

Eurasia in Russian and Chinese Political Expertise: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Since Russia and China are both leading states on the Eurasian continent, the dynamism of their relations to a large extent dominates the dynamics of geopolitical processes in the region. The growing and escalating stand-off with the West in both countries, notably due to the recent developments in Ukraine, appears likely to further the rapprochement between Moscow and Beijing on many issues of strategic interaction. The relevant question in that context is whether the Russian and Chinese perceptions of Eurasia, of Eurasian regionalism, are truly compatible. In the past few years, Russia has made considerable attempts to foster its vision of an external international order on the continent, including the popularisation and substantiation of Eurasia as a concept with regard to its geopolitical surroundings. One of the main consumers of these ideas was supposed to be China. Have Russian endeavours accomplished their goals? In seeking to provide an appropriate response to this question, the authors have focused on an analysis of both states' expert and academic discourse on Eurasia and Eurasian regionalism. This article conceptualises Eurasia as a social construct, an element of foreign policy discourse that is intended to be mirrored in academic and expert discourse. A comparative analysis of Russian and Chinese discourses should ascertain – albeit at least in part – the extent to which Beijing has embraced Moscow's ideas on the development of Eurasian regionalism and the proximity of Russian and Chinese approaches to the international order of the continent or a particular part of it.

Keywords

Russian foreign policy, Chinese foreign policy, Russian–Chinese relations, Greater Eurasia, Eurasian regionalism, Eurasian security, discourse analysis

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Problem Statement: Russia, China and Eurasian Regionalism

Eurasian regionalism has been developing quite rapidly over the past few years. While the term 'Eurasia' has acquired a certain academic reputation – from a concept mainly attributed to research in the field of geopolitics, it has become more widely and steadily accepted in the global academic discourse (Macaes, 2018). Yet the concept's content is still debatable, even at the most basic level – in terms of the territorial boundaries it encompasses. Until recently, the notion of 'Eurasian' in global discourse mainly referred to the post-Soviet space, in some cases including some adjacent countries. It was, and to a large extent still is,

this interpretation that has guided Western academic discourse. This structural and conceptual framework is being maintained both in scholarly discourse¹ and in foreign policy institutions – for example, the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State is

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mandated to cover countries geographically belonging to Europe and the post-Soviet space.²

Meanwhile, other conceptualisations suggesting broader territorial boundaries for Eurasia are also being intensively promoted. Thus, certain scholars describe the Eurasian region as part of a continent geopolitically outside the West (Karaganov, 2018, pp. 85–93) and, accordingly, encompassing Asia and at least some of the Middle East alongside the post-Soviet space. Other scholars suggest that the geopolitical boundaries of Eurasia also include Europe (Diesen, 2021). The broadest interpretation finally proposes to obliterate the boundaries between Eurasia being a geographic and geopolitical concept, assuming that today, even the most distant countries and regions of the continental landmass remain interdependent enough to regard the entire continent as a large cross-regional international system (Macaes, 2018).

This recent debate is a reflection of Eurasian regionalism, developing both as an unbiased process that emerging concepts are trying to comprehend and as a social construct, *per se*. However, the lack of a sustainable consensus on identifying the territorial boundaries of Eurasia as a geopolitical concept (let alone the internal content of this concept) attests to some of this process's randomness. Indeed, this problem frequently generates a sort of 'linguistic' or, more precisely, a terminological barrier. Whilst acknowledging the development of Eurasian regionalism as given, various countries on the continent have divergent views on its nature, substance and perspectives.

It often distorts the states' understanding of each other's initiatives and goals. Nevertheless, as in the Asia-Pacific region, Eurasia has its own 'noodle bowl', albeit in this case, it comprises ideas, concepts and projects rather than institutions and integration formats. At present, almost all leading states in the Eurasian area have their own Eurasian initiatives and agendas: Russia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, Central Asian and the ASEAN countries, as well as the EU (Lukin & Yakunin, 2019). In some instances, these initiatives explicitly employ the terms 'Eurasia' and 'Eurasian', although they often fill the concept with their own notions. For others, political and economic initiatives use different terms, but their focus on the centre of the continent and the advancement of transcontinental economic, logistical and social linkages also enables them for inclusion among the projects that constitute the core of Eurasian regionalism. The prime example of the former is Russia, with its auspices and support for a number of Eurasian initiatives: the Eurasian Economic Union, the Eurasian Development Bank and the Comprehensive Eurasian Partnership. The chief example of the latter is China, which rarely uses Eurasian terms at the official level. The projects promoted by Beijing under the One Belt, One Road initiative, however, are the main economic foundation for any pan-Eurasian agenda (Karaganov et al., 2017).

At the moment, Russia and China are the two leading states driving the dynamics of Eurasian regionalism, each from its own perspective. There is a peculiar 'division of labour' between them. China's policy is mainly focussing on the implementation of large-scale economic projects and on the One Belt, One Road Initiative. Beijing's official goal is not to geopolitically consolidate Eurasia or any significant part of the continent, in any case, not yet. Moreover, the projects across the central part of the continent are only a component part of a larger and more ambitious policy to develop the logistics infrastructure between the eastern and western parts of the continent, also including maritime routes. Within this logic, China does not intend to provide its economic projects with direct political content, while officially, Beijing keeps stressing that the ultimate outcome of its policy will be for all countries to develop, on a global, as well as on a continental scale.³

Russia, with its admittedly fewer resources, demonstrates an aspiration to articulate a development framework for a new trans-regional order in Eurasia, drawing on the strengthened role of China and other non-Western powers. Over the past few years, the idea that Eurasia needs a geopolitical consolidation around a positive, alternative agenda to that of the West has become one of the leitmotifs for Moscow's foreign policy. One of the main addressees of this policy is naturally, China, which has the greatest systemic impact on the ongoing processes in the region. As a matter of fact, Beijing's soft involvement in the Eurasian order development agenda, inspired by Russian perceptions, has become the most important aspirational goal of Russian official and scientific diplomacy. On this front, Moscow has achieved some success.

Thus, in the year 2015, Russia and China adopted a Joint Statement on the conjugation of the Construction of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt. The two countries formally supported each other's projects and declared their mutual desire to 'ensure progressive and sustainable economic growth in the region, intensify economic integration in the region and preserve regional peace and development'.⁴ The term 'conjugation' proved to be apt and highly distinctive, especially from Moscow's point of view: Russia proposed to Beijing to cooperate in developing a regional order in the heart of Eurasia through the mega-initiatives coordination. Since then, the term 'conjugation' has been firmly embedded in the Russian foreign policy lexicon.

However, the 2015 document spatially encompassed only the EAEU countries, which, *de facto*, restricted conjugation ideas to Central Asia. The following year, Moscow proposed a much more expansive and ambitious framework for collaboration. Speaking at the St Petersburg Economic Forum, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, put forward the initiative of a Comprehensive Eurasian Partnership: "We propose to think about creating a Greater Eurasian

Partnership with the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as countries we already have close relations with – China, India, Pakistan and Iran. And of course, I mean our partners in the CIS and other interested countries and associations”.⁵ The Russian leader didn’t exclude the possibility that the European Union could become a part of the new initiative. At that time, this made the Russian initiative of Greater Eurasia the most geographically ambitious format of Eurasian regionalism.

The content of the Russian initiative remains unclear even today, 6 years after its launch. Initially, Russia emphasised mainly economic aspects, which only highlighted the desire to harmonise with Chinese projects and steer them in a favourable track for Moscow: ‘We could start with the simplification and unification of sectoral cooperation and investment regulations, as well as non-tariff measures of technical and phytosanitary regulation, customs administration and intellectual property rights protection; then gradually move towards the reduction and then towards the elimination of tariff constraints’,⁶ explained the Russian prime minister. Russia, therefore, saw its proposed Greater Eurasian Partnership as an ideological and institutional continuation of the EEU. The latter could provide China with the experience of regulating and establishing common economic spaces. Also, in 2016, in his speech at the Eastern Economic Forum, Vladimir Putin stressed that it was through the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Putin highlighted that it is through cooperation between the EEU and China that ‘the basis for a Comprehensive Eurasian Partnership in the five-plus-one format is being created’.⁷

Gradually, however, Russia’s vision of a Greater Eurasia has become more and more explicitly comprehensive, offering an agenda for security, pan-political dialogue and, to some extent, even values in addition to economics and regulation. Addressing the 2017 One Belt, One Road Forum, the Russian president announced that ‘Greater Eurasia is not an abstract geopolitical scheme but, without any exaggeration, a genuinely future-oriented civilisational project’, adding that ‘Eurasia is capable of developing and proposing a meaningful and positive agenda. It concerns security, the development of relations between states, the organisation of the economy, the social sphere, the governance system, and the search for new growth drivers’.⁸ Thus, Greater Eurasia was, in fact, put on a par with the Chinese initiative, which was likewise rapidly acquiring civilisational, value and political dimensions. Moscow obviously sought to match the two mega-initiatives and aspired to offer to Beijing its vision of Eurasian advancement.

Since 2016, significant strides have been made towards this policy, both at the formal level and at the academic expert level. At the expert level, one of the key venues for advancing the Greater Eurasia concept has been the Valdai International Discussion Club. Since 2016, for example, the

club has held a special annual conference in Shanghai, whose agenda has largely been built around the Greater Eurasia concept, although, of course, the advancement of the Greater Eurasia idea was not exclusively confined to this venue. The Russian approach was promoted in a large number of international analyses and academic papers. A more detailed systematisation and analysis of these materials follows.

Considerable emphasis has been placed on promoting the idea of Greater Eurasia on international platforms, most prominently, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which is crucial for Russia and the PRC in the region. The Greater Eurasian Partnership idea was, indeed, enshrined in the 2019 Bishkek Declaration, which stated that ‘member states consider it essential to use the potential of the region’s countries, international organisations and multilateral associations to form a region-wide, open, mutually beneficial and equal cooperation in Eurasia for robust security and sustainable development’.⁹ This enabled Moscow to be optimistic about the gradual shaping of Greater Eurasia as one of the major international political development ideas for the continent. ‘I am convinced that the SCO could become a comfortable platform for launching work on the formation of a Greater Eurasian Partnership’,¹⁰ Deputy Russian Foreign Minister I.V. Morgulov noted that same year.

Russia and the People’s Republic of China signed a Joint Statement on the development of a comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation in a new era in 2019, which stated: ‘The parties believe that the ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative and the idea of a Greater Eurasian Partnership can develop in tandem and in alignment and will facilitate the growth of regional alliances, as well as bilateral and multilateral integration processes for the benefit of Eurasian states’.¹¹ Effectively, the reciprocal recognition of the initiatives brought about the desired outcome for Moscow – Beijing formally recognised the Russian project as being equal in stature to the GPOP. Moreover, at the highest level, it proclaimed its support for the ideas and objectives of the Greater Eurasia initiative.

However, in practice, the extent to which China eventually embraced and adopted the Russian concept remains an open question. Chinese officials and documents barely operate with the terms Eurasia or Greater Eurasia, save for joint bilateral and multilateral declarations. To what extent is Chinese foreign policy thinking guided by Moscow’s proposed ideas and concepts? How successful can Russia’s efforts in recent years to advocate – at different levels – its vision of the evolution in international relations on the continent (or parts of it) be considered?

Determining it is not an easy task, especially based exclusively on official documents and speeches. Below, we suggest looking at this issue through the prism of an analysis of academic and expert discourse in Russia and China. To a

certain, and sometimes limited extent, degree of freedom from official rhetoric, expert ‘think tanks’ and academic institutions theoretically should be more open to both producing and ‘absorbing’ political narratives and concepts and making them part of the foreign policy thinking of their respective societies. A comparative analysis of Russian and Chinese discourses on Eurasia should establish, at least in part, the extent to which Beijing has embraced Moscow’s ideas on the development of Eurasian regionalism and how close the mutual understanding, and thus, the positions, taken by Russia and China on the future international order in Eurasia converge.

Two notable generalisations should be mentioned as part of current research analysis considering the question of public and expert discourses on the topic of Eurasia concept both in Russia and in China. First, in the course of the concept formation and development of the ‘Greater Eurasia’ project, there has been a certain discussion in Russian expert community on various interpretations of the concept, as well as various approaches to its perception. Karaganov in 2018 [2018] posed Eurasia as a new geostrategic and economic pole that would withstand the pro-US pole within the framework of Greater Eurasia, the Belt and Road initiative, and BRICS. [Lukin \(2015\)](#) and [Trenin \(2015\)](#) developed the concept formation of ‘Greater Eurasia’ from the ‘Greater Asia’ as the antonymic concept of Greater Europe as the former major direction of Gorbachev’s foreign policy; the very presence of the word ‘Asia’ in the concept leads, according to the authors’ assumption, to the inevitably strong link between Russia and China as a growing world power. On the contrary, [Bordachev \(2018\)](#) perceives Eurasia as initially purely philosophical concept, which, being initially far from rational implications, needs to be further applied to essential needs of Russian both foreign policy (cooperation with the East) and its domestic policies of developing the Russian Far East and Siberia. Finally, [Vokressensky and others \(Volodin et al., 2018\)](#) argue that the transformation of the world order presents a multipolar, rather than a bipolar process, with various network multi-level hierarchical systems, including those of ‘Greater Eurasia’ project, ‘Belt and Road’ initiative, Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for TransPacific Partnership (CPTPP), etc. However, while there have been certain debates in Russian expert community, they are not the focus of our research. Instead, what we are rather interested in is to show how the official Russian initiative is reflected in Chinese discourse, so the concept of Eurasia is generalised on the official level of Russian foreign policy here.

As for the dynamic of the Russian concept formation on the official level, we assume that, due to comparatively small number of official announcements discussed in the current chapter, the dynamic of conceptual changes of Eurasia did not bear any systemic or fundamental changes. The authors of the paper are focussing on the period after

2016, that is, after the announcement of Greater Eurasia initiative by Vladimir Putin.¹² Over the past 7 years, however, the main changes have been as follows: in 2019 the mutual recognition of Greater Eurasia and the Belt and Road initiative between China and Russia made these initiatives formally complementary to each other, which became an official recognition that Greater Eurasia is built largely on a Russian–Chinese basis and which made implications of Russian initiative more specific.¹³ However, this only continued the traditions laid down in the format of the conjugation of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt. Finally, we assume that in February 2022 further breakdown between Russia and the West might have led to subsequent transformation of geographical definition of Eurasia, although in April 2022 Deputy Chairman of the Security Council Dmitry Medvedev that it was Russia’s goal to provide conditions for further building ‘open Eurasia from Lisbon to Vladivostok’, which correlates with initial conceptualisation of Russian expert community. However, testing this hypothesis lies outside the scope of current research.

Comparative Discourse on Eurasia: Methodology and Data Analysis

Considering that the purpose of this paper is to study the patterns of discourse change around Eurasia in Chinese and Russian expert circles, the application of qualitative discourse analysis is a natural and relevant part of gaining a better understanding of how parties formulate and interpret the concept in pursuit of their own policies ([Jorgensen & Fillips, 2008](#), pp. 26–27). It is legitimate to apply the approach of critical discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough in this circumstance, for discourse is seen as the unit constituting (composing) reality ([Tiecher et al., 2000](#), pp. 48). In other words, critical discourse analysis (CDA) will help to show how different or similar constitution of reality by different actors in the international process results in different or similar implementation of regional integration projects’ policies of Russia and China.

Therefore, the main objective of this analysis is to answer the question: how do the Chinese and Russian expert communities construct the notion of Eurasia in the framework of China’s and Russia’s foreign policy implementation, since 2016 up to the current period? In particular, solving the following tasks within the discourse analysis will help researchers to approach the most precise analysis of this concept:

- Who are the principal actors of Eurasian politics?
- Which geographical and political features of the region the authors impute to the concept?

- Whether confrontation or interaction with other international actors prevail over the operation of the concept, etc?

The answers to the above questions will thus, help to show what basis the Chinese and Russian approaches to Eurasia as a theoretical concept form the ground for their current international policies.

The critical discourse analysis draws on texts from leading Chinese think tanks engaged in foreign policy and international relations. For representative coverage of cases, we referred to the top positions of Chinese think tanks, as well as associated state think tanks under the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese government, in the international Global Go to Think Tank Index, an international ranking system that estimates the research centres and think tanks impact on the political and foreign economic decision-making.¹⁴ The top 10 positions of the Global Go to Think Tank Index are as follows:

1. China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR);
2. China Institute of International Studies (CIIS);
3. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS);
4. The Shanghai Institute of International Studies (SIIS);
5. The China Reform Forum (CRF);
6. The China Centre for Contemporary World Studies (CCCWS);
7. The Development Research Centre (DRC) of the State Council;
8. The China Centre for International Economic Exchange (CCIEE);
9. The Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP);
10. The National Economics Research Institute (NERI).

Furthermore, these think tanks' websites selected all articles published in the period from 2016 to 2021, with a brief reference or detailed description of Eurasia or Eurasian regional politics by introducing the Chinese term 'Eurasia' – 欧亚 – as a core term. As the number of sorted articles is significantly larger than the number considered in the discourse analysis, a random sample of 20% of the number of articles from each think tank on the list under consideration, is aimed at keeping the selected cases representative, in order to reduce the time costs. Thus, our discourse within a Eurasia concept is analysed using a Chinese-language sample of 42 texts.

Likewise, to the method described above, for generating a sample of expert writings in Chinese, this paper draws a selection of materials devoted to the Eurasia analysis from the 32 Russian leading think tanks' articles:

1. Carnegie Moscow Centre;
2. Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations;
3. Russian International Affairs Council;
4. Journal *Russia in Global Affairs*;
5. National Research University Higher School of Economics – Centre for Complex European and International Studies;
6. Valdai International Discussion Club;
7. MGIMO Review of International Relations;
8. Journal 'Problems of National Strategy' under the auspices of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies.

To compile the sample, seven of the most prominent Russian think tanks were listed as the main sources of information. The publications selected were no older than 5 years old by the time we commenced our work in 2022. Multiple articles from each organisation were reviewed in which the author(s) provide a detailed assessment of the developments in Eurasia and/or write extensively about the ongoing state of affairs in Eurasia. We selected only the articles that fit the scope of this paper – articles of Russian scholars, where the term 'Eurasia' appeared at least once. Moreover, the sample used in this paper was randomly generated from the total number of publications in equal percentages. In doing so, works by officials, original publications on other platforms and articles by the same researchers written at other organisations were excluded from the study.

It is necessary to mention the potential limitations of data collection and the method of critical discourse analysis though. First, the overall number of Chinese and Russian expert publications on the topic of Eurasia both as a concept and as a specific international cooperation project, massively exceed the capabilities of CDA method, which is a more case-oriented approach with a focus on specific text inferences. In order to conduct research on representative data though, we referred to the classical critical discourse analysis approach based on random sampling method, which mitigates risks of obtaining biased results. Second, another limitation of the method lies in the fact that, due to the random sampling method, a number of works of esteemed Chinese experts, such as Zhao Huasheng and Li Xin, were not included in the sample. However, we assume that this limitation may be neglected for two reasons. First, the political viewpoints, expressed by these experts, closely correlate with other Chinese authors from the corresponding think tanks; another reason is that the sample contains other major figures in Chinese expertise, such as Li (2017a) and Li (2020), whose perspectives on the future of the Greater Eurasia project were closely analysed in a recent work of Lukin and Novikov (2021). Bearing these constraints of the research design in mind, we thus save room for further

research of the Chinese and Russian political expertise including the implementation of other qualitative methods and widening the sample of papers included in the research.

Note that a ‘geographical approach’ to Eurasia is quite common, when examining Russian analytical materials. The Silayev and Sushentsov report [2018] and the Razumovsky article [2020] both conceive Eurasia as a continent. A significant clarification is provided that the term is polysemous and can vary slightly depending on the context. Two aspects stand out: Eurasia as a post-Soviet space and as cooperation between Russia and China, in conjunction with the EEU and the One Belt, One Road project.

Regarding Russia–China cooperation prospects, Karaganov (2021) predicts that in the future, Europe’s prominence as a player in the international arena will diminish. The geographically westernmost states in this part of the world will then turn into the “‘extreme western part’ of greater Eurasia’. Further, on Russia, Karaganov hopes for a redefinition of Russia’s role in world politics by its citizens once they realise that Russia is neither Europe nor Asia, but ‘just Northern Eurasia’. Bdoyan (2017), when analysing Russian–Turkish relations, argues that both countries are in the ‘Eurasia space’, and their economic cooperation and counter-terrorism efforts are visible as ‘Eurasian cooperation’. Dubnov (2018) continues the ‘geographical’ approach. When speculating on border arrangements in the Caspian Sea, he sees the Caspian Sea and the countries that have access to it as being part of the Eurasian space. Considering Nazarbayev’s resignation as President, Lukyanov (2019) argues that Kazakhstan and neighbouring Uzbekistan are at the centre of Eurasia. If, at this point, it appears more or less clear where the centre of Eurasia is seen, it should now be clarified where it ends. The article by Ivashentsov (2018) refers to Russian–South Korean relations in the political and economic fields. It refers to the Korean peninsula as the ‘Eurasia region’, which suggests the approximate geographical boundaries of Eurasia in East Asia. Additional clarity emerges after studying the article by Bratersky et al., (2021). Examining the problem of unrecognised states in Eurasia, the authors list many polities: Kosovo, Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Taiwan. Apparently, for the authors, Eurasia is a geographical region within the boundaries of the continent.

Apart from that, it can be further applied to ‘draw’ the geographical boundary of Eurasia from the side of East Asia. From the material analysed, we can conclude that the Russian authors’ geographical perception of Eurasia is guided by a ‘continental’ approach. Eurasia is a continent stretching from the European states to the very edge of East Asia.

In Chinese academic discourse, the term Eurasia emerges in two dimensions of Chinese foreign policy: either as a geopolitical territorial unit, whose boundaries are defined as different by various authors, or as a particular application

domain of Belt and Road and EAEU specific economic and political projects (Fang, 2019; Zuo, 2020). In the former case, there is a greater specification of the term Eurasia as geographical region in Chinese texts compared to Russian scholars’ similar texts: for example, Li Yongquan, analysing Russian foreign policy strategies, defines Eurasia as 后苏联空间, ‘post-Soviet space’, restricting the region to contemporary Russia and the CIS (Table 1). Most Chinese scholars whose works focus on the Russian foreign policy analysis share a similar stance: Eurasia in this case does not extend to the territory of Western and Eastern Europe, much less include China, seeing it as the territory where Russia implements its post-Soviet geopolitical strategy (Chen, 2021; Chen, 2013).

Notwithstanding, the narrow perception of Eurasia as a post-Soviet space within Russia’s interest area is noticeably transformed when Chinese discourse shifts from analysing Russian foreign strategy to China’s foreign policy strategies. Graphically, the extension of the Eurasia concept in academic discourse could be represented in the form of a funnel, the narrowest part of which would contain the most clearly delineated Eurasia as a region of the CIS countries within Russian interests. In the middle part of the funnel, Eurasia could be most characteristically represented in the form of the EAEU project, with which China sees cooperation as a promising area of foreign policy and foreign economic activity. Finally, the broader part of the funnel is devoted to the discourse on Eurasia as the space in which China’s Belt and Road project is being implemented and which is, therefore, China’s direct area of interest; it is natural that the boundaries of the concept are blurred in direct proportion to the expansion of the geographical boundaries of the Eurasian region. Thus, Zeng Xianhong in his article defines Eurasia as a multi-layered complex of countries and regional powers, the relationship between which depends largely on the nature of the confrontation between Russia and the US powers – the former as the traditional hegemon in the region and the latter as a force opposing Russian foreign policy in the Ukrainian bridgehead (Zeng, 2019). Much more vague formulations occur in the texts of the think tank authors devoted to China’s role for the Eurasian region (Tables 1 and 2).

In summarising the attempt to classify the Chinese works’ discourse on Eurasia as such, it should be noted that the concept of Eurasia is much more distinct than in the Russian researchers’ works, distinguishing between three areas of Russian and Chinese foreign policy – Russia’s dominance space, regional Russian projects and the most global area of the Chinese One Belt, One Road project.

As regards the further conceptualisation of Eurasia in Russian and Chinese discourse, a commitment to the institutionalisation of Eurasian space is evident among Russian researchers. Thus, Kortunov (2020), referring to Putin’s proposed ‘Greater European Space’, points out that

Table 1. Definition of Eurasia in the text.

Chinese authors	Russian authors
<p>1. 中国借中亚地区向西扩展, 带动中国西部地区经济发展, 进而打通欧盟和环太平洋经济带的联系, 改变整个欧亚大陆的经济版图, 谋求中国在全球经济格局中的主导地位 (Sun, 2017).</p> <p>It [cooperation with Central Asia] is a way for China to expand westward to stimulate the economic development of western China, thereby connecting with the European Union and the Pacific region, changing the entire Eurasian continent economic map and achieving China's dominant position in the global economic landscape.</p> <p>2. 本文所界定的欧亚, 不是地理学上的欧亚大陆, 而是狭义的欧亚, 即后苏联空间、独联体地区。目前的独联体是一个分裂的、不确定的、模糊不清的结构。但是, 独联体对于俄罗斯、独联体国家本身和美国来说, 也是一个具有重要地缘政治意义的结构 (Li, 2020).</p> <p>Eurasia, as defined in this paper, is not a geographical Eurasian continent, but Eurasia in the narrow sense – the post-Soviet space, the CIS region. The CIS in its current form is a fragmented, undefined and ambiguous structure. However, the CIS is also a structure of geopolitical significance for Russia, the CIS countries per se and the United States.</p>	<p>1. Both Russia and China, although predominantly land-based powers, are inevitably – due, among other things, to geography – are maritime powers as well. So, on the sea the situation is aligned, and the 'Heartland' remains what it is – Greater Eurasia – which, in turn, makes clear demands on the countries that unite this region (the SCO is a prime example) (Kramarenko, 2018).</p> <p>2. Inter-state energy associations also operate on the Eurasian continent, including the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E): European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E), CIS and Baltic ECO/EEC, Central Asian Power System (CAPS) in Central Asia, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in South Asia and Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) in Southeast Asia (Marchenko et al., 2018).</p>

Table 2. Eurasia as a geographical region.

Chinese authors	Russian authors
<p>1. 宁夏要成为中国对阿拉伯国家交往、欧亚大陆桥建设的有力支撑和不可替代支点 (Zhou, 2014).</p> <p>The Ningxia region could ... become a strong pillar and indispensable pivot for China's interaction with Arab countries and a Eurasian land bridge construction during the Silk Road strategy implementation.</p> <p>2. '冰上丝绸之路' 的开发, 有助于为欧亚大陆东西两端的联通提供一条新的路线, 也有助于开发北极地区的油气能源 (Yang, 2017).</p> <p>The development of the 'Ice Silk Road' will help provide a new route between the eastern and western parts of the Eurasian continent, as well as the hydrocarbon energy in the Arctic region development.</p>	<p>1. In the coming decades, Eurasia, the core of the Old World, will face the challenge of creating a sustainable continental security regime. Both the world growing leadership vacuum and the continent's super powers continuing rise are leading to this (Silaev & Sushencov, 2018).</p> <p>2. The future of the Eurasian continent is very likely to be an arena for a new confrontation between the new world order two emerging poles – China and the United States (Razumovsky 2020).</p>

this idea is not a confrontation of one bloc of countries against another. Quite the contrary, it does not marginalise regional projects such as ASEAN, the EEU or the Belt and Road, and is entirely accessible to European Union member states. This idea runs against the well-established Chinese position stating that the Greater Eurasian Space is a Russian regional project in the area, while the Chinese project is global in its ambitions and objectives, as well as in its implementation scale (Chen, 2021; Yang, 2016). This is a fundamental conceptual contradiction that exists in the Russian and Chinese researchers' and experts' views on the region's advancement, which reflects the inconsistency between the two countries' joint actions and exposes

potential vulnerabilities in Russia–China geopolitical cooperation.

As for the further elaboration of the Eurasia concept, however, it deserves mentioning that many Russian authors' discourse on Eurasia is tied to the economic project analysis. Among them are the EAEU and China's Belt and Road Initiative. For example, Karnauhova (2019) discusses the Customs Union and later the EEU as a mode of Eurasian integration chosen by the Central Asian republics. At the same time, the driver of integration in this institutional framework was Russia. Separately analysing Tajikistan's policy, Mordvinova (2019) refers to this country's rejection to join the EAEU (and the Customs Union, respectively) as

a refusal to participate in the ‘project of Eurasian integration’. Prokopchuk (2018) notes that the ‘Eurasian space’ has recently been considered ‘in the context of the implementation of large-scale Celestial Empire infrastructure initiatives’, referring to One Belt One Road.

It is important to note that Russian researchers often use the term ‘Greater Eurasia’ to describe integration projects between different states in the region. For them, ‘Greater Eurasia’ has become an important foreign policy agenda in recent years. In general, it refers to the emergence of diverse international institutions and the expansion of projects in the Eurasian space. Nonetheless, such projects are not merely involving any ‘Eurasian’ state, but rather the cooperation between numerous such states. An essential clarification is that ‘Greater Eurasia’ and ‘Eurasia’ are concepts of equal value – in other words, there is no fundamental distinction between them, except for the first option’s focus on already planned integration processes. As already noted, this integration runs between the Russian EEU and the Chinese Belt and Road project. The strengthening cooperation between these two projects and the ASEAN bloc is also frequently highlighted as relevant for the Eurasian region.

As for the economic aspect of the development of processes in ‘Greater Eurasia’, the researchers’ works are more ‘geographical’ understanding of Eurasia. For example, Tsvetov (2017) considers the involvement of Russia, the EAEU, China and their neighbours with the ASEAN bloc as a hugely influential variable in the ongoing integration of Greater Eurasia’s countries. A similar inclusion of EAEU, China and ASEAN into a unified region can be found in Luzyanin (2018). The author here refers to the initiative announced by Vladimir Putin in 2015, which has been called Russia’s ‘flagship initiative’ in promoting Eurasian integration. It addresses the substantive consolidation around the EAEU-ASEAN-SCO triangle (the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in the Russian approach to Eurasia remains to be analysed in detail further in this paper). The author also argues that Eurasian integration has been stimulated by the Belt and Road project and Russia’s ‘pivot to the East’, as well as the potential to interface the EEU and the Belt and Road. Kanaev and Sintao (2018) provide similar reasoning. They see Greater Eurasia as a project where the success depends on Russian–Chinese cooperation in the integration between the EAEU and the Chinese logistical and geopolitical project. Marchenko et al. (2018), while not directly alluding to the aforesaid projects, describe energy relations in Eurasia by presenting a cooperation map in this area. It depicts a multitude of countries from the Czech Republic and Scandinavia to Southeast Asia. Moving away from an exclusive focus on the EEU and the PP, it argues that Eurasian integration incorporates a deepening economic partnership between centres such as Europe and China. Notably, there is no detailed description of what ‘Europe’ is. One can try to speculate whether the

authors are referring to the EU countries, Switzerland or Norway, yet there is no explicit definition of Europe in the text as the centre concerned.

Thus, we might deduce that the Russian authors’ analysis of economic relations in Eurasia primarily deals with the cooperation potential between the ‘Russian’ EAEU, China’s Belt and Road Initiative, and ASEAN. European countries, including EU members, are obviously included in Eurasia, although the ‘European part’ of Eurasia is receiving far less attention than the ‘Asian’ part. When it comes to Eurasian economic integration, Russian authors often concentrate on questions of the conjugation of Russia’s EAEU initiative and China’s One Belt One Road project. In addition to this, the institutions’ integration with ASEAN figures prominently and provides insight into the definition of Eurasia’s boundaries. With regard to economic projects, it can be argued that Eurasia in this case correlates strongly with its continental boundaries. The EU countries and their neighbours are also perceived to be part of Eurasia for some researchers; however, there are no clear boundaries on the western side. Presumably they include the entire Europe as a part of the world in Eurasia, though this is not indicated explicitly, and Russian authors appear to be more focused on projects where Russia participates alongside Asian countries, such as the Central Asian republics, China and Southeast Asian countries.

Moreover, a discourse analysis of the works of Chinese authors in the study sample detects that while Russian authors scale the Greater Eurasia project to the geographical and geopolitical framework of the Eurasian region, Chinese experts assess the project as a regional initiative, not allowing it to rise to the level of the core Chinese project of the Belt and Road. The logic of the analysis of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and Sino-Russian cooperation is interesting in an article by Zuo (2020), one of the heads of the Institute for Strategic Studies of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee: in the text she cites Putin’s 2017 statement at a forum of the Chinese Belt and Road project that “combining the potential of the Eurasian Economic Union, the Belt and Road, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, ASEAN and other integration mechanisms could help lay the foundation for a Greater Eurasian Partnership”. Seemingly agreeing with this statement, Zuo goes on to write that ‘Promoting economic and trade cooperation in the Greater Eurasia region is an integral part of the quality construction of the Belt and Road’ (with the last character 义 ‘yi’ meaning ‘justice’, ‘obligation’, ‘meaning’, which emphasises the significance of China’s geopolitical and infrastructural project by the author) (Table 3, para. 3). The discrepancy between the Russian president’s quote about the integrating project of the ‘Greater Eurasia’ community and the author’s reasoning that the Chinese project dominates in uniting the countries of the region, including Russia, is indicative of the contrast

Table 3. Comparison of the discourse on Eurasia with the discourse on Greater Eurasia.

Chinese authors	Russian authors
<p>1. 欧亚大陆是世界地缘政治心脏及中俄两国的战略舞台,该地区格局之‘势’的变动,必然牵动大国关系之‘形’。(Lu, 2019) The Eurasian continent is the geopolitical heart of the world and a strategic arena for China and Russia, and changes in the ‘potential’ pattern of the region will inevitably affect the ‘shape’ of relations between the major powers.</p> <p>2. 各国应当协调包括中国‘一带一路’倡议、俄罗斯‘大欧亚伙伴关系’计划、欧盟《连接欧洲和亚洲--对欧盟战略的设想》政策等相关设想和规划,凝聚共识,推动欧亚大陆国家间合作,共同应对疫情下国际格局的变化,促进地区与全球的稳定、发展。(Chen, 2021) Countries should coordinate their efforts, including China’s One Belt, One Road initiative, Russia’s Greater Eurasia Partnership and the EU’s policy ‘Linking Europe and Asia – a vision for EU Strategy’. They should build consensus and promote cooperation among Eurasian countries to cope with the changes in the international landscape in the face of the epidemic and contribute to regional and global stability and development.</p> <p>3. 推进大欧亚地区的经贸合作,是高质量共建‘一带一路’题中应有之义 (Zuo, 2020). Promoting economic and trade cooperation in the Greater Eurasia region is an integral part of the Belt and Road quality construction.</p>	<p>1. ASEAN proves to be a crucial element of this initiative. Without ASEAN, Russia’s Greater Eurasia will consist mostly of its closest EAEU partners, China and isolated, fragmented allies like Iran or Serbia (Tsvetov, 2017).</p> <p>2. At some point, 10 years from now, a variant of this configuration, I think, will emerge. Part of Europe will become the definitive western periphery or, on the contrary, the extreme western part of greater Eurasia, where there will be slightly different players. But one can no longer imagine a Russian–European alliance against anybody or even just as a third world-bearing force (Karaganov, 2021).</p> <p>3. In the twenty-first century, the Middle East and North Africa are among the regions of Greater Eurasia. Logically, therefore, among the steps that could strengthen European security should be cooperation between the EU, Russia and China, and preferably the US, on the Iranian nuclear issue; coordination of their efforts (as well as India’s) in finding a formula for stability in the Persian Gulf zone; cooperation on the political dimensions of a Syrian settlement and on that basis, joint participation in the Syria reconstruction; cooperation in Libya stabilisation (Trenin, 2019).</p>

between the two countries’ discourse on the role of ‘Greater Eurasia’ in the international politics of the Eurasian region. The desire to reclassify Greater Eurasia as a regional project – EAEU, SCO, ASEAN, etc. – can be observed in the works of other Chinese authors, whose articles focus on the analysis of China in international relations (Li, 2020; Zhang, 2018); the occasional works in the sample that prioritise the Greater Eurasia project and China–Russia cooperation are authored by Russian foreign policy specialists and rarely touch on the Belt and Road initiative in the text, focussing on the analysis of Russian foreign policy and foreign economic strategy (Chen, 2021; CCIEE, 2019; Chen, 2021). Last but not least, even when describing the potential applications of the Greater Eurasia projects, leading Chinese experts, such as Li Ziguo, are, to a large extent, cautious in defining the changes of future consolidation between the ‘One Belt, One Road’ and Greater Eurasia projects, by pointing out ‘heavy geopolitical implications of the Russian project’ (Li, 2017b) (Table 4).

As an example, Dutkevich (2018) cautions against neglecting security in the region, which could be detrimental to the EAEU and Belt and Road projects. Beyond the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, a function in

guaranteeing Eurasian security should also be assumed by the CSTO, which he believes China can enter if necessary. It is noted, according to Markedonov (2018), the CSTO’s experience with the other country, Azerbaijan, has been called ‘the experience of Eurasian integration’. The line about the imperative of building and strengthening political institutions, in addition to purely economic projects, emphasises the SCO’s significance. Kulincev (2020) sees the SCO as a mechanism for a new order in the Eurasian region, as a ‘link’ between the Chinese project and the EAEU. One can conclude that the countries entering (or likely to enter) the SCO are not just part of Eurasia, they are the principal part of it.

Finally, Kramarenko (2018) argues that the SCO sets comprehensible rules of the game for the countries of Greater Eurasia, or as the author calls it, referring to H. Mackinder, ‘Heartland’. Here, it is worth noting once again the inclination towards a geographical interpretation of Eurasia, albeit with a focus on regional institutions. Certain synthesis of both economic and political initiatives in Eurasia is evident by Morozov (2018). The author maintains that for Russia to retain its status as a ‘Eurasian power’, Moscow requires efforts to manage Asian issues

Table 4. China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' as a driver for Eurasian integration.

Chinese authors	Russian authors
<p>1. 中国在推动‘一带一路’时，主动对接俄罗斯的‘欧亚经济联盟’、哈萨克斯坦的‘光明之路’、蒙古的‘草原之路’英国的‘北方经济引擎’等，所有这些都充分体现了中国外交的包容共存和合作共赢理念 (Yang, 2017)</p> <p>In promoting the Belt and Road, China has taken the initiative to interface with Russia's 'Eurasian Economic Union', Kazakhstan's 'Bright Road', Mongolia's 'Steppe Route' and Britain's 'Northern Economic Engine', all of which fully reflect the concept of tolerance and coexistence and <i>win-win cooperation of Chinese diplomacy.</i></p> <p>3. 不仅如此，还可以将中国深化‘一带一路’建设、‘冰上丝绸之路’与俄罗斯欧亚经济联盟的两国重大战略进行对接，在更大范围更高层次和更广领域深化新时代全面战略协作伙伴关系 (CCIEE, 2019).</p> <p>In addition, it is possible to conjugate the Chinese construction of the Belt and Road and the icy Silk Road with the main strategies of the Russian Eurasian Economic Union and to deepen comprehensive strategic partnership and cooperation in a new era on a larger scale, at a higher level and in a broader area.</p>	<p>1. A different context is associated with the idea of conjugating the Chinese 'One Belt, One Road' project with the Eurasian Economic Union. Here, Eurasian integration receives a powerful economic and political impetus in the cooperation between Russia and China (Silaev & Sushencov, 2018).</p> <p>2. China's desire to maintain and strengthen its 'soft power', which has been severely undermined by recent events, is understandable. Thus, the fate of the Eurasian space, which has recently been considered in the context of the implementation of large-scale infrastructure initiatives by the Celestial Empire, is of great interest (Prokopchuk, 2018).</p>

**Figure 1.** Publications in Web of Science for Eurasia in 2020–2021 by field.

together with China and India, as well as an active mediating role in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. Moreover, in the context of Russia's objectives, it is seen as harmonising the EAEU with the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative in order to exploit both projects as mutually beneficial rather than competing. In addition to the already indicated interest in conjugating the Russian and Chinese projects, Transcaucasia and Central Asia are considered here as a platform for Russia's participation in Eurasian politics. In other

words, there is a reference to particular regions as part of a larger region called Eurasia.

At the same time, it is natural that the discourse of Chinese experts is relatively homogeneous and focuses on China's Belt and Road project as the leading project in the Eurasian region.

The focus of the authors, especially the Shanghai Institute of International Studies, on the leading Chinese project is characteristic, not only as the central project of the

region in its economic and logistical components, but also as an essential link between more local regional geopolitical projects – the Russian EAEU, Kazakhstan’s new economic policy ‘Shining Path’, etc. (CCIEE, 2019; Li, 2017b; Zhang, 2018), which legitimately highlights the Belt and Road as the dominant geopolitical and strategic concept in the region.

Conclusions

From the above study of the Eurasia concept in Russian and Chinese analyses, the following discourse features can emerge. To start with, in Russian texts the concept of Eurasia is often not defined explicitly; the reader is presumed to already be aware of the subject matter. As for the Chinese texts, the authors provide a more explicit formulation of the concept of Eurasia in the text. There is also no consensus in Chinese academic discourse on the geographical framework and political characteristics of the Eurasia region – in general, expert papers can be divided into three types: Eurasia as a post-Soviet space, Eurasia as a space for implementing China’s cooperation with the EAEU, and Eurasia as a realisation space for Chinese political and economic integration projects, including the Silk Road project. Nevertheless, the clear articulation of the concept and linking the term Eurasia to the EAEU and Belt and Road projects reinforces earlier assertions by researchers (Lukin & Novikov, 2021) that, while Russian scholars substitute the term Eurasia for the geopolitical concept of ‘Greater Eurasia’ and attribute rather vague geographical characteristics to the concept as a whole, Chinese internationalists associate the concept of Eurasia with the rather specific aforementioned foreign policy and foreign economic projects.

It is worth noting that in the geographical interpretation of the term, Russian texts see Eurasia as a geographical region, a continent stretching from the European Union to China and Southeast Asia. While not denying the focus of Chinese researchers on the geopolitical characteristics of the region, it remains to be pointed out that in their studies the region’s geographical scope diverges, depending on the primary international actor referred to in the text. Thus, when outlining Russian foreign policy strategy, the authors tend to confine the Eurasian region to the CIS, but when covering Chinese policy, the region expands to include the Asian region as well as Eastern and Western European countries (Chen, 2021; Zhou, 2014).

Likewise, in analysing the Eurasia concept in Russian texts, it has to be mentioned that the discourse on Eurasia in Russian texts often overlaps and is even replaced with the analysis of the so-called ‘Greater Eurasia’. It refers to the process of Eurasian state integration, for example, through membership in common platforms, but also through organisations among themselves, through synchronisation of

rules with each other. There is no similar scenario for the formation and development of the discourse in the Chinese political and expert field: despite the multi-vector description of Eurasia as a region, the authors do not associate the region with the Russian geopolitical concept. Overall, the degree to which Chinese authors neglect the Russian strategy of Greater Eurasia, mentioned only in the texts of Russian authors and in works devoted to the analysis of Russia–China relations, confirms the initial apprehension of this concept being not only irrelevant but also unprofitable for Chinese political elites: the appearance of any other strategy than the Chinese Silk Road will bring China nothing but a competing strategy in the foreign policy of Eurasia. This is confirmed by objective data on publication dynamics in international peer-reviewed journals included in the Web of Science database: while from 2016 to 2021 there was a sharp surge in the number of Russian papers in the total weight of papers on Eurasian themes in international relations and politics (from 20 to 50%, respectively), there was no similar increase in papers by Chinese researchers dedicated to Eurasia, and in particular to Greater Eurasia – we observe no increase in papers as among Russian authors, and their weight in the total weight of the papers base. Indeed, the analysis of authors’ affiliations of the articles in the Web of Science database on Eurasia for 2020–2021 (Figure 1) showed that there was no evidence of an overall increase in the weight of the papers in the Web of Science database. (Figure 1) showed that out of 1263 publications on Eurasia, 42 of which were published in Political Science (3%), 45 in International Relations (3.5%) and 6 in Asian Studies (0.5%), the weight of Russian papers was 47.3% of the total number of publications, while the weight of Chinese papers remains at 4%.

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, as well as Russian political efforts to create per se or engage in a regional cooperation management system (EAEU, SCO, CSTO) and to work with the Chinese project, has often been spotlighted by Russian researchers as the drivers of Eurasian integration. Most Russian researchers position the Belt and Road project as a regional initiative within the framework of the Greater Eurasia community project, together with a number of other economic and strategic projects, including the EAEU. Meanwhile, Chinese researchers place the Belt and Road project in the focus of political and economic development in the Eurasian region, leaving the Russian geopolitical strategy to take the regional form of political and economic integration.

Closing Remarks

The presented results illustrate that the Chinese perception of processes on the continent remains quite distant from Russian perceptions, at least at the level of foreign policy expertise. Chinese international experts at large practically

do not operate under the concept of Eurasia in the content offered by the Russian expert and official narrative. The exception is Chinese Russian studies, which by its profile absorbs Russian political terminology and foreign policy ideas. However, in this case too, it is not so much a question of processing and embracing Russian concepts as foreign policy thinking, but rather of Russian ideas as an object of research.

Overall, for current Chinese expertise, Eurasia is primarily Russia and its foreign policy initiatives, as well as the geopolitical space adjacent to it, which is in one way or another associate with Moscow and its interests. To an even lesser extent, Chinese discourse reflects the identification of Eurasia and Eurasian regionalism with other powers, including those whose initiatives incorporate this notion directly. In a sense, it conveys the existing reality: of all the major players on the continent, perhaps only Russia seeks to flesh out Eurasian initiatives with deep political content and to form a systemic ideological framework for Eurasian regionalism. This is fully reflected in the Russian scientific and expert discourse, which is characterised by a heterogeneity of ideas and concepts about Eurasia, despite the tight attachment to Moscow's official political initiatives.

Does this mean that Russian ideas have not fundamentally influenced Chinese foreign policy thinking? And that between Moscow and Beijing, despite the closeness of their relations, there remains a big ideological gap, which may eventually lead to political contradictions as well?

Based on the results of the study, we assume the answer to the first question to be the affirmative one. The traditionally strong attachment of Chinese think tanks and academic institutions to the official ideological line and activities of state authorities, for example, and certain restraints on the freedom of academic debate in China, are a worthy consideration. Chinese think tanks are more prone to theorising and developing original concepts than Western and Russian do, and rather articulate the theoretical basis for the policies pursued by the Chinese leadership. Moreover, the obvious difference in narratives in both Russian and Chinese texts shows that neither of the sides is willing to acknowledge the other as the sole leader of integration processes in the Eurasian region. The idea of Eurasianism, initially developed in the works of Russian writers and scholars, brought to mind by Nazarbaev's government in Kazakhstan back in 1990s and, finally, reprocessed and officially proclaimed by Russian government officials, together with the 'Greater Eurasia' project, remains a purely alien concept for the Chinese experts, completely distant from Chinese methodological schools, and, hence, unpopular, although emanating from a friendly country.

The second issue is all the more challenging. The mere lack of consensus between Russian and Chinese foreign policy circles on interaction in the Eurasian region and mutual understanding of the aforementioned projects,

confirmed by the scant interest of Chinese academic circles in the Greater Eurasia project, is worrisome per se. The results of the study show the undoubting position of Chinese scholars that Chinese Belt and Road Initiative plays not only an important role in the region as a long-term infrastructure and economic project, but also appears for being the cultural and, in some works, even the political centre of the region. This lack of consensus may reinforce the potential geopolitical risks to the construction of a Sino-Russian dialogue on the future of Eurasia in the longer term. After all, designing a regional and trans-regional space based on cooperation and synergy of initiatives implies a common vision of the output, which is not clearly seen, as the study suggests.

We believe that there is still potential for a closer collaboration on this project though. Although not on a large scale, a rather vigorous study of the modern Russian version of Eurasianism in Chinese Russian studies, together with the willingness of Chinese scholars to study the initiatives framed by the Russian leadership and the Russian expert discourse, together with the synthesis or incorporation of Russian ideas into the Chinese foreign policy agenda and related projects, show that the 'Greater Eurasia' project is still far from being cast away and forgotten. In this sense, Russian efforts have achieved their basic goal of introducing Beijing to Moscow's proposed agenda and ensuring that its interests are taken into account in Chinese foreign policy planning, at least at the declaratory level. Russia should thereby unconditionally pursue efforts to further formalise and advocate its foreign policy ideas, including Greater Eurasia and allied approaches. Moreover, science and expertise is what is seen as the core of the future consensus on the foreign policy consensus between the sides. A good example is the highly monogenic environment of the Euro-Atlantic science and expertise space, where unified or at least similar ideas, concepts and connotations continue to be effectively generated, providing a monolith of political thinking and hence political action.

The most recent trends associated with the drastic deterioration of Russian-Western relations will swing Russian policy and expertise even more towards China. Russia, according to the remarks of government officials, is still enthusiastic in building the project of 'open Eurasia from Lisbon to Vladivostok', as Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia Dmitry Medvedev has recently declared, which means the project will be still regarded as a centrepiece of Russian foreign policy in the region. In this vein, while the first part of the task in introducing the Eurasia project to Chinese expertise can be considered to be a success (although with expected limitations on the scale of the popularity), let us hope the challenge of finding common language between Russian and Chinese regional projects in the future will be handled sensibly and harmoniously by both sides.

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Notes

1. See, for example, the website of the Davis Center at Harvard University: <https://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/about>.
2. Official site of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State: <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-political-affairs/bureau-of-european-and-eurasian-affairs/>.
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