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A Constructivist Approach*

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***Sino-Russian Relations and Its Implication on Russia's Position  
in the Asia-Pacific: A Constructivist Approach***

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## **Abstract**

The paper seeks to explain Sino-Russian relations through a constructivist approach and explore the impact of Sino-Russian alliance on shaping Asia-Pacific relations toward Russia. Based on theoretical framework and discourse analysis, the paper will shed light on Sino-Russian ideational structure, explicating how shared ideas/interests have formed strong ties between two states and how ideational factors have affected on states' foreign policy behaviors. The paper argues that "Sinocentrism" in Russia's "turn to the East" policy can be an obstacle for Russia's success in the Asia-Pacific and explain the consequences of the clash of interests/ideas of China and India for the development of Russia in the Asia-Pacific.

In this sense, although most scholars have perceived Sino-Russia partnership to be successful for the both sides, this paper contributes that strong Sino-Russian relations are considered as a potential threat to Asia-Pacific security and stability. This point explains the collusion of interests between major Asia-Pacific powers (China, India and Japan).

**Keywords:** Sinocentrism, Russia, China, constructivism, Asia-Pacific

## **1. Introduction**

Russia's identity and interest in this region has been shifted toward the Eurasian power, especially after the Ukraine crisis in 2014 and its subsequent European sanctions. Earlier, Russia's foreign policy was primarily focused on European countries, but because of the conflict in Crimea, the US and the EU imposed a series of sanctions against Russia. In turn, the latter significantly limited Russia's access to Western capital and markets. This meant that Russia has begun to pay more attention to other regions and a significant emphasis was placed on the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to increased interest in the Asia-Pacific region, Russia also introduced a "turn to the East" policy or "pivot to East" as an alternative to the West (Hill & Lo, 2013).

Nevertheless, despite the increased interest in the Asia-Pacific region, comprehensive cooperation between Russia and the countries of this region still seems to be distant and minimal (Poonkham, 2016). This is because in view of the "turn to the East" policy, Russia has overemphasized on developing closer ties with the rising and assertive China.

In this sense, the study aims to discuss Russia-Asia-Pacific relations from the constructivist approach in order to identify the key ideational variables that have made an impact on Russian policy towards the Asia-Pacific. Therefore, the study poses the research question, as follows: Why is Russia not successful in Asia-Pacific region? And how Sino-Russian relations implicate on Russia's position in Asia-Pacific?

At the same time, one must proceed from the fact that Russia's position in the Asia-Pacific region and in Asia as a whole is currently not deteriorating, but, on the contrary, is noticeably improving, although not so fast. At the same time, the main tenets of Russia's policy remain the same as before, namely: not so strong participation in the economic and political activities of the Asia-Pacific Region as well as a lack of common ideas and interests with some of the Asia-Pacific countries. But almost everywhere today, the large and important role that Russia is destined to play in ensuring the political stability and security of this region, and more recently, in solving its energy problems, is gradually recognized (Bratersky & Policy, 2018).

## **2. Research Questions and Hypothesis**

As the problems and challenges still existing in Russian - Asia-Pacific relations, this research would primarily be guided by the key question: Why is Russia not successful in the Asia-Pacific region? Does China play a negative or positive role in Russia's development in Asia-Pacific?

The hypothesis of this thesis is that though there are several reasons why Russia is not very successful in the Asia-Pacific region economically and politically. The main factor is the lack of shared ideas, interests, values and norms so as to build strong relations with the Asia-Pacific countries. This study is using a constructivist theory to explain Russia–Asia-Pacific relations (and their lack thereof). Another reason can be explained by Russia's ineffective policy towards Asia-Pacific by treating the region ideationally as merely "a backup plan" for Russia in the event of conflicts in Europe. Moreover, Sino-Russia alliance is also expected to play a pivotal role in shaping Russia-Asia-Pacific countries relations. However, for now, this alliance seems to be seen as a threat to a stability in the Asia-Pacific region, what in turn affects the success of Russia's cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries due to security issues.

## **3. Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

- (1) To explain Sino-Russian relations through constructivist approach, based on shared interests and ideas.
- (2) To study the impact of Sino-Russian alliance on shaping Asia-Pacific relations toward Russia.

## **4. Research Methodology**

This study opts for a qualitative research methodology. Its independent variables consist of Russia's Eurasian identity and Sino-Russian ideational structure (shared ideas/interest). Dependent variables are the Russia–Asia-Pacific relations, especially its relationship with key actors in the region, namely China, Japan and India.

The study also applies a discourse analysis. This method is an extensive group of essentially diverse, linguistically oriented approaches. The discourse analysis is often defined as the integral sphere of the study of linguistic communication in terms of its form, function and situational, socio-cultural conditionality. It is important that one of the reasons for the emergence of an interdisciplinary field for the study of discourse analysis is due to the study of language in a social and cultural context, which once again emphasizes it is considered as the most appreciate method to be applied for this study (Johnstone, 2018).

The study will analyze both primary and secondary sources related to the topic of the problem being studied. Primary sources include interview transcripts, documents of negotiations and conferences held by Russia with the Asia-Pacific. Secondary sources include articles and documentaries that synthesize information on a topic. The study will use a discourse analysis in order to make sense of these sources.

## **5. Literature Review**

The literature review is categorized into two main themes: sinocentrism in Russia's "Pivot to the East" policy and China's influence on Russia's security role in Asia-Pacific.

### **5.1 Sinocentrism in Russia's "Pivot to the East" Policy**

In 2008 a new concept of the Russian foreign policy was adopted, in which the Asia-Pacific region was again presented as a foreign policy priority, which stated the need for a "turn to Asia" policy, which would help attract investment for the development of agriculture in Siberia and Far East and take steps for wider participation of the Russian Federation in regional integration organizations, it was expected that economic and political relations between Russia and Asian countries would grow exponentially. However, Fiona Hill and Bobo Lo (2013) argued in their article that in fact no important changes have occurred, and Russia still looks only towards China, whose economic growth is changing the general balance of power in the region and far beyond its border.

It is worth noting that Bobo Lo (2015) is of the opinion that “turn to East” policy is a myth and all this policy is limited only by excessively increased attention from Russia to China, which leaves behind the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. The so-called “sinocentrism”, which greatly limits Russia's influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

The fact is that the question of sinocentrism in relations between Russia and other countries of the Asia-Pacific region occupies almost the most important place, since from the very beginning there was a debate in one of the Natasha Kuhrt's (2015) articles where he raised a question which path in the east Russia will choose: diversity or sinocentrism. And as the current situation shows, Sino-Russian relations completely overshadow the development of Russia's relations with other Asian countries.

Therefore, the question arises whether Russia will be able to overcome this problem and build the same strong relations with other countries of the Asia-Pacific region without damaging relations with China.

According to Bobo Lo (2009), the answer to this question is rather positive than negative, because it is not for nothing that Russian - Chinese relations are commonly called the popular term “convenience vector”. The fact is that both countries recognize the importance of maintaining peaceful relations with the longest common border between the countries. Both countries consider their primary and secondary security problems, which makes the peaceful maintenance of their mutual strategic rear areas very important.

Thus, the Sino-Russian partnership entails some costs. The closer these relations are, the more difficult it is for Russia to develop ties with other Asian partners, which leads to a more general thesis that Russia's policy regarding Asia is determined more by external than internal factors.



## **5.2 China's Influence on Russia's Security Role in Asia-Pacific**

The security issue of the Asia-Pacific region is often raised by authors such as William T. Tow and Brendan Taylor (Tow & Taylor, 2013), Michael Yahuda (Yahuda, 2011). At the moment, there are serious threats to international security in the Asia-Pacific region, to pay close attention to which most leaders of the states of the region, if they do not refuse, then put off for the near future.

As it was said in the book named "Bilateralism, multilateralism and Asia-Pacific security: Contending cooperation" (Tow & Taylor, 2013), the main reason for the emergence of security problems in the Asia-Pacific region is that this region is the concentration on the one hand of such regional "heavyweights" as the United States, Japan, China, Russia, pursuing an active Pacific policy and defending their own geopolitical interests, on the other, "collective players", including countries with different military-political and economic potentials (for example, ASEAN).

However, Russia's role in the security and stability of the Asia-Pacific region remains controversial to this day. Most authors are divided into two groups: those who consider Russia to be the guarantor of security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region (Bratersky & Policy, 2018; Korolev, 2016) and those who, on the contrary, believe that Russia poses a direct or indirect threat to this region, especially in the alliance with China (Baev, 2016; Kashin & Lukin, 2018).

Maxim Bratersky believes that reliance on Russia as a key guarantee of stability ("security provider") in the Asia-Pacific region seems justified, because The Russian Federation has consistently pursued a policy of non-interference in disputes and possible conflicts in the region and acts as a neutral party, which at the same time has its own interest in maintaining a safe environment (Bratersky & Policy, 2018).

However, most of the Russian scholars (Baev, 2016; Kashin & Lukin, 2018) has a different opinion on this matter, since there is still a question of threat from the alliance between Russia and China, which only grows stronger every year.

From the very beginning, Sino-Russian security relations had serious global implications. The first dimension of these relations affected, firstly, the strategic situation and the alignment of forces in the Asia-Pacific region, and then Russian-Chinese military-technical cooperation.

Vasily Kashin and Alexander Lukin mentioned that from a recent time regularly one can observe enhanced interoperability of the armed forces of Russia and China both in continental theaters and in the maritime sphere. However, both sides officially deny the possibility of creating a formal military alliance. In addition, Russia still maintains a fully independent security policy in Asia, closely cooperating in military and technical relations in other countries, such as India. Vasily Kashin and Alexander Lukin also noted that Russia does not take sides and avoids participating in major territorial disputes involving China in the East China Sea and the South China Sea (Kashin & Lukin, 2018).

Again as it was said by Maxim Bratersky, Russia has become much more active in regional security problems, including the problem of North Korea and the problem of the Kuril Islands; it develops new directions for its arms exports, and is considering creating permanent naval presence in the southern part of the region, what certainly may play a role in making Russia one of the major player in Asia-Pacific (Bratersky & Policy, 2018).

## **6. Constructivism in Asia-Pacific Region: The Concept of "Identity"**

The theory of constructivism has become especially popular among researchers studying the Asia-Pacific region since the late 1980s. Despite that the constructivist approach is not the only true theory for exploring the Asia-Pacific region, the analysis shows that studying state identities, the position of the constructivists fits into a real picture of modern international relations in the Asia-Pacific region (Peou, 2002).

According to constructivists each nation has its own identity which create and impact on states' behavior, preferences, motivations and actions with all the following consequences.

The identity of the state has an intersubjective nature, that is, the identity of the state depends not only on the self-image, but also on the opinions of other states. Consideration of the identity of the state requires three levels of analysis - the international (or systemic) level, the state level and the individual level (Wendt, 1999).

There are two main types of state identity - collective and egoistic. Collective identity implies solidarity, mutual assistance and cooperation. Decisions are made on the basis of a compromise. This type of identity is the result of the development of international relations. In the early stages of the development of international relations, selfish identity prevailed, when states did not take into account others and acted on the basis of their selfish national interests, but gradually, as international relations developed and the number of international organizations and the development of law developed, collective identity began to prevail more and more and it is now predominant.

If we develop this idea, then we can say that the international system is a product of the creation by people of a set of ideas and a system of norms created at a specific time and in a specific place. Therefore, the key concept in constructivism is ideas, both general and particular (individual). Common ideas, being part of the social structure, form culture. The social role of this or that agent is also very important here.

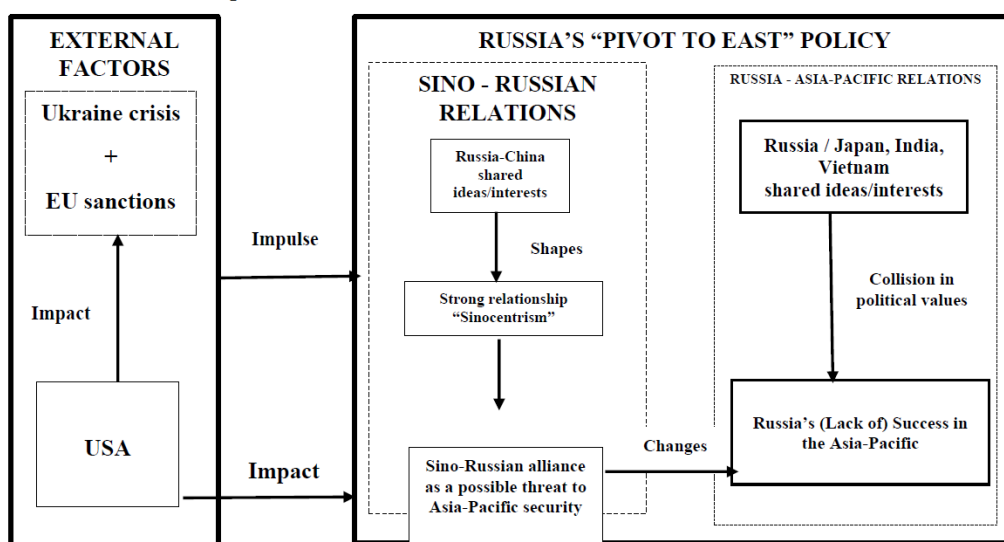
Thus, constructivism is based on two main principles: (1) the structures of human associations are determined by shared ideas rather than material forces; (2) the identity and interests of aspiring actors are constructed by these shared ideas, not given by nature. The fact that, from the point of view of constructivists, international relations are created by people (common interests, ideas, etc.) is the main difference between constructivism and other theory, in particular from neorealists, who argue that international relations are redefined by human nature.

Constructivists see international cooperation as a process of social learning in which interactions produce shared understanding of reality, redefined interests and may lead to the development of collective identities to ameliorate the security dilemma' (Acharya 1999b).

Finally, by positive interaction among states, socialization in international relations can gradually develop the norms of peaceful conduct. These points are productive in complementing and contributing to the conventional ways of thinking about Asia-Pacific relations as well as Russia- Asia- Pacific relations.

## 7. Conceptual Framework: A Constructivist Approach

Figure 1: A Constructivist Approach to Russia's Pivot to the East



In this thesis, the conceptual framework has been shaped by the constructivist approach. According to Alexander Wendt (1999), a constructivist approach argues that ideas and ideational constitution matter. Actors' (states') relations are determined and socially constituted by shared ideas, interests and values.

By adopting the constructivist vein, the thesis will investigate key ideational variables that explain Russia's Pivot to the East policy (see Figure 1). First, it will identify some key external factors, especially the Ukraine crisis, EU sanctions, and USA policy, that ideationally transform Russia's European identity and in turn shape its Eurasian identity and "pivot to the East" policy. Although it is believed that the increase of the attention from Russia's side to Asia-Pacific region was after the "turning point" in Russia-West relations, which was caused by Ukrainian crisis in 2013-2014 and its concomitant EU sanctions (Hill & Lo, 2013; Mankoff, 2009)

Second, the framework aims to explain the formation and development of Sino-Russian alliance, which is necessary in order to make sense of “the holistic picture” of Russia-Asia-Pacific relations. There are agreements between Russia and China on many issues of foreign policy and international cooperation, based on the recognition of common values and structures of common knowledge, which is constitutive for the maintenance and development of a common international culture of interacting social communities with their own values, interests, and historical identities. These all create strong relations between both states, that can be characterized by Russian scholars as “sinocentrism” in Russian foreign policy (Kuhrt, 2015).

In sum, the thesis is a constructivist approach to study how shared ideas and interests between Russian and the Asia-Pacific actors influence the characteristics of their bilateral and multilateral relations under the rubric of Russia’s Pivot to the East policy. By understanding these variables, it may change political and international behaviors of the Asia-Pacific actors towards Russia.

## **8. Explanatory Value of Constructivism in Shaping Relations between Russia and Asia-Pacific Region**

### **8.1 Constructivism Explaining Russia-Asia-Pacific Relations**

Studying the Asia-Pacific region, it is striking that most foreign authors bypass Russia. Russia is either ignored altogether or is mentioned in passing as a secondary or even third-level player. From this point of view, it is very difficult to analyze the relations between Russia and the Asia-Pacific region from a constructivist approach in general.

Since it was noted earlier that Russia and the Asia-Pacific have quite a few common ideas that could serve as a common ideational factor for strong cooperation in the future, as in a separate situation of China and Russia. And this reflects the fact that Russia is not yet one of the most influential actors in the region and is largely on the periphery of regional processes.

Nevertheless, recently, one can meet Russia and the Asia-Pacific region in the same context of the “security community” (“mutual security”). This term designates a group of states whose values and interests are so close that the use of force in relations with each other becomes unthinkable.

Interestingly, the authors interpret this concept differently. Most associate this concept with the Asia-Pacific region itself, and they oppose Russia as a violator of this concept, while recently Russia has been considered within this concept, thereby supporting the constructivists' idea of a common ideational factor. The division of opinions can most likely be explained by the vestiges of the Cold War: military unions of the USA-Japan and USA-South Korea. In the absence of similar alliances from Russia and China.

The fact is that Russia is characterized by its own philosophy of foreign policy, which does not always correspond to the ideological concept of the Asia-Pacific countries. For example, the philosophy of Russian foreign policy implies consideration through the prism of competition and protection of the interests of the Russian energy business.

A relatively stable international order has already been established in the Asia-Pacific region. It is based on a set of principles and norms shared by the vast majority of states in the region, the key place being occupied by the concept of state sovereignty and the provisions arising from it, such as territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful coexistence and others.

The absence of interstate wars and major armed conflicts in the region can be considered an important evidence of the presence of international order in the Asia-Pacific region. That is why constructivists conclude about the regional identity of Asian countries remains stable, but Russia with its own philosophy of foreign policy may violate it.

## **8.2 Constructivism in Shaping Sino-Russian Relations**

The constructivist approach has been used more than once to study Sino-Russian relations. The relevance of appealing to the constructivist theory when analyzing the relations between Russia and China is due to the fact that the state interests of both countries are related to the

regulation of political, economic and cultural-social relations, and one of the most influential areas studying the influence of sociocultural characteristics on the behavior of actors in the international arena, is constructivism. The central issues of constructivist research are “the issues of the emergence, development, diffusion and / or socialization of international norms, as well as their direct impact on the behavior of states and other subjects of international relations”.

Occupying an important place in the study of international relations, identity for constructivists acts as a mediator between the environment and the interests of actors, mainly states. Constructivists focus on the relationship between public interests and identities. A. Wendt tried to create the concept of national identity as a product of interactive interactions of actors within the international structure, highlighting three “cultures of anarchy” (Hobbesian, Lockyan and Kantian), three corresponding to them on the basis of the identity of different ideal types of “role structures” (enemy, rival, friend), and three types of internalization of rules by the way the system is legitimized (through violence, by rational calculation of costs and benefits, due to mutual complementarity).

It is believed that the constructivist approach allows you to complement existing research on the history and current state of Russian-Chinese relations in the context of the socio-cultural characteristics of China and Russia, as well as to outline the prospects for the development of these relations in the future from the point of view of spiritual factors.

So, one of the factors that influenced the formation of the sociocultural characteristics of Russia and China is that in the 20th century, Russia and China went through a period of unprecedented cultural integration based on a common Marxist ideology. The Chinese perceived the world in many ways through the prism of Soviet literature and art. The collapse of official ideology in the USSR and its latent crisis in China similarly led both countries to return to their "roots" and origins. This gives a chance for constructive interaction between modern Russia and China, during which they can significantly enrich themselves in the process of knowing each other.

The constructivist approach is characterized by the recognition of the interdependence of international processes and relations and the conceptualization of the picture of international relations. This determines the significance in international processes and relations of norms, values, historical identity, characteristic of states and their political leaders. There is agreement between Russia and China on many issues of foreign policy and international cooperation, based on the recognition of common values and structures of common knowledge, which is constitutive for the maintenance and development of a common international culture of interacting social communities with their own values, interests, and historical identities.

### **8.3 External Factors as Implication on Russia-Asia-Pacific Countries' Relations: Factor of US Leadership in the Asia-Pacific Region and the Effect of Sanctions**

Both positive and negative factors naturally influence Russia's position in the Asia-Pacific region. Now the negative factors that hinder the development of regional partnership are stronger. Hence, the task is to reduce, as far as possible, the influence of negative factors on Russia's cooperation with the Asia-Pacific countries.

One of these negative factors, and possibly the main one, is the direct or indirect influence of the United States. Variants of the American approach to Russia's relations with the Asia-Pacific countries, and mainly to relations between Russia and China, are built around the problem of retaining the US leadership in the region. Accordingly, the following questions arise: is the United States ready to share leadership in the Asia-Pacific region with Russia and China? And will the United States be able to share ideological values with Russia and China? Judging by the current trends, the answer is rather negative.

The negative dynamics of Russian-American relations affects Russia's cooperation with leading regional players. Politically, for Japan and South Korea, military-political alliances with the United States are top foreign policy priorities, and Washington's poor relations with Moscow are unlikely to improve Moscow's relations with Seoul and Tokyo.



Another important factor is anti-Russian sanctions. Starting in 2014 after Ukraine crisis, the USA, the EU and several other Western countries have pursued a policy of sanctions against Russia, which implies a combination of financial, trade, economic, visa and other restrictions imposed on individual industries and sectors of the national economy, Russian companies and individual citizens of Russia as well as their partners and contractors abroad. Anti-Russian economic sanctions became a prerequisite for the implementation of Russia's strategy aimed at integration into the markets of Asian countries ("turn to the East"), primarily China, as a tool for renewing economic growth and reducing the dependence of the system of Russian trade and economic relations on European countries (Vyacheslavovna, 2015).

## **9. Russia and China: The Development of a Common Identity as the Foundation for the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership**

Russia and China relations are a source of dependence not only for political, socio-economic situation in the Asia-Pacific region, but also for the global political climate. In the past few years, it has become increasingly obvious and relevant to formulate new theoretical and practical approaches to the study of the interaction between Russia and China, which have vivid cultural and historical characteristics. Cultural and humanitarian ties play an important role in the relationship between these states and have a great impact on the process of their interaction (Valeev & Alikberova, 2015). This means that, the foreign policy strategy and behavior of China and Russia in the international arena are determined not only by economic and military-political factors, but also by the socio-cultural characteristics of both countries.

The relevance of using constructivist theory when considering relations between Russia and China can be explained by the fact that the national interests of countries are associated with the regulation of economic, cultural and social relations. The central issues of diffusion and / or socialization of international norms, as well as their direct impact on the behavior of other subjects of international relations. Various factors, including cultural factors, have a huge impact on the relationship between states and their peoples. Culture has become one of the central points for beneficial cooperation between Russia and China, providing the basement for formation of collective identity as well as "mutual security" in Sino-Russian relations (Kashin & Lukin, 2018).

The constructivist approach is characterized by the recognition of the interdependence of international processes, relations and the conceptualization of the picture of international relations. This determines the significance in international processes and relations of norms, values, historical identity, characteristic of states and their political leaders.

There is agreement between Russia and China on many issues of foreign policy and international cooperation, based on the recognition of common values and structures of common knowledge, which is constitutive for the maintenance and development of a common international culture of interacting social communities with their own value orientations, interests and historical identity (Valeev & Alikberova, 2015).

China and Russia, in their various political forms, have interacted with each other. Politically and culturally, both China and Russia share authoritarian characteristics in their contemporary regimes, not to mention their common communist backgrounds (Ying, 2018).

Generally speaking, China and Russia share the same “ideology of state,” which has facilitated strong state control in the political and economic transition of these two countries. Political-cultural similarities help China and Russia find commonalities in social structure and state regime, including collectivism and authoritarianism today. Belonging to different types of civilization, they still can find many common “mentalities”. This explains why Beijing and Moscow mutually support and respect the right to choose their own developmental path.

The presented examples of cooperation between Russia and China make it possible to assert that the creation of an international dialogue is carried out while preserving national values and identity. At the same time social constructs emerging in the process of social action and in the system of human interaction, which are based on the structures of joint knowledge, play a particular importance.

Over the past twenty years, bilateral relations between Russia and China have come a long historical path. They were distinguished by a combination of a forward-looking strategic approach to various areas with an attentive attitude to the most complex problems of our time. It is especially important to continue the most comprehensive and deep exchange of views

between the leaders of Russian and China on the basis of the principles of peace, equality and independence. The preservation of independence, autonomy and equality in international relations is a matter of paramount importance.

China and Russia - were able to completely solve the border problems that they inherited in their historical legacy, achieved mutual military confidence and disarmament in the border areas, became really good neighbors and friends who strive for mutually beneficial cooperation. A similar precedent is difficult to find not only in Asia, but even throughout the world.

#### **10. Consequence of the Clash of Interests of China and India for the Development of Russia in the Asia-Pacific**

It has been proven that India-China relations have ongoing confrontations due to mutual mistrust, securitization and historical memory between two states. However, given the inevitable rivalry, the strategies, forms and variations of such competition are diverse, which implies both new opportunities and risks for Russia.

In assessing the prospects for India - China cooperation, the opinions of the scholars seem to differ. Some researchers optimistically believe that in the current decade the cooperation between India and China will prevail. However, such conclusions are made only on the basis of official documents and statements, in which differences and contradictions are traditionally smoothed out (Uyanaev, 2014). It is likely that the status quo in Indian - Chinese relations will be preserved, as well as their gradual, slow-moving normalization, allowing for an improvement.

It is highly possible that the rivalry between India and China will become one of the main factors in world politics of the current century, and the Indian Ocean will appear as an arena of competition for global trade routes ("big transport game of corridor") (Kaplan, 2010). The real conflict between the two Asian giants may erupt at sea, but it seems unlikely that India will become part of a wider coalition to contain China. It seems that both countries have become hostages of the security dilemma.

The insufficient and incomplete knowledge about each other is the reason for the growing mistrust between the two countries. At the same time, achieving a balance of power and taking measures for effective military deterrence is also a necessary task for India.

Currently, there are several pain points in India-China bilateral relations: lack of trust and security dilemma, unresolved border problem, increasing competition in South Asia and the Indian Ocean and growing activity of China in the Asia-Pacific region.

For Russia, this confrontation has a dual meaning. On the one hand, relations with China are extremely important for Russia from any point of view. On the other hand, it is necessary for China to have a counterweight and not gain too much strength. China can thus partially counterbalance the United States, and India can counterbalance China.

In most cases, the role of Russia in India-China relations is noted as positive and stabilizing, by the fact that it is Russia that “has good will” and enjoys great trust in both India and China. However, Russia may be able to take the most advantageous position without entering into confrontation with either side and ensuring constructive interaction with everyone.

## **11. Conclusion**

The increase role of the Asia-Pacific region in Russia international development due to the weakening of the values of European external relations is long-term, expected and steady. At some point, the Asia-Pacific has played a role not only in economic geography, but also in the economic, social and cultural development of Russia itself.

In the short term, the Asia-Pacific region will rely on bilateral relations, trying to preserve, protect from negative external influences or increase the positive inherent in them. For Russia, these ties are prioritized in such a way that China has emerged as the main strategic partner. India and Japan, for their part, not only occupy a significant place in Russia's foreign economic activity, but also, in a sense, balance the growing influence of China.

As Russia's involvement in the economy and politics of the Asia-Pacific region increases, it will have to rethink its approaches to the issues of bilateral relations with the main region's countries. Maintaining a special, privileged relationship with China will likely underpin any Russian strategy. Both Moscow and Beijing understand that the destruction of the achieved level of trust and the return of even mild forms of confrontation will have disastrous consequences for the national security, politics and the economy of both countries. However, Russia will be faced with a choice of whether to maintain a friendly to China neutrality in the conflicts developing in Asia-Pacific with its participation (this is an optimistic option), or to stand entirely on the side of China.

Thus, Russia's cooperation with the Asia-Pacific countries can be classified as quite successful. This is based on the prevailing mood of countries - the desire to cooperate with each other, not conflict.

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