



Thematic Maps as a Form of Graphic Presentation of Geopolitical and Geographical Ideas

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Abstract

The design and creation of thematic maps as a form of presenting geopolitical and geostrategic ideas has especially been part of the development of geographical, political and military science since the 20th century. There is no standardised model for making geopolitical and geostrategic maps, however it can be argued that the evolution of graphic presentations on thematic maps has followed the development of these sciences.

Typically, a geopolitical or geostrategic idea is initially imagined, i.e. based on speculation rather than a theoretical basis, or non-empirical abstraction, i.e. not applied in practice. Nevertheless, the graphic representation of spatial relations between geopolitical actors and the geostrategic importance of a given space is of great significance, because the map provides perceptions of the idea, spatial conception and interdependence of the key spatial elements.

Among the best known geostrategic maps are those based on the Heartland theory (H.J. Mackinder, 1904) and Rimland theory (N.J. Spykman, 1940), and there are many maps showing the geostrategic importance of certain spatial units, for example, the Mediterranean area through centuries of turbulence. Most scientists have adopted, replaced or supplemented cartographic representations as the easiest and most enduring expressions of geostrategic concepts. The greatest number of geopolitical maps was created at the time of the Cold War, due to its global importance and the great interest it aroused among geopoliticians and other scientists.

In order to achieve clarity in the graphic representation of geopolitical and geostrategic concepts, it is important to choose the most suitable mapping tools to highlight key spatial elements - objects of geopolitical or military interest. A good graphic representation clearly conveys the main idea and enables a quick and easy understanding of geopolitical relationships and the geostrategic importance of a given space.

The aim of this paper is to present different ways of mapping geopolitical and geostrategic ideas, especially in Croatia. Thematic maps published by the military and in scientific literature are analysed. A diachronic approach allows insight into the development of thematic maps used in geopolitical and geostrategic publications.

Keywords: geopolitics, geostrategy, thematic map