

ABSTRACT

Russia's pivot to Asia has become one of the highly discussed topics among political and international relations theorists. However, diverse opinions exist on the timeframe of the pivot and on the level of favourable results of the new policies of Russia's turn to the East. Mostly, Russia is thought to be intensifying its relations with countries of the Asia-Pacific region, increasingly since the Western trade sanctions were applied on Russia after the 2014 Ukraine crisis. Academic discussion also revolves around Russia's opportunities and challenges in the region. Progressive cooperation, mainly with China, is suggested due to the growing importance of Asia and its countries: China's rapidly rising economy and military strength has made the country into a candidate for the most important world powers. On the other hand, development and modernisation of Siberia and Russia's Far East region would be necessary for efficient maintenance of any progressive relations with Asian countries. Russia would have to develop its infrastructure in the regions to enable connection and cooperation with China and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Among all potential partners in Asia, China is mostly indicated as the most probable and suitable economic and political partner for Russia in the region. However, many authors agree that Russia is failing in actively participating in projects in Middle East and other regions, where China has already taken the main lead. Lagging behind China in international relations and future projects, Russia seems to be on the course of being only a junior partner to China, which is a situation Russia would like to avoid the most. Further, conflicts have often emerged between Russia and other Asian countries, such as India, Japan or Vietnam, mainly due to mutual disputes over territories in South and East China Sea. For more, in many cases, Russia is supporting China's opponents in these disputes with military equipment. Under these

circumstances, any intensifying of relationships between Russia and China are therefore not foreseeable for the future. Russia may end up in a situation, in which Moscow would have to choose a side in possible conflicts. For the future, Russia is expected to become more active in Asian projects to make sure it will have its place among the rising Asia-Pacific powers, and not dwell in a position of a junior partner and resources appendage of China and others.