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# Russia's Engagement With Asia Pacific: International Socialization, Multipolarity and Regionalism

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## Abstract

This paper addresses Russia's growing engagement with the Asia Pacific region from the vantage point of two key concepts that shape Russian foreign policy – multipolarity and socialization. I argue, first, that there is a discrepancy between the declared agenda of the Russian government in Asia Pacific and Moscow's domestic policy toward its Far East territories. Secondly, in Asia Pacific Russia is likely to face a geopolitically chaotic and anarchic situation with a level of conflict potentially even higher than in Europe.

## Keywords

Russian, Asia Pacific, Socialization, Multipolarity, Regionalism

## Introduction

This paper addresses Russia's growing engagement with the Asia Pacific region from the vantage point of two key concepts that shape Russian foreign policy. The first is the concept of *multipolarity*, the key foundational principle for Russian diplomacy, based on the idea of cultural diversity and political plurality, and a need for a "fair" distribution of power among a variety of poles throughout the globe. Initially the idea of multipolarity implied a balance between Russia's orientation to the West and to the East, yet in the context of the drastic deterioration of Russia's relations with the West since President Putin's third term in office multipolarity has become a concept justifying Russia's voluntary search for an alternative to its relations with Western institutions in a loosely defined Asia. The idea of multipolarity that initially was designed for tuning Russian foreign policy to an increasingly diverse world has ultimately inverted into an explicitly anti-Western policy that justifies an alternative orientation toward an even more complicated and challenging region: Asia Pacific.

*Socialization* is the second concept used in this analysis to describe Russia's engagement with Asia Pacific. Socialization refers to international institutions and the corresponding binding commitments they take (Epstein, 2012: pp.136-139). The socialization of great or rising powers is seriously hindered by sovereignty and national interests. This has led to the idea of reciprocal socialization that claims that powers socialized into the international order are to simultaneously reshape it (Terhalle, 2011: pp.341-361), which is in line with Russia's overall strategy in a multipolar world.

Asia Pacific plays a particularly important role in Russia's balancing of the Occident and the Orient. This chapter investigates how feasible are Russia's expectations of finding Asia Pacific to be a Russia-friendly model of regional socialization to compensate for its shrinking engagement with the West in general and the EU in particular. This investigation looks at what models of international socialization Russia anticipates finding - and can afford to pursue - in Asia Pacific, and what possible risks and pitfalls these models entail.

My argument is two-fold. First, there is a discrepancy between the declared agenda of the Russian government in Asia Pacific and Moscow's domestic policy toward its Far East territories. Russia's chairmanship in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), culminating in the Vladivostok summit of September 2012, was focused on the principles of liberalization of trade and investment; regional economic integration; food safety and human security; transportation and logistics, including facilitation of border-crossing procedures; and innovative technologies, research, and education. Yet the proclaimed priorities of Russia's APEC strategy have so far remained rather abstract and largely detached from Russia's domestic agenda in the Far East, which is basically focused on stimulating investment in Russia's eastern regions and mitigating the effects of Chinese migration. Yet the key problems Russia faces in its easternmost regions are depopulation, low living standards, high commodity prices, poor incentives for private investments, and underdeveloped transport infrastructure (Popov and Chernyshov, 2013), and to date it seems unlikely that Moscow has a strategy to resolve them.

Second, in Asia Pacific Russia is likely to face a geopolitically chaotic and anarchic situation with a level of conflict potentially even higher than in Europe. In its eastern policy Russia is a relative newcomer to a region that is an arena of two competing strategies - American and Chinese, with multiple formal and semi-formal institutions trying to adjust to the two dominating actors and strike a balance between them. The high level of competition and rivalry, coupled with "thin" (weak and dispersed) institutions, turn Asia Pacific into a pluralist type of international society, to borrow a concept from the English school theory. In this respect Asia Pacific varies dramatically from the EU-centric European international society that can be characterized as "solidarist", with "thick" (binding and

powerful) institutions serving for multilateral policies.

This chapter is grounded in the methodology of critical discourse analysis. Russia's 'turn to Asia' exists as a figure of speech and as a peculiar type of anti-Western political narrative justifying the reorientation of Russia away from the EU and Euro-Atlantic institutions, especially after the annexation of Crimea and the drastic deterioration of Russia's relations with its European and American partners. This discourse is manifest in academic and political discussions, which are the main sources for this research. I have intentionally limited the scope of the empirical material mainly to Russian-language publications as they are the least familiar for international readership and better reflect the ongoing Russian foreign policy debates. The likely policy effects of the discourses examined will also be identified and critically assessed.

### **Russia's Turn from Europe to Asia: Internal and External Facets**

In this section I will discuss the domestic drivers for Russia's shifting attention to Asia Pacific, as well as explicate this as part of the political logic of Russia's estrangement from Europe.

#### ***Domestic Debates***

From an administrative viewpoint the best vindication for Russia's growing interest in Asia Pacific is the establishment of a new Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East. This is the first time that the Russian government has instituted a region-specific ministerial body. Some experts interpreted the opening of its head office in Khabarovsk as raising this city to the symbolic status of Russia's "third capital" - after Moscow and St. Petersburg (Bordachev and Barabanov, 2013). There are even more radical voices in Russia who advocate the relocation of Russia's capital from Moscow to the Far East (Vladivostok) and the bestowing of greater administrative powers to the regions of Siberia and Far East both domestically and internationally - as full-fledged members of the Kremlin-sponsored Eurasian Union whose stand on the issues of integrating with Asia Pacific would be essential.

These ideas, however speculative they might be, betray a certain skepticism about the federal center's policies towards Russia's Far East - a region that was historically important from a geopolitical viewpoint rather than as a territory requiring investments for ameliorating its citizens' living standards (Larin 2013). Huge — though largely mismanaged — investments in upgrading the infrastructure of Vladivostok as the host city of the 2012 APEC summit signaled Russia's interest in the Asia-Pacific region, which however did not reach far beyond political symbolism. Worse, the APEC summit revealed the scope of mismanagement and profligacy in the Russian government: the bridge to the *Russkiy* island, portrayed

in the official media as technologically advanced, became a notorious example of corruption, poor quality standards and low safety of construction work (Priadkina, 2013).

Asia Pacific is widely believed to be a driver for developing Russia's Far East (Ivanov, 2010). Yet as far as long-term strategy is concerned, reorientation to the East has little effect in fostering economic innovation; most cross-border business projects are in fact energy related (Vlasov 2014). In its dependence on hydrocarbon exports in Asia Pacific, as well as in Europe, Russia follows the much maligned "petrostate" model.

### *Away from Europe?*

From an international perspective, Russia's change of focus from Europe to Asia is widely accepted as a political trend, yet its logic is subject to various interpretations. According to Konstantin Kosachev, the former head of the *Rossotrudnichestvo* governmental agency, Russia "faces an array of artificial constraints in the West that is eager to push it as far as possible to Siberia and Far East, away from the real and well explored sources of well-being" (Kosachev, 2014). In this interpretation, Russia's partnership with Asian countries is a last resort that regrettably deflects Moscow from its greater interests in the West.

In a different reading, Russia is seen to change its priorities voluntarily and willingly. In fall of 2013 the deputy prime minister Arkady Dvorkovich clearly articulated Russia's dissatisfaction with the Western markets and pathetically declared that "Russia leaves Europe and comes to Asia" (Metelitsa, 2013). Yet the rationale for this U-turn is vague and imprecise. Thus, Fiodor Lukianov, the head of the Council on Foreign and Security Policy, a Moscow-based mainstream think tank, claims that Russia's symbolic eagle turns its head to Europe merely "by inertia" - a statement that ignores a century-long tradition of intentional and deliberate pro-European cultural and economic gravitation towards Europe. Yet Lukianov claims that these traditions of geopolitically anchoring Russia to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea regions are currently of no import with the Asia Pacific region allegedly evolving into a new magnet for Russia. In justifying a non-Eurocentric strategy of Moscow he deems that "the main events in the future will evidently take place in Asia Pacific" - an often reiterated mantra that might be questioned, for example, by the obvious centrality of the crisis in Russian-Ukrainian relations since 2014 for the international order. Other simplistic justifications for a detour from Europe include statements like "a new Asia is emerging", "Asia is more important than Europe", and "everyone in Asia seems to need Russia" (Lukianov, 2013). Another argument in this series is fully reactive and repetitive - the need for Russia to refocus on Asia Pacific is explained by the U.S. acknowledgement of the importance of this region for American interests.

Experts from the Valdai Club, one of the pro-Kremlin think tanks, claimed that in a long term perspective the West and the South are going to stagnate, which makes the global East Russia's "natural ally". Their report lambasts "an obsolete Euro-centrism of Russian foreign policy thinking" and offers a strategy of rapprochement with Asia as "a new globalization of Russia" (K Velikommu Okeanu... 2012). The accusations against the West contain strong normative claims – the East is portrayed as more tolerant to other traditions and more adaptable to the changing world.

Politically, the strongest argument in the discursive arsenal of Russian pro-Asia-Pacific advocates is the rising doubts about the universality of European model of regional integration that Moscow views as both intrinsically unstable and externally expansive. A similar criticism is vociferously articulated in the post-colonial academic literature. In fact, Russia joined a chorus of voices who deny the "paradigmatic status of the European example" and refuse to judge all other regional projects against the EU achievements (Acharya, 2012: p.7). In this context Asia-Pacific may hypothetically fit into a picture of "anti-hegemonist multipolar international system" to "mark a retreat from universalist liberal agendas of both a political and an economic sort" (Buzan, 2011: p.16, p.18).

The post-colonial idea of Asia as an essentially European construct matches the portrayal of Europe as "the historical departure point for the analysis of international regionalism in general" and the subsequent "European epistemic pre-eminence in the international regionalism" (Postel-Vinay, 2007: pp.557-558). This might extend to theories either substantiating Western neglect of Asian countries, or looking for "a Western hand undermining Asia's economic growth" (Jones and Smith, 2007: p.170) – a conspiracy theory that many in the Kremlin would certainly be happy to share as well.

This Euroscepticism is sustained in many Asian countries by local lamentations about the insensitivity of Western institutions (International Monetary Fund, the World Bank etc.) to regional needs, which translates to the search for "Asian solutions for Asian problems" (Jones and Smith, 2007: pp.169-176). It is exactly this approach that Russia wishes to pursue in the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea regions, South Caucasus and Central Asia, trying to prevent extra-regional powers (mostly Western) from playing important regional roles in what Russia considers – with mixed results – its sphere of vital interests. Yet with the growing involvement of the United States in South East Asia the very distinction between "regional" and "extra-regional" powers becomes increasingly meaningless, which in a practical sense implies that in this region Russia will not be able to claim its sphere of influence and would have to coordinate its policies with its major competitors.

## **Asia Pacific: Structural Characteristics and Russia's Policies**

This section will describe the debate on structural features that define the specificity Asia Pacific regionalism against the backdrop of European experience of regional integration and then discuss the spectrum of Russia's policy options as determined by systemic constraints and opportunities.

### *Structural Factors of the Asia Pacific Regionalism*

Many Russian authors do their best to distinguish Asian regionalism from its European counter-part, yet most of these attempts remain inconclusive. Thus, the assumption that "in East Asia integration was derivative of the corporate business interest in economic expansion" (Arapova and Baikov, 2012: p.105) hardly differentiates this region from the EU at all. The same goes for a multi-level character of East Asian integration with parallels in the European model. Ultimately, Russian experts end up measuring the developments in Asia Pacific by European standards, claiming that "Japan seems to be the only East Asian country to reach European level of state maturity", or that "East Asia is still years away from the customs union model" (Arapova and Baikov, 2012: p.105). They conclude by admitting that the prospects of a currency union in East Asia are limited, financial markets are under-integrated, and in general Asian regional projects would be better off studying the EU experiences in more detail (Arapova and Baikov, 2012: pp.106).

Against this backdrop, quite persuasive are voices of those experts who claim that "in both Asia and Europe, despite their differences, similar mechanisms such as meta-governance and functional specialization have been used in the establishment of new models of regional governance, mainly aimed at managing transnational problems of various kinds, such as financial flows and non-traditional security challenges" (Hameiri, 2013: p.331). Many concepts – liberalization, securitization, regionalization – are equally applicable to both Europe and Asia. In fact, Russia has itself confirmed on numerous occasions that liberal investment regime, sustainable development, and human capital development – all presumably Western-grounded policies – are part of Asia-Pacific regionalism as well. For instance, the Valdai Club report argued for a transfer of most effective Euro-Atlantic political institutions to the Asian ground, like, for instance, a „Helsinki process for Asia“ (K Velikommu Okeanu...).

The key problem is that regional players in Asia may wish to "preserve their autonomy from dominance, neglect, violation or abuse by more powerful central actors"(Acharya 2011: 97-98), but it is very rare that they would produce an alternative set of internationally accepted norms of their own. They are norm-rejectors and norm-adaptors rather than norm-generators. Neither of these non-Western integration projects, despite the wishful thinking of its post-colonial support-

ers, was able to create a set of alternative – presumably non-liberal - norms and rules to challenge the Western normative supremacy. “Most of the regional countries see the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a grouping of authoritarian, state capitalist countries, which are opposed to the dominant group in Asia of democratic, free-enterprise countries, which are the leading technological innovators” (Dibb, 2014). The academic debate on comparative regionalism suggests that non-Western regions are dissimilar to the West in either failing to adapt its normative innovations (like human security, food security, etc.), or having a lower level of interest in democratic practices. Perhaps “the only fundamental norm ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) has reinforced is a realist commitment, not to the region, but to the sovereign inviolability of the nation-state” (Jones and Smith: p.185). This is what Russia certainly values the most, yet the idea of sovereignty, while cherished by many, faces strong challenges from trans-national integration of which the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) patronized by the U.S. is one of the best examples.

Weak norms imply weak institutions, which means that a lot depends “on the distribution of power and the attitude of the powerful” (Buzan, 2011: p.20). Asia-Pacific is widely known as a region with “no nuclear arms control agreements, no conventional forces agreements and no agreements to avoid naval incidents at sea” (Dibb, 2014). The Carnegie Corporation overtly characterizes the whole Asian continent as highly volatile and conflicted, with growing security troubles (territorial disputes, destabilizing rivalries between neighbors, nationalism, arms race, etc.) with the endemic mistrust menacing economic integration (Feigenbaum, 2014). This dismisses simplistic statements that “the East offers to Russia rather easy gains” and that “the Asia-Pacific zone does not create any problems for Russia” as grossly misleading (Leclercq, 2013: p.45, p.46). It is therefore likely that Russia’s anti-hegemonic policies in Asia Pacific will see it engaged in power balancing, yet without the institutional and normative constraints, albeit often malfunctioning, that are available in Europe.

### **The Repertoire of Russian Policy Models**

In Western academic literature there is a common understanding that Russia’s resources of influence in Asia Pacific remain limited, and are sometimes substituted by “geopolitical fantasies” (Dibb, 2014). In Russia too experts admit an extremely low level of economic integration with Asian markets and modest military capabilities (Bordachev and Baranov, 2012). Russia’s late arrival to Asian institutions is also an issue (Lukianov, 2014). Russia is justifiably portrayed as a weak actor in this region who would need to adapt to the competing projects of integration without visible perspectives of promoting its own – still badly articulated – strategy of socialization.

Many Russian experts adhere to a securitized version of Russia's engagement with Asia Pacific, a region perceived as a source of new risks and threats requiring reaction from the Kremlin. Basic trends in Asia Pacific are the growing competition for leadership; the multiplicity of territorial conflicts with possible militarization; and the primordial role of the U.S. as a potentially "stabilizing force" with whom Russia ought to find a common language (Klimenko, 2013: p.35). In a less optimistic forecast, in Asia Pacific Russia is doomed to a confrontation with the U.S. (Fedorovsky, 2012: p.70) who seeks to pursue its own - much deeper and more radical, in comparison to APEC - project of regional integration. The TPP can be used to contain the Chinese economic expansion through regulating the issues of copyright legislation, environmental protection, social security and competition, and Russia would certainly need to adapt to the U.S. policies.

Against this background, there are several models of Russian foreign policy socialization in Asia Pacific that I will critically address. Three of these models are of realist pedigree: great power management, balance of power, and spheres of influence; while two others - normative convergence and normative plurality - are more identity-based and thus require a social constructivist reading.

The *great-power-management* model (otherwise historically known as a "concert of great powers") is perhaps the optimal for Russia in Asia Pacific. Hypothetically it might be based on a trilateral arrangement of power sharing with the United States and China (Petrovskiy, 2013: p.75). In the meantime, this trilateral forum could evolve in a more inclusive system of relations to replicate the experience of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with consultations on three baskets - security, economics, and humanitarian issues - at its core. The idea of a Helsinki process for Asia Pacific with new formats of security dialogue is part of the Russian debate as well (Petrovskiy, 2013: p.78).

Evidently, Russia has a price to pay for materializing this model through adapting to the key players and thus securing "its seat at the table" (Barabanov and Mankoff, 2013: p.8). A Valdai Club report, in particular, calls for a certain self-constraint: for example, Central Asia is dubbed more as an economically unsustainable region and a burden that Russia has to share with China, than an object of Russian expansion. Another potential move that Russia needs to undertake is the amelioration of its relations with Japan who is America's closest ally in the region. As a report of the Working Group on the Future of U.S.-Russia Relations assumes, Russia would also have to more explicitly recognize the pivotal significance of the East Asia Summit as an organization that reflects the U.S. strategic vision of trans-Pacific relations as based on long-term cooperative commitments of major actors involved (Barabanov and Mankoff, 2013: p.37).

It is hard to say how successful Russia can be in its attempts to foster a great-



power-management type of relations in Asia Pacific. So far Russia's intentions to position itself as an important element in power relations in Asia Pacific are reminiscent of its previous attempts to forge an alliance with the leading Euro-Atlantic nations and thus be recognized as an indispensable global actor. This strategy largely failed, as exemplified by the suspension of Russia's membership in the G8 due to the annexation of Crimea – a very consequential move that might undermine the Russian position in Asia Pacific as well.

*Power balancing* is a second model that Moscow might wish to adhere to in a situation of geopolitical and geoeconomic competition between China and the U.S. over the influence in the region. The idea boils down to the possibility for Russia to play a balancing role vis-à-vis both Beijing and Washington without establishing a bloc-based relationship with either of them.

This model implies the reconceptualization of China as a competitor rather than an ally for Moscow. Some experts warn that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is increasingly under the influence of China (Salin, 2012) who seeks to pursue its own military and economic policies towards the countries Central Asia. In their view, China is pursuing a strategy of joint political declaration with Moscow to get discounts in Russian energy supplies, and is keen on diversifying its external sources of hydrocarbons, with Russia seen as a potential source. However, decade-and-a-half-long negotiations between Moscow and Beijing on the price of Russian gas are still underway, making prospects of fruitful energy cooperation between the two countries dubious. Military resources and demographic potential make China a source of strong security pressure for Russia who seeks to avoid over-emphasis on China and thus is eager to diversify its economic relations to include countries seeking to counter-balance Beijing's predominance in the region, including Vietnam, South Korea, and Japan. As a Russian expert claims, "beginning in 2001, Russia's policy in the Asia-Pacific region became, in fact, an attempt to build a system of dialogue with the Pacific countries that would not depend on its relations with China" (Fenenko, 2013). The Customs / Eurasian Union project, as well as Russia's free trade negotiations with Vietnam and New Zealand, could be seen through this prism.

In this scenario Moscow resists Washington's intentions "to build the future Asian security system on the basis of American political alliances" (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.61). This is exactly why Russia would need to rely upon China and ultimately turn into a "soft balancer", or a "swing state" who can afford observing "military containment and rivalry between China and the United States without taking part in it directly" (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.52). This logic is based on pragmatic considerations: "a certain degree of confrontation between the U.S. and China could make it easier for Russia to resolve certain problems" (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.57), yet it is far from clear how exactly Russia might

take advantage of the U.S.-Chinese rivalry in Asia Pacific, and whether it can stay more or less neutral should hostilities erupt.

*Spheres of influence* is a third *Realpolitik* model that might have certain traction for Moscow – at least, this is exactly what Russia looks for in its relations with the EU. Yet beyond wider Europe the division of spheres of interests is of a limited significance and can be applicable basically to Russia's policy of blocking Chinese influence in Central Asia – a group of countries whom Russia strategically see as potential members of its Eurasian Union project. It is hard to see how Russia can succeed in negotiating the spheres of influence arrangements with China any more than it did with the EU. Arguably, it is more likely that Russia will be doomed to pursue unilateral policies in Asia Pacific without strong backing from partners or allies.

*Normative convergence* is a model grounded mainly in the prospect of Russia's gradual acceptance of the principles of economic liberalization in Asia Pacific promoted by the U.S. A normatively convergent Russia, instead of playing a balancing game, would seek to adapt its policies to the rules, procedures and regulations advocated by the dominating powers. In particular, as some experts presume, Russia can gradually develop a more well-disposed attitude towards the TPP. This would be of particular importance should the Eurasian Union project need to be adjusted to Russia's Asia Pacific policy – a perspective that some Russian experts seriously anticipate occurring in the future.

Finally, *normative plurality* as a conceptual model presupposes Russia's role as an autonomous pole whose norms – largely in the economic sphere – do not necessarily converge with those of other actors. Moreover, Russia might consider playing a role of politically representing those governments who “are tired of the ideas of liberalism” (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.60). This stance is likely to put Russia in confrontation with the United States and the U.S.-promoted project of TPP that a Russian expert views as a “prototype for an anti-Chinese political union” (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.60). Yet TPP is a factor affecting Russia as well: to a large extent, Moscow's failure to use its rotating presidency in APEC in 2012 for promoting major projects in the region is due to the loss of interest in this organization from the U.S., a key actor in Asia Pacific.

There are many other factors that are likely to foster Russia's unilateral policies, including the disinterest of major Asian countries in Russia's deeper engagement with regional institutions, and impediments for Russia's economic competitiveness in the Asian market due to the relatively high costs of Russian labor force. As Valdai Club's experts avow, “the huge Asia-Pacific economy operating without Russia is an inescapable truth... U.S. businesses in general have no interest in the Russian Far East... Japan, another candidate for the position of a priority partner,

will never make the Russian Far East a target of large-scale investment under conditions of the tight ties of politics and business in that country and unresolved territorial problems” (K Velikomu Okeanu...). This scenario implies that Russia will not be able to normatively and institutionally socialize in the Asia Pacific regional structures and will instead have to act unilaterally – echoing Russia’s policies towards the EU and “near abroad” countries.

## **Conclusions**

Debates among Russian experts and politicians betray a deep ambiguity about this country’s engagement with Asia Pacific. On the one hand, foreign policy experts are duly aware of the existing pitfalls and even perils for Russia in this region. Russian professional discourse – especially that originating from research centers located in Russia’s Far East – contains strong arguments conducive to securitizing Russia’s relations with China that is often perceived as Russia’s rival rather than a strategic ally. The scale of economic investment that new energy supply routes to China would require, as well as the scope of unresolved financial and trade issues with China, are well known to economic researchers (Inozemtsev, 2014) who are skeptical about the added value of Russia’s reorientation from European to Asian markets.

On the other hand, the Kremlin is determined to go ahead with the declared rerouting of its economic policies and political priorities from West to East. Moscow assumes that there is a demand for Russia’s deeper involvement in the regional milieu. In the mainstream discourse one may find ideas of Russia’s mission of “helping to bring together the disunited Asian states... and to create a democratic multipolar community of Asian-Pacific states” (Ivashentsov, 2013). By the same token, other optimistic voices claim that economic cooperation with countries like Japan can compensate for Russia the losses from possible Western economic sanctions (Senina, 2014).

These and similar other arguments betray the deeply political nature of the Russian policy of reorientation from Europe to Asia Pacific. This policy is more a reaction to the troubles Russia faces in its relations with the West than an authentic strategy in its own right. Sergey Naryshkin, the former chairman of the State Duma, has confirmed that Russia’s enhanced engagement with its eastern neighbors stems directly from the changing tenor of its relations with the West in his claim that Western sanctions against Moscow in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea would catalyze Russia’s rapprochement with Asia Pacific (ITAR-TASS, April 17, 2014). The widely disseminated explanation of Putin’s foreign policy as strategically intended to proffer a conservative interpretation of European identity rather than to seek an alternative to it elsewhere (Mezhuev 2014) also casts doubts on the authenticity of the “Asian drive”. The idea of multi-

polarity, as seen from Moscow, thus ultimately boils down to winning acceptance and recognition from the West rather than assuming the risks of starting a big game in Asia.

## **Bio**

Andrey Makarychev is guest Professor at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Science. His area of expertise and teaching includes Russian and European studies and EU - Russia relations. He had intensely published on a variety of topics related to Russian foreign policy, including co-edited volumes “Russia’s Changing Economic and Political Profiles” (Routledge, 2014) and “Mega-Events in post-Soviet Eurasia: Shifting Borderlines of Inclusion and Exclusion” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); a monograph “Russia and the EU in a Multipolar World” (Ibidem, 2014), a co-authored monograph “Celebration Borderlands in a Wider Europe: Nations and Identities in Ukraine, Georgia and Estonia” (Nomos, 2016). His research articles on EU, Russia and the common neighborhood countries were published in major peer-reviewed international journals such as ‘Problems of Post-Communism’, ‘Journal of International Relations and Development’, ‘Europe-Asia Studies’, ‘Journal of Eurasian Studies’, ‘Demokratizatsiya’, ‘European Urban and Regional Studies’, etc.

Andrey Makarychev’s record of previous employers includes – along with a number of Russian Universities – Danish Institute for International Studies (Copenhagen), Center for Security Studies, ETH (Zurich), and Institute for East European Studies (Free University, Berlin). He is a group coordinator in two international research projects: „Borders, Peoples and Institutions in the Baltic Sea Region“ (the University of Tartu and Free University of Berlin, supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) and „Religion as Soft Power in the South Caucasus“ (supported by Swiss National Science Foundation and administered by the University of Fribourg, Switzerland).

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