphery, and the theory of the right of heaven. The way of geo-competition after the sphere of influence is demarcated mainly relies on the system to maintain control over the artificial geographical environment. The commodity economy and capital flow require a stable social environment, and the role of the system is greatly improved compared with the resource-led development model.

After the 1950s, wars between countries resulted in two results: a sharp decline in the number of countries and an increase in the average size of countries (land, population, and resources). The expansion of countries in terms of territory, population, and resources meant that as defence becomes relatively easy, conquest becomes increasingly difficult. In addition, the concept of a sovereign state and nationalism has taken root in the hearts of the people, and the cost of occupying territory has become more expensive. During this period, the theory of containment as a defensive geopolitical theory was valued. Representatives of defensive geopolitical theories include George Kennan, Bullitt, Kissinger, and Brzezinski. They introduced concepts such as containment, domino theory, the overall balance of power, and key countries into geopolitics. enriched geopolitical theory.

After the 21st century, human beings have entered an economic society based on the creation and distribution of information from an industrial society, that is, the information economy. Contradictions and

conflicts have been greatly weakened, information accumulation and distribution have become the main content of economic development, and the characteristics of symbiosis between countries are obvious. Although geopolitical scientists represented by Brzezinski continued to explore the geopolitical prescriptions for maintaining US global hegemony, more scholars began to explore the changes in geopolitical theories, among which representative theories include geoeconomics, universalist geopolitical Political science, critical geopolitics, cyber geopolitics, etc.

When the stage of national geo-competition is an objective geographical environment, under the premise that force is effective, no matter what kind of development model the country is in, geo-competition will mostly be geo-conflict, but the change of national development model needs to consider the time dimension. In the dominant mode, the objective geographical environment is no longer the main stage of geopolitical competition, so the mainstream geopolitical theories in this period are defensive and normative geopolitical theories. We can find that countries with different economic development models choose different geopolitical competition methods in the face of an objective geographical environment and man-made geographical environment. Therefore, it is necessary to build a joint geopolitical view, which also conflicts with the traditional dominance of Reflections on Geopolitics (Weiwei 2010: 74). The joint geopolitical view will play a greater guiding role in the construction of future geopolitical theories, and geopolitical theories based on reality will continue to be an important tool for understanding, predicting, and forming the structure and direction of the world system (Cohen 2011: 33).

Geography, Regions, and Space: Joint Geopolitical Viewpoint

On the whole, post-Cold War geopolitical theories have shown new features on the basis of critically inheriting traditional theories, but in essence, these theories still have obvious power characteristics, only from the perspective of economics, culture, and discourse power. "soft" areas are discussed. Whether geopolitical theory can break through the limitation of power and develop into a real institutional and normative geopolitical theory, it is necessary to reclassify the research object of geopolitical theory, that is, the diplomatic environment in which the country is located. The geopolitical competition methods in different

diplomatic environments are different. The infinity of virtual spaces such as the Internet and the symbiosis of data wealth sources provide an opportunity for breakthroughs in geopolitical theory.

The joint geopolitical view requires countries to reclassify their diplomatic environment when facing geopolitical competition. This paper divides a country's diplomatic environment into three categories: geo-environment, regional environment, and space environment, as shown in Table 6.

	Geographical environment	Regional environment	space environment
Environment type	Objective environment	Objective and economy, society	Objective and virtual
Source of wealth	Land and Resource Utilization	Division of labour system	Symbiosis data
Source of power	Violence control	Alliance, cooperation	Node control
External strategic focus	Make a difference	Active	Work hard

Table 6 – *Classification of the diplomatic environment*

First is geo-environment. Geo-environment is the sum of the relationship between countries based on geographic location. This geographic relationship focuses on the relative position in the objective geographic environment, which is the core content of traditional geopolitical research. Political scientists have politicized geographical relations and created political concepts with geographic meanings such as East, West, South, and North. Deng Xiaoping said: "East, west, north, south", and now the east rises and the west falls. As an objective geographical environment, the source of wealth in the geo-environment is land, resources, and their utilization of technology, and the source of power is the control of violent means. Therefore, the competition in the geo-environment is mostly a zero-sum game.

The second is the regional environment, the sum of geographical relations based on a specific geographical range. This sum includes the objective geographical environment in which the country is located and the economic and social environment created on top of it. Each country is within a specific region, which has special significance for the country. For example, Latin America is the "backyard" of the United States, and its periphery is the basis for China's rise. Since the end of World War II, regional political and economic integration has been on the ascendant, such as NATO, the European Union, and RCEP. At a time when globalization is encountering difficulties today, the trend of global re-regionalization is once again on the rise. Land and resources are the most basic

source of wealth in a regional environment. However, the cooperation and division of labour in the integration process can play the role of a wealth multiplier. The source of power in regional settings is still the control of violence, but alliances or cooperation can expand the control of violence. The geographical environment and regional environment belong to the flat two-dimensional world. For example, if you open a map, you can see at a glance what geographical environment and regional environment your country faces from the perspective of China or the United States.

Third, the space environment. It is different from the geographical and regional environment, and it is a three-dimensional world. The space environment is the sum of all relationships within the real and virtual space, the space environment is the real space environment, and the Internet is the virtual space environment. The source of wealth in the space environment includes not only real natural resources (outer space, which is not available now) but also virtual natural resources (data). There are two sources of power in the space environment. In real space, it is the control of the frequency spectrum, orbit and aircraft. In virtual space, it is the control of nodes and flow.

Distinguishing these three environments may help us rethink the focus of China's foreign strategy. The basic conclusion of this paper is: we must make a difference in the geo-environment, be active in the regional environment, and work hard in the promising space environment.

Making a difference in the geo-environment means the country should be cautious and not overdo it. The geographical relationship is the oldest in human history. Human beings have competed and cooperated in various geopolitical environments for thousands of years, but there are two serious problems in geopolitical competition and cooperation. First, the involution of geopolitical competition is very serious, and the competitive strategies usable by all parties have basically been used up. Traditional geopolitical theories, such as the theory of land power and sea power, require us to carry out corresponding military construction and arms competition. According to the theory of sea power, if the United States builds a huge aircraft carrier fleet, China needs to build more aircraft carriers. Suppose China has built 11 aircraft carriers, but the technology and tactics used by the United States on aircraft carriers are very mature. How much room for innovation can China have in this regard? The second is the unpredictability of failure. There are many failure cases of major powers in geopolitical competition. From the Cold War to the present, the United States and the Soviet Union have suffered failures in Vietnam, North Korea, Iraq, and

Afghanistan, respectively, and these failures were all unexpected by major powers. When the geopolitical expansion of major powers reaches a certain point, there will be a power break. However, where the boundary of this point is currently, the country cannot accurately predict. This kind of geopolitical failure has caused these countries to spend a lot of money. However, they have gained very little, and the morale of the people has also been severely damaged, causing serious domestic conflicts. Therefore, China can refrain from engaging in fierce geopolitical competition with other countries. Of course, any country cannot avoid geopolitics, so it is enough for China to do something in this regard.

In the regional environment, China needs to be proactive. Being proactive means actively promoting the region's integration, and it can also actively participate in the integration process of other regions because the region is the foundation of China's rise. The integration of East Asia is affected by two factors, one is the change of the pattern, and the other is the internal driving force. As far as the former is concerned, the regional structure of East Asia tends to be polarized, and the trend of polarization is a centrifugal force for East Asian integration. However, the integration of East Asia also has its own internal driving force, which is a kind of centripetal force, so the integration of East Asia will be affected by both centrifugal force and centripetal force. This has affected the speed and degree of integration in East Asia, which is exactly what requires China to promote the integration process in East Asia actively.

Regarding the worldwide re-regionalization process, China seems to be using the "Belt and Road" initiative to link these different regions together. There are achievements and resistance which has aroused overt and covert opposition and exclusion from core countries in other regions. Of course, China's overly active activities in other regions will lead to geopolitical and economic competition. The so-called activeness in this article refers to the activeness in the Asia-Pacific region, and we should be cautious when entering other regions.

We must work hard in the space environment. The space environment is a new field and a new world. There is not enough intensity in this vast world and a lack of strict rules and systems, so it is very suitable for staking. We can do a lot in the space environment and avoid involution. For example, the key to the Internet space is three words: data, nodes, and traffic. The wealth in the Internet space comes from data, and the source of power is the control of nodes and traffic. Mastering these three points can control wealth and power in the Internet space. However, China's attitude towards data, nodes, and traffic is still relatively conservative, with more worries and less openness. As the source

of wealth in the Internet space, the biggest feature of data is that it is growth wealth; that is, data will be used more and more, while traditional Sources of wealth such as land and natural resources are consumptive wealth, that is, they become less and less as they are used. Therefore, the key to growing data wealth is openness and use because storing data will not increase wealth. However, China's data openness and flow policy is still very cautious. This requires the government and Internet companies to maintain an open attitude on data opening and flow issues, find a better balance between maintaining data security and open data use, and establish more innovative usage rules.

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