

Beyond the Central Eurasian Pivot

Michael Tierney

Introduction

Central Eurasia has long been an area that occupies utmost geostrategic importance in the international system. While the region made up by areas of Central Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe has seen significant conflict throughout its history, it was also the site of substantial instability throughout the 20th century as world powers sought to dominate it. However, the end of the Cold War and the United States' emergence as sole global power as well as the enhancement of the European Union and its advances toward Central Eurasia brought about a new era of stability and security in the region. Some pivot states of this region had also broken away from Russian control and were now able to manoeuvre independently in the international system. Yet the interconnectedness spawned by globalization created a delicate balance between these states and their former imperial ruler, as well as between Europe, the United States, and other countries in the Middle and Far East. The dominance of the United States and the relative weakness of countries like Russia and China at the turn of the 21st century ensured some stability in Central Eurasia however, even though internal conflicts and problems in some of the Central Eurasian states caused domestic and regional instability during the 1990s and 2000s. Nevertheless, the recent financial crisis coupled with other domestic issues in the United States has called into question its ability to intervene across

the global system.¹ Recent events abroad, with Libya being the exception, also illustrate that the United States is far less likely than it once was to intervene in foreign conflicts to try and encourage international stability.² Finally, the rise of emerging powers like Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (commonly referred to as the BRICS) paired with Europe and Britain's domestic problems signals that power is shifting across the globe. Emerging countries are now finding themselves increasingly on par in terms of international and regional influence with their more established counterparts.³

While emerging powers still have many critical domestic issues that must be dealt with in the coming years and they are intensely focused on 'at-home' development rather than projecting much power abroad, many of them will continue to gain international influence moving forward.⁴ Europe, Britain, and the United States also have numerous domestic issues to resolve in the coming years. However their status as technologically advanced, well governed, and economically (and militarily in the case of some) powerful countries indicates that they will be able to see themselves through the difficult short term while retaining their status as stable, powerful countries into the future.⁵ Nonetheless, the period of transition that has occurred globally in recent years with emerging countries shifting the balance of power relative to established powers has significant potential to create new instabilities in the international system. With Central Eurasia being a geostrategic pivot for past world power conflicts due to its robust natural resources, economic potential, geographic location, and high population levels, the region could be the site of major rivalry once again as new powers emerge that can seek influence across the globe. This historical pivot may no longer be the only one in the international system though. Some scholars have stated that globalization and regionalization, the rise of new powers previously on the fringes of the global system, and the geopolitical importance of countries outside Central Eurasia might cause the

¹ Ian Bremmer, *Every Nation for Itself: Winners and Losers in a G-Zero World* (New York: Penguin 2012), pp. 11-16; Geoffrey F Gresh, "Traversing the Persian Gauntlet: U.S. Naval Protection and the Strait of Hormuz," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 31 (2010): p. 43.

² Bremmer, *Every Nation for Itself*, pp. 32, 112-113.

³ Bremmer, *Every Nation for Itself*, pp. 10, 21-25; Gerald Schmitz, "Emerging Powers in the Global System: Challenges for Canada," *Library of Parliament* (2006).; Andrew Cooper and Jongryn Mo, "Middle Power Leadership and the Evolution of the G20," *Global Summitry Journal* 1 (2013): p. 1.

⁴ Schmitz, "Emerging Powers..."

⁵ Bremmer, *Every Nation for Itself*, 186-188.; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books 1997), p. 195.

opening of several new geostrategic pivots.⁶ This study seeks to determine if there are in fact comparable geostrategic pivots located outside of the traditional Central Eurasian region. If so, it will pinpoint where these pivots are located, which factors make them a pivot, and where the sites of geostrategic rivalry might be moving forward.

The paper proceeds in four parts. First, there is a brief overview of the existing literature on geopolitics and geostrategy with specific focus on pivot states and regions. Second, methods will be provided which cover the way in which selected states were measured to count or discount them as pivots in the international system. Findings and analysis will ensue with discussion of why certain countries or regions are counted as pivots. In conclusion, there will be a discussion of the implications that the findings have for geostrategy and international security moving forward.

Geostrategy and Pivot States

In 1904, Sir Halford Mackinder first advanced his notion of the ‘geographical pivot of history’. His thesis was based upon the intersection of historical events and geography, rather than contemporary power struggles, but nonetheless was important in informing British foreign policy in the earliest part of the 20th century.⁷ Mackinder’s theory essentially stated that the world was now closed, that there were no more areas of exploration, and that states would begin to look within the “closed political system” to establish their dominance.⁸ To contextualize, Mackinder was writing at a time when the British and Russian Empires were playing the ‘great game’ and Germany was a rising power in Europe. Accordingly, he divided the globe into three distinguishable parts. The pivot area consisted of the Central Asian and Middle Eastern regions. The marginal crescent which bordered the pivot area included Europe, China, South Asia, and Korea. Finally, the outer crescent was made up of areas that had been colonized by the existing

⁶ Bremmer, *Every Nation for Itself*, pp. 115-123.; Ervin J Rokke, foreward to *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction by the Right Honourable Sir Halford J. Mackinder* (Washington D.C.: NDU Press), p. xv.

⁷ Geoffrey Sloan, “Sir Halford J. Mackinder: The Heartland Theory then and now,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22 (1999): p. 18.

⁸ Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (Washington D.C.: NDU Press, 1942), p. 22.

powers. This outer part included regions like North America, Australia, and the African and South American continents.⁹ Of highest importance to Mackinder was Britain's role in the international system. He warned that Britain could no longer rely solely on its naval power to ensure its global reach and that the pivot area, which was also prized by Russia and Germany, could give them a huge strategic advantage should they control it because of its vast resources, geographically important location, population, and economic potential.¹⁰ Even though his theory was meant to inform British policymaking, the geographical pivot was born into international geostrategic thinking and would influence various countries' foreign policies in the decades to come.

In 1919, Mackinder further developed his idea of the pivot and formulated the 'heartland theory.' The heartland that Mackinder described essentially occupied the same space on the map that had been plotted as the geographical pivot of history 15 years prior. This time however, Mackinder famously stated that:

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
Who rules the World-Island commands the World.¹¹

In this way, Mackinder advanced his theory to include East Europe and the "World-Island" as significantly important geostrategic locations for states to focus on, though they were perhaps not as important as controlling the pivotal Heartland. The World-Island, according to the renowned geographer, was the area where Europe, Africa, and Asia met.¹² His theory had developed from a time of Great War in which Britain had emerged victorious, but also in a world where there was revolution in Russia, an emerging power across the Atlantic in the United States, and a reeling Germany which had been dismantled at Versailles. Nonetheless, Mackinder's central pivot remained more or less the same even though parts of Europe and Africa could now be considered more strategically important than previously thought. His heartland theory was incredibly influential as a result. Ervin Rokke and Steven Mladineo note that while Mackinder's theory was tainted by the Nazi's use of it in advancing *Lebensraum* ("living space") policies where Germany aggressively expanded into Europe and other parts of

⁹ Halford J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *The Geographical Journal* 23 (1904): p. 435.

¹⁰ Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," pp. 434-437.

¹¹ Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, p. 106.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

the world, it had resurgence during World War II when Allied planners recognized its usefulness in defeating the German threat.¹³ Rokke also posits that Mackinder's heartland theory is exceptionally relevant now as "regional strategic concerns have replaced those of the global bipolar confrontation of the twin superpowers."¹⁴ Mackinder's heartland is therefore a suitable place to begin in designing a list of pivot states in the contemporary international system.

Many geostrategic and geopolitical scholars have used Mackinder's theory of the heartland in their own works. Others have designed geopolitical models similar to that of Mackinder. In 1985, Dimitri Kitsikis published his theory that there was a Eurasian "Intermediate Region" which had been established over the course of thousands of years, particularly due to the efforts of various Empires to control it. In contrast to Mackinder, Kitsikis' larger Eurasian continent consisted of three distinct peninsulas.¹⁵ He argued that there was an "Intermediate Region" located between the European peninsula consisting of countries in West Europe, North and South America, Australia, and New Zealand and the Far East peninsula consisting of India, Southeast Asia, and China, Korea, and Japan.¹⁶ The Intermediate Region was made up of countries between the two peninsulas and included states across Eastern Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Russia. Since the Intermediate Region had been the site of centuries old imperial conflict and sat between the European and Asian peninsulas, it was essentially *the* pivot in historical international affairs.¹⁷ While Kitsikis' Intermediate Region is much larger than Mackinder's geographical pivot, it does bear resemblance to the latter's World-Island and Heartland if the two were merged together. In this way, Kitsikis also saw the geopolitical importance of Central Eurasia and acknowledged that it had been the major pivot throughout most of human history. Kitsikis merely expanded Mackinder's geographical pivot of history and argued that the pivot area was created through an

¹³ Rokke, foreward to *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, xv.; Steven Mladineo, introduction to *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction by the Right Honourable Sir Halford J. Mackinder* (Washington D.C.: NDU Press), pp. xxvii-xxi.

¹⁴ Rokke, Introduction to *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, p. xv.

¹⁵ Dimitri Kitsikis, "Intermediate Region," (Extract from *L'Empire ottoman*, Paris, PUF, 1985), accessible from <<http://www.intermediateregion.com/?lang=en>>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

intersecting of cultures and geography, rather than of strategy and geography as Mackinder argued in his heartland theory. Although 'Europe' has now extended further east due to the European Union's post-Cold War expansion, Kitsikis' work does provide some possibilities for geostrategic pivots in the contemporary world where numerous powers have emerged in all corners of the globe.

In 1997, Zbigniew Brzezinski tried to inform American geostrategic thinking in the post-Cold War world when he published his book *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*. Notably, Brzezinski was writing at a time when the United States was the only truly global power and other states and regions such as Russia, China, and Europe were still trying to navigate through domestic issues and were finding their place in a unipolar system. Nevertheless, he offered valuable insight into the future of geopolitics and hypothesized about not only a world in which the United States was the sole global power but also one in which countries like China and Russia gained positions of significant influence.¹⁸ According to Brzezinski, the latter of these two worlds had the ability to produce significant instability and Eurasia would be critically important in international affairs.¹⁹ Like Mackinder, he strategized that Eurasia is the "globe's largest continent, is geopolitically axial, and a power that dominates it would control two of the world's three most advanced and economically productive regions."²⁰ He also posited that control over Eurasia would mean control over Africa, a huge population, and vast amounts of wealth. Thus he concluded that Eurasia was "the chessboard on which the struggle for global primacy continued."²¹

In addition, Brzezinski argued that there were several players with varying degrees of power surrounding Eurasia. Each had interests in controlling a piece of the Eurasian 'mega continent', but in a time of rising economic interdependence and constrained military conflict, states would opt for diplomacy, coalition building, and co-optation tools to try and gain influence in the area.²² Yet he also asserted that geopolitics had moved from the regional level to the global.²³ While countries like Ukraine,

¹⁸ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, pp. 87-122, 151-193.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Iran remained as four of the five central pivot states Brzezinski identified, South Korea was added to the list of pivot countries in the international system. In this way, he theorized that new pivot states were beginning to emerge outside of Central Eurasia. Moreover, Brzezinski realized that Turkey and Iran could also be considered regional powers due to their influence in the Middle East and Central Asia.²⁴ He made the justification for these countries' centrality in geostrategy because of their natural resources, population sizes, and geographic locations.²⁵ Finally, Brzezinski acknowledged that geostrategic pivots were not permanent and could shift at any time.²⁶ This statement gave credence to later scholars who theorized that numerous pivots could be found both inside and outside the bounds of Europe and Asia in an increasingly multi-polar world.

Ian Bremmer published his geopolitical theory of a 'G-Zero' world in 2012. In his book *Every Nation for Itself: Winners and Losers in a G-Zero World*, Bremmer argues that the United States' role as the world's most dominant superpower is fading and a power vacuum has now emerged as several states, both emerging and established, try to fill the "global leadership void" left by the United States' reduction in global affairs.²⁷ Like Brzezinski, Bremmer posits that there are several influential states with varying degrees of power in the international system. However, he also notes that the United States will be the "leader of last resort" due to its economic and military clout and because of the reluctance of emerging states to assume the mantle as leader in international affairs.²⁸ Yet domestic issues will force the United States to hesitate about intervening abroad and will cause it to "lead from behind" as it did in Libya.²⁹ Unlike Brzezinski, he contends that the world is breaking into regional spheres where several pivot states are located and where several powers may compete.³⁰ He also claims that Africa and Asia will be the most volatile regions moving forward because they have high levels of natural resources,

²⁴ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, pp. 41, 47.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁷ Bremmer, *Every Nation for Itself*, pp. 7-36.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

high population levels, are a strategic asset for both established and emerging powers, and have too few powerful states (Africa) or too many (Asia) in their geopolitical space which will instigate conflict.³¹ While Bremmer does not hypothesize a complete breakaway from the Central Eurasian region as a pivot, he does argue that geostrategic pivots will be located across the globe due to 'regionalization'. Accordingly, his potential pivot states are: Turkey, Angola, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and Canada.³² Bremmer also includes Brazil among his potential pivot states, but says that Brazil is a regional power and an emerging global power so it is not a pivot in the same sense as the others.³³

Importantly, Bremmer argues that a pivot state is a country which is both of strategic value for other states and also has the ability to influence international affairs.³⁴ In this way, pivot states can help to shape international stability and the competition between powers. Nonetheless they will also be the site of rivalry between powerful states moving into the future. Similar to Brzezinski, Bremmer finds that military power and conventional means of conflict will not work as well in a deeply interconnected world.³⁵ Instead he argues that diplomatic coercion, economic resources, natural resources, and cyberspace will be the primary tools of powerful state competition. These tools will be used more predominantly because one country cannot use conventional means against another without hurting itself economically and diplomatically in the process.³⁶ However, Bremmer acknowledges that some conventional methods will be used though they will spark larger wars more easily in the 'G-Zero' world.³⁷ Thus the pivot states that Bremmer puts forth could very well be the centres of geostrategic importance moving forward. Nevertheless, his list of pivot states breaks from the past and provides new possibilities from various parts of the globe with varying degrees of influence. Bremmer's list therefore provides a broad range of pivot countries that can be assessed as such in today's international system.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 70, 118.

³² Ibid., pp. 115-123.

³³ Ibid., pp. 115-117.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 115.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 67-108.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 153-154.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 31.

Scope and Methods

As evidenced by the literature, the definition of a pivot state has evolved over time. For Halford Mackinder, pivots were regions of the globe which were of strategic importance to major powers. This definition was also prevalent in Kitsikis' model as he assessed a historical "Intermediate Region" which had been coveted by empires and states alike over centuries. Yet under Brzezinski, the contemporary definition of a pivot state began to evolve. Brzezinski argued that pivots may be location outside of the historic Heartland, and that these states could shift at any time. In a sense, Bremmer further developed this theory by arguing that pivots were indeed located outside of Central Eurasia, and by theorizing that pivot states were not only defined by the level of strategic importance they held for major powers, but also by the level of influence they held regionally and internationally. This study follows in the footsteps of Bremmer and Brzezinski by defining pivot states as countries which are both strategically important for major powers, but also have some ability to influence international affairs as well. This study also introduces a nuanced approach to the pivot state debate by positing that states can have varying degrees of pivot-ness, depending on a range of factors discussed later in this section.

This study used a mixed methods design to garner the desired data. Using the literature reviewed above, several states were targeted as potential pivots in the current international system. The countries of interest were as follows: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, South Korea, Georgia, Armenia, Angola, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, and Canada. All countries were selected from Brzezinski's and Bremmer's work except Bremmer's Brazil because he repeatedly discusses that country as a regional power and emerging international power.³⁸ Countries were selected from Mackinder's list only if their territory fell completely within his 'Heartland.' For example, Kazakhstan was selected because its territory fell fully within the Heartland. Pakistan was not selected however because only its northern tip fell

³⁸ It is a member of the BRICS states (emerging powers) as well; Ibid,

within the bounds of the Heartland. Some countries were selected from Kitsikis' model, but only if they aligned with the choices of other scholars. Many of Kitsikis' countries were discounted because of their present inclusion in 'Europe' via the European Union, which is a world power, and because Kitsikis' model focuses on 'geo-civilizational' factors rather than geostrategic ones.

In order to test the theory that there are now indeed pivots located outside of Central Eurasia, the states listed above were ranked according to geopolitical variables which measured their ability to pivot socially, economically, and in terms of security. The variables used in this study were also selected based on the common factors listed in each reviewed scholars' work, which they argued were needed to make a state pivotal, in order to effectively test the theory of new pivots located outside of the historic Heartland. As a result, a country was considered most pivotal if it met five criteria to the highest degree. For each criterion introduced, a quantitative ranking system was also presented to gauge the degree to which the selected state met the given criterion. The final score for each country was then tallied, in order to rank the states from most pivotal to least pivotal. States sharing the same scores were grouped together, but the specific variables leading to their scores were assessed in the analysis below. Finally, states were also grouped into regions and the average score was calculated to determine if there are also, in fact, geopolitical pivot regions located outside of Central Eurasia.

First, the economic size and strength of each potential pivot was taken into account. The logic is that larger, stronger economies are more strategically valuable because of their ability to consume or due to their ability to produce valuable goods and services. In this manner, states could be pivotal in one of two ways: because they had the ability to provide needed goods and services to other states, thereby increasing their international influence, or because they had the ability to consume imports from more powerful states competing for global market share. As such, net exporters and net importers held equal value under the definition of 'pivot' used in this study. Each listed country's economy was measured accordingly using Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) so that they could be assessed on par with one another, and because GDP (PPP) generally represents the size and strength of a country's economy, as well as its ability to produce and consume. Countries whose GDP (PPP)

ranked above the global average (US\$107,500,000,000,000³⁹/229 countries⁴⁰= approx. US\$469,432,314,410) were deemed most strategically pivotal (scored as 3). However, the countries were also ranked using the global index provided by the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) World Factbook. Countries that scored below the global average but were still above the global median (229/2=114.5) were considered to have some pivotal ability (scored as 2). Countries that did not exceed either the average or the median were not considered very pivotal under this criterion (scored as 1).

Second, geographic location was taken into account. Countries that were not physically isolated beside a single powerful state were considered better able to pivot in the international system, because they would not have the same degree of pressure coming from their powerful neighbour trying to protect its security and regional influence against other world powers. If a country was relatively isolated beside a powerful state, then it reduced the opportunity for other powerful states to use it as a pivot. If a country was relatively open geographically or was located between two potential rivals, thus creating a direct competition between two powerful neighbours vying to ensure their own regional security, it could pivot more freely and was strategically more valuable (scored as 3). States that bordered several countries, but only one powerful state were considered less pivotal because they could be somewhat constrained by their single powerful neighbour, even though they still had some ability to manoeuvre along their other borders (scored as 2). Countries that were isolated beside a powerful state were not considered pivotal under this criterion (scored as 1).

Third, natural resources were considered by taking into account whether a country had resources of commercial importance as listed in the CIA World Factbook. States with various commercially important natural resources were considered most pivotal, because they could provide a wide range of valuable resources to and equally wide array of international partners, both powerful and non-powerful (scored as 3). Conversely,

³⁹ Calculated using: CIA-The World Factbook, "World: Economy: GDP (purchasing power parity)," accessed October 25, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>

⁴⁰ The CIA recognizes 229 nations in its listing of world's countries by GDP (PPP), excluding the European Union. Data can be found at CIA-The World Factbook, "Field Listing: GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) Country Comparison to the World," accessed October 25, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2001.html#xx>

countries with dependence upon a single resource or a relatively small set of resources were seen as less pivotal because they would have fewer resources to share with international partners (scored as 2). States with no commercially valuable resources were not considered very pivotal under this criterion (scored as 1).

Fourth, population size between the ages of 15-64, defined as the number people who could potentially be economically active in a country, was measured in consideration of a state's ability to pivot. Countries with higher population sizes between the ages of 15-64 were considered to be more pivotal in the international system due to their ability to spur economic growth and to consume goods from other countries (scored as 2). Thus, a country must have had a population size in the 15-64 age range above the global average ($4,779,884,483^{41}/237^{42}$ countries = approx. 20,168,289) to be considered most pivotal in this regard because they would have comparatively larger strategic/economic potential than countries whose populations fell below the global average (scored as 1).

Finally, technological capability was used to augment the population size between 15-64, as technology can be used to innovate, gain efficiencies, and increase productivity in the workforce, thereby increasing strategic value via the ability to produce. Therefore, the number of internet users in a given country was assessed as a greater number of internet users likely meant increased technological capabilities. Countries were divided based on the percentage of their population which uses the internet. Countries scoring between 81% and 100% were scored as 5; countries with 61% to 80% were scored as 4; 41% to 60% a 3; 21% to 40% a 2; and 0 to 20% a 1.

Based on the criteria listed above, countries could be ranked from most pivotal to least pivotal by how many variables they met and to the degree by which they met them. For instance, if a country met all of these variables to the highest degree, then it was considered most pivotal (scoring a total of 16/16). If it met none of the variables, then it was not considered pivotal at all. Moreover, the cross section of variables outlined (e.g., economic, security, and social) meant that states could achieve pivotal status in a number

⁴¹ Calculated using: CIA-The World Factbook, "World: People and Society: Age Structure as of 2015," accessed October 25, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>

⁴² The CIA recognizes 237 nations in its listing of population sizes for each, excluding the European Union. Can be found at CIA-The World Factbook, "Field Listing: Population Comparison to the World," accessed October 25, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html>

of different ways. However, states must have met all criteria to be considered most pivotal because only in this way would they be most strategically valuable to a wide array of international players, with varying interests, trying to compete with one another on the world stage. States that only met some of the criteria were then analyzed as more or less pivotal in the international system depending on how they fulfilled the factors outlined above. All data, locations, and rankings were collected from the CIA World Factbook.

It is also important to discuss the scope of this article prior to the findings, analysis, and discussion. This study assesses the current global system based on the variables noted above, in order to provide a theoretical understanding about how and why states with varying degrees of geostrategic value act, interact, and impact international security. As such, it is similar in design to studies previously completed by scholars such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Ian Bremmer. It does not necessarily assess internal politics of states, or the specific relationship between states in contemporary international relations. However, the ways in which these two factors may impact pivots and their relationships with other states is examined generally in the Analysis and Discussion sections. Nonetheless, the geostrategic values listed above will remain despite shifting internal politics and relationships between countries. In this manner, this study takes a traditional geopolitical approach to the study of international relations and international security, while determining whether there are now pivots located outside of the historic 'Heartland' region located in Central Eurasia.

Findings

The table below outlines the data compiled from the CIA's World Factbook.⁴³ After compiling relevant data into Table 1, which provides an overview of the strategic assets for each country listed, the countries were scored and ranked in Table 2 to determine whether there were new pivots located outside of the traditional Central

⁴³ All data from CIA-The World Factbook, "The World Factbook," accessed October 25, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

Eurasia region. Analysis of these findings follows in the next section, to more fully discuss each country's ranking.

Table 1: Potential Pivot States and their Geostrategic Assets

Country	GDP(PPP) (US\$)	Total GDP(PPP) Rank 2014	Geographic Location (Land Boundaries and Coastline)	Natural Resources	Population Size (15-64) 2015	Internet Users 2014
Afghanistan	60,580,000,000	100	China 76 km, Iran 936 km, Pakistan 2,430 km, Tajikistan 1,206 km, Turkmenistan 744 km, Uzbekistan 137 km	natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones	18,229,498	5.90%
Angola	175,600,000,000	64	Democratic Republic of the Congo 2,511 km, Republic of the Congo 201 km, Namibia 1,376 km, Zambia 1,110 km, South Atlantic Ocean	petroleum, diamonds, iron ore, phosphates, copper, feldspar, gold, bauxite, uranium	10,614,553	19.40%
Armenia	24,280,000,000	135	Azerbaijan-proper 566 km, Azerbaijan-Naxcivan exclave 221 km, Georgia 164 km, Iran 35 km, Turkey 268 km	small deposits of gold, copper, molybdenum, zinc, bauxite	2,146,566	43.60%
Azerbaijan	165,300,000,000	67	Armenia (with Azerbaijan-proper) 566 km, Armenia (with Azerbaijan-Naxcivan exclave) 221 km, Georgia 322 km, Iran (with Azerbaijan-proper) 432 km, Iran (with Azerbaijan-Naxcivan exclave) 179 km, Russia 284 km, Turkey 9 km, Caspian Sea	petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, nonferrous metals, bauxite	6,935,842	60.30%
Botswana	32,060,000,000	120	Namibia 1,360 km, South Africa 1,840 km, Zimbabwe 813 km	diamonds, copper, nickel, salt, soda ash, potash, coal, iron ore, silver	1,381,246	13.20%
Canada	1,592,000,000,000	15	US 8,893 km, North Atlantic Ocean on the east, North Pacific Ocean on the west, and the Arctic Ocean on the north	iron ore, nickel, zinc, copper, gold, lead, rare earth elements, molybdenum, potash, diamonds, silver, fish, timber, wildlife, coal,	23,452,063	92.90%

					petroleum, natural gas, hydropower		
Georgia	34,210,000,000	117	Armenia 164 km, Azerbaijan 322 km, Russia 723 km, Turkey 252 km, the Black Sea		timber, hydropower, manganese deposits, iron ore, copper, minor coal and oil deposits; coastal climate and soils allow for important tea and citrus growth	3,291,125	50.60%
Indonesia	2,676,000,000,000	9	Timor-Leste 228 km, Malaysia 1,782 km, Papua New Guinea 820 km, Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean		petroleum, tin, natural gas, nickel, timber, bauxite, copper, fertile soils, coal, gold, silver	172,951,002	16.70%
Iran	1,334,000,000,000	18	Afghanistan 936 km, Armenia 35 km, Azerbaijan-proper 432 km, Azerbaijan-Naxcivan exclave 179 km, Iraq 1,458 km, Pakistan 909 km, Turkey 499 km, Turkmenistan 992 km, Persian Gulf, Caspian Sea		petroleum, natural gas, coal, chromium, copper, iron ore, lead, manganese, zinc, sulfur	58,119,334	28.30%
Kazakhstan	418,500,000,000	42	China 1,533 km, Kyrgyzstan 1,224 km, Russia 6,846 km, Turkmenistan 379 km, Uzbekistan 2,203 km, Caspian Sea		major deposits of petroleum, natural gas, coal, iron ore, manganese, chrome ore, nickel, cobalt, copper, molybdenum, lead, zinc, bauxite, gold, uranium	12,241,185	59.30%
Kirgizstan	19,160,000,000	142	China 858 km, Kazakhstan 1,224 km, Tajikistan 870 km, Uzbekistan 1,099 km		abundant hydropower; significant deposits of gold and rare earth metals; locally exploitable coal, oil, and natural gas; other deposits of nepheline, mercury, bismuth, lead, and zinc	3,686,102	24.20%
Mongolia	34,760,000,000	127	China 4,677 km, Russia 3,543 km		oil, coal, copper, molybdenum, tungsten, phosphates, tin, nickel, zinc,	2,065,374	17.90%

				fluorspar, gold, silver, iron		
Mozambique	31,100,000,000	126	Malawi 1,569 km, South Africa 491 km, Swaziland 105 km, Tanzania 756 km, Zambia 419 km, Zimbabwe 1,231 km, Indian Ocean	coal, titanium, natural gas, hydropower, tantalum, graphite	13,147,348	5.50%
Singapore	445,200,000,000	39	Johore Strait, Singapore Strait	fish, deepwater ports	4,424,906	80.70%
South Korea	1,781,000,000,000	13	North Korea 238 km, Sea of Japan, Yellow Sea	coal, tungsten, graphite, molybdenum, lead, hydropower potential	36,358,522	91.50%
Tajikistan	22,320,000,000	139	Afghanistan 1,206 km, China 414 km, Kyrgyzstan 870 km, Uzbekistan 1,161 km	hydropower, some petroleum, uranium, mercury, brown coal, lead, zinc, antimony, tungsten, silver, gold	5,247,750	16.10%
Turkey	1,508,000,000,000	17	Armenia 268 km, Azerbaijan 9 km, Bulgaria 240 km, Georgia 252 km, Greece 206 km, Iran 499 km, Iraq 352 km, Syria 822 km, Black Sea, Aegean Sea	coal, iron ore, copper, chromium, antimony, mercury, gold, barite, borate, celestite (strontium), emery, feldspar, limestone, magnesite, marble, perlite, pumice, pyrites (sulfur), clay, arable land, hydropower	53,575,435	46.60%
Turkmenistan	82,090,000,000	86	Afghanistan 744 km, Iran 992 km, Kazakhstan 379 km, Uzbekistan 1,621 km	petroleum, natural gas, sulfur, salt	3,634,646	8%
Ukraine	370,800,000,000	48	Belarus 891 km, Hungary 103 km, Moldova 940 km, Poland 428 km, Romania (south) 176 km, Romania (southwest) 362 km, Russia 1,576 km, Slovakia 90 km, Black Sea	iron ore, coal, manganese, natural gas, oil, salt, sulfur, graphite, titanium, magnesium, kaolin, nickel, mercury, timber, arable land	30,647,879	37.50%
Uzbekistan	171,700,000,000	66	Afghanistan 137 km, Kazakhstan 2,203 km, Kyrgyzstan 1,099 km, Tajikistan 1,161 km, Turkmenistan 1,621 km	natural gas, petroleum, coal, gold, uranium, silver, copper, lead and zinc, tungsten, molybdenum	20,596,840	40.60%

Vietnam	510,700,000,000	36	Cambodia 1,228 km, China 1,281 km, Laos 2,130 km, Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, South China Sea	phosphates, coal, manganese, rare earth elements, bauxite, chromate, offshore oil and gas deposits, timber, hydropower	66,120,239	43%
Zambia	61,050,000,000	99	Angola 1,110 km, Democratic Republic of the Congo 1,930 km, Malawi 837 km, Mozambique 419 km, Namibia 233 km, Tanzania 338 km, Zimbabwe 797 km	copper, cobalt, zinc, lead, coal, emeralds, gold, silver, uranium, hydropower	7,759,769	15.40%

Table 2: Pivot Ranks by Country

Country	GDP(PPP) (US\$)	Geographic Location	Natural Resources	Population (15-64)	Size	Internet Users	Total
Canada	3	1 (Adjusted to 3 due to Russia)	3	2	5	14	
South Korea	3	3	1	2	5	14	
Turkey	3	3	3	2	3	14	
Iran	3	3	3	2	2	13	
Vietnam	3	2	3	2	3	13	
Indonesia	3	3	3	2	1	12	
Ukraine	2	3	3	2	2	12	
Uzbekistan	2	3	3	2	2	12	
Kazakhstan	2	3	3	1	3	12	
Azerbaijan	2	2	3	1	3	11	
Singapore	2	3	1	1	4	11	
Afghanistan	2	3	3	1	1	10	
Angola	2	3	3	1	1	10	
Armenia	1	3	2	1	3	10	

Georgia	1	2	3	1	3	10
Zambia	3	3	2	1	1	10
Botswana	2	2	3	1	1	9
Kirgizstan	1	2	3	1	2	9
Mongolia	1	3	3	1	1	9
Turkmenistan	2	3	2	1	1	9
Mozambique	1	2	2	1	1	7
Tajikistan	1	2	2	1	1	7

Analysis

None of the 22 countries examined could be totally discounted as a pivot state, though some fulfilled more of the criteria than others which made them more likely to act as a pivot in the international system. Three countries were tied at the top of the list; however, they achieved that rank through different assets. Canada, South Korea, and Turkey each scored 14 points. Canada is strategically pivotal due to its strong economy, a wealth of natural resources, its relatively large working age population size, and benefits gained from a technologically advanced society. The only reason Canada did not score perfect in this ranking is because it is relatively isolated beside the United States. However, the argument can be made that Canada is actually located between Russia and the United States. As various countries compete for resources and territory in the Arctic as the polar ice cap melts, Canada's geographic location could place it between two major powers in reality. In this case, Canada can essentially be considered the most pivotal country on the list. Further, Canada has historically been considered a 'middle power,' which indicates that it has even more international influence than a traditional pivot state would have.⁴⁴ In this manner, Canada may also be considered a 'wildcard pivot' as it is as influential as it is geostrategically valuable to other countries in the international system.

⁴⁴ Cooper and Mo, "Middle Power Leadership," p. 2.; Andrew Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1997),

Similarly, South Korea can also be considered a ‘middle power’ and ‘wildcard pivot.’⁴⁵ The country scored 14 points due to its economy, population size, and technological advancement. However, unlike Canada it scored highly due to location rather than natural resources. In contemporary international affairs, it is apt to define South Korea as being located between China, Japan, and the United States. Further, due to its strategically important location on the Korean Peninsula, South Korea can be considered one of the most pivotal states in the world.

Conversely, Turkey is considered pivotal due to its economy, geographic location between Asia and Europe, population size, and natural resources. Yet technological advancement is lacking when compared to countries such as Canada and South Korea. In order to become most pivotal, Turkey will have to focus upon technological advancement in the coming years. Notably, each of the countries ranked highest on the list has a close relationship with the United States and/or the European Union. Canada and Turkey are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Turkey is a candidate to join the EU, and South Korea has a historically close relationship with the United States for security reasons. While it is not the intent of this study to assess specific foreign policies, the strategic importance and close relations of each country to the United States and Europe means that it will be difficult for other major powers to make inroads with these pivots in the future. Yet recent trade deals may signal that there are opportunities for other world powers to increase their own strategic advantages in these three regions moving forward.⁴⁶ It is also worth noting that of the three most pivotal states; only one is located in Central Eurasia, which indicates that there are indeed pivots emerging outside of the historical ‘Heartland.’

Iran and Vietnam each scored 13, making them the next most pivotal countries in the contemporary international system. Iran had the highest ranking in economy, geography, population size, and natural resources. However, technological advancement was lacking which will limit Iran to some extent in its ability to pivot.

⁴⁵ Cooper and Mo, “Middle Power Leadership,” p. 3.

⁴⁶ See Global Affairs Canada, “Canada-China Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) Negotiations,” accessed May 30, 2016, <http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/fipa-apie/china-chine.aspx?lang=eng>

Nonetheless, Iran has been considered a geostrategic pivot for most of the 20th and 21st centuries and it has also been considered a regional power.⁴⁷ It has also historically had cool relations with Western countries, while gravitating towards states such as China and Russia.⁴⁸ In this way, Iran represents the first country on the list which is generally opposed to US hegemony. Vietnam has similarly opposed Western influence, as well as Chinese influence, while working alongside Russia to improve its strategic value. Vietnam also represents another shift outside of Central Eurasia and scored highly as a pivot due to economy, population size, and resources. Yet it is still relatively constricted by Chinese authority in East Asia, as evidenced by recent disputes in the South China Sea.⁴⁹ Further, it is middling in technological advancement. Nonetheless, recent reports seem to suggest that Vietnam and the United States are easing tensions in order to deter China's regional influence.⁵⁰ This development illustrates perfectly the importance of geopolitical study of the international system. Powers compete for domination of certain regions, and potential pivots seek ways to improve their strategic value. Alliances can shift, and internal politics may change, but the pivot-ness of states remains depending on variables such as those outlined in this study. These factors then impact the ways in which states act, interact, and impact security across the globe. In this manner, Vietnam will likely be a very pivotal country for years to come.

Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan scored next on the list with 12 points each. Indonesia scored the highest possible rank on economy, population size, resources, and location. Yet it was ranked in the lowest category for technology. Therefore, while Indonesia represents another shift away from Central Eurasia, it will have to advance significantly with technology in order to become most pivotal. Should it accomplish this task, it would actually become as pivotal as Canada in the global

⁴⁷ Ray Takeyh, "Time for Détente with Iran," *Foreign Affairs* 86 (2007): p. 21; Barry Rubin, "Iran: The rise of a regional power," *The Middle East Review of International Affairs* 10 (2006).

⁴⁸ Olga Samofalova, "New Iran-China ties threaten Russian interests," *Russia & India Report* January 29, 2016 accessed May 30, 2016, https://in.rbth.com/world/2016/01/29/new-iran-china-ties-threaten-russian-interests_563401; David Oualaalou, "What's Behind the New Chinese-Russian-Iranian Alliance?" *Huffington Post* January 24, 2015 accessed May 30, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-oualaalou/whats-behind-the-new-chin_b_6189306.html

⁴⁹ Bonnie S. Glaser, "Armed Clash in the South China Sea," *Council on Foreign Relations* April 2012 accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/armed-clash-south-china-sea/p27883>

⁵⁰ Nathan Thompson, "How the United States and Vietnam have become unlikely friends," *CNN* May 22, 2016 accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/05/22/politics/vietnam-united-states-friends/>

system. Conversely, Uzbekistan and Ukraine were identical with 3 points allocated for location and resources, and 2 points for population size. Each also had relatively low technology scores, with GDP (PPP) rankings above the median, but below the average. In this manner, these two countries will have to grow their economies while focusing on technological advancement to become most pivotal. In the case of both, it will also be prescient to assess how they gravitate towards or away from Russia in the coming years. There has been significant turmoil in Ukraine recently due to its pivoting between Europe and Russia.⁵¹ This case once again illustrates the importance of understanding geopolitics and its place in international relations. Both the EU and Russia would like to have Ukraine in their respective sphere of influence. In Ukraine, there has been further turmoil due to internal politics and the policies of respective governments towards one power or the other.⁵² The Ukrainian case also demonstrates well the inter-play of external and internal influences when a country is considered pivotal. Yet it will be pivotal regardless of which political party or world power gains the most influence in the years to come. It is also likely that powers will continue to compete over countries like Ukraine whatever the outcome may be in the short term in that country. Kazakhstan scored a 12 due to location and natural resources. Further, its economy scored above the median, but below the average. Kazakhstan has seen middling technological advancement as well and has a small population size which negatively impacts its ability to pivot fully.

Azerbaijan and Singapore followed scoring 11 points each. Azerbaijan scored similarly to Kazakhstan, except for the fact that it is more constrained geographically due to its location beside Russia. However, Azerbaijan has attempted to work more closely with Western powers than its Russian (former Soviet) counterpart since the 1990's.⁵³ In this way, Azerbaijan may realistically be as pivotal as Kazakhstan, which generally seeks relationships with several partners including Russia, China, the US, and Europe. It will be important to watch how Azerbaijan continues to build alliances despite residing in

⁵¹ BBC, "Ukraine Crisis: Timeline," *BBC* November 13, 2014 accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Aleksandra Jarosiewicz, "Azerbaijan – a growing problem for the West," *Osrodek Studiow Wschodnich* September 15, 2014 accessed on June 1, 2016, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2014-09-15/azerbaijan-a-growing-problem-west>

Russia's backyard moving forward. Finally, Singapore scored well on geographic location and technological advancement. However, it also had a GDP (PPP) below the average and above the median. It has a very small population size as well, with very few natural resources. In this way, Singapore was not highly pivotal, but can be considered more of a 'middle pivot.' Yet its strategically valuable shipping port must be taken into consideration when assessing its pivot-ness.⁵⁴ The shipping port is an important trade post for several countries, and Singapore is able to leverage this facet alongside its technological prowess in order to improve its strategic status in the contemporary international system. In this manner, Singapore provides an excellent example of the ways in which a small country with a small population can build its impact on international relations in the 21st century.

Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Georgia, and Zambia each scored a 10. Yet their geostrategic attributes varied. Afghanistan and Angola have economies which scored below the average, but above the median. They each also scored highly in geographic location and natural resources, but low in population size and technological advancement. Significantly, Angola marks the first pivot on the list located in Africa. On the other hand, Afghanistan marks yet another historically pivotal country in the international system. Armenia and Georgia have relatively weak economies, with small population sizes between the ages of 15-64. Still, they are middling when it comes to technological advancement, which will help them become more pivotal in the future if they can leverage the technology to improve their economic health and wealth. Otherwise, Armenia has some valuable resources but is relatively open to manoeuvre. Georgia has a wealth of natural resources, but is constrained by Russia. Nevertheless, Georgia's relationship with the EU and US has grown in recent years, which has strained relations with Russia.⁵⁵ Like Ukraine, it will be important to examine how Georgia pivots in the coming years as it has begun to work alongside the EU and NATO despite Russian influence in the region. Finally, Zambia represents another potential shift outside of Central Eurasia. The African country has a strong economy and is well placed

⁵⁴ MPA Singapore, "Port of Singapore," accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home/port-of-singapore>

⁵⁵ Michael Birnbaum, "Spurned by the West, Georgians look to Russia despite past quarrels," *The Washington Post* July 4, 2015 accessed on June 2, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/despite-past-quarrels-with-russia-georgians-are-returning-to-its-orbit/2015/07/01/40d64c24-1b49-11e5-bed8-1093ee58dad0_story.html

geographically. It also has some natural resources which make it partially strategically valuable in this regard. Zambia's small population size and low technological advancement create barriers for its ability to fully pivot though. Nonetheless, the shift to Africa represents an area of interest to observe in the future.

Botswana, Kirgizstan, Mongolia, and Turkmenistan were ranked next with a score of 9. Botswana and Turkmenistan each have a GDP (PPP) ranking below the average but above the median. They also have relatively small populations which are technologically hindered. Yet Botswana has a wealth of natural resources while Turkmenistan only has some valuable resources. On the other hand, Turkmenistan is relatively open geographically while Botswana may be constrained by South Africa. Mongolia was only really pivotal due to its location between China and Russia, and because of its vast natural resources. Kirgizstan is slightly more pivotal in the sense that it has several natural resources and is slightly more advanced technologically. However, it would also seem that it is more constrained due to its location beside China. Yet it would be more apt to define Kirgizstan as being a pivot between Russia and the United States. The country has a formal military relationship with the US, and has warmed relations with Russia in the time since its independence from the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ In this way, Kirgizstan may actually be more like a 10 than a 9 because it has used its pivot-ness to create some competition between world powers. In this case, Kirgizstan is likely more pivotal than Botswana, Mongolia, and Turkmenistan.

Finally, Mozambique and Tajikistan scored lowest on the list with 7 points apiece. Mozambique is slightly pivotal due to its location; however it is constrained by South Africa. Similarly, Tajikistan is constrained by China. In reality though, Tajikistan is actually constrained by its relationship with Russia as it tends to rely on Russia for economic stability and security.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the country still scores a 7. Each also has some valuable natural resources. Otherwise, they have weak economies, small working

⁵⁶ Stratfor, "Kyrgyzstan Quarrels With the United States, Again," *Stratfor*, July 30, 2015 accessed June 2, 2016, <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/kyrgyzstan-quarrels-united-states-again>

⁵⁷ Samuel Ramani, "Russia Offers to Support Tajikistan...But There's a Price," *The Diplomat*, October 1, 2015 accessed on June 2, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/russia-supports-tajikistanfor-a-price/>

age populations, and a low level of technological advancement. Therefore, Mozambique and Tajikistan are not very pivotal in today's international system.

Discussion and Conclusion

There are some important conclusions which can be drawn from the results. First, there are indeed pivot states located outside of the traditional Central Eurasian region. According to the list developed in this study, there are strategically valuable countries located across the globe. Many of these states are comparable to the countries located in Central Eurasia. While countries like Iran and Turkey continue to rank highly as geostrategic pivots, Canada, South Korea, and Vietnam ranked equally pivotal in the current international system. This trend continues throughout the results. For every pivot state found within Central Eurasia, there are other comparable strategically valuable states found outside of the historical pivot region.

In regional terms, there are also pivots located outside of Central Eurasia. In the end, Central Eurasia scored an average of 11.5 points. East Asia scored 12.5 points, although there were fewer countries from this area studied, Southern Africa scored 9 points, and Canada independently scored highest with 14, which was later adjusted upwards to 16. Therefore, the argument can be made that there are indeed now pivots located outside of Central Eurasia which are equally important from a geostrategic perspective as the historic Heartland. Yet this study only provides an initial assessment of some regions, especially East Asia, which requires further review. Nonetheless, countries such as Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam, Canada and Singapore will become increasingly valuable strategic pivots in the near future, and many of them are considered important already. The growing importance of East Asia as a geostrategic pivot region will undoubtedly be exacerbated by China's emergence as a world power as well as the continued importance of East Asia in United States foreign policy.⁵⁸ It may even begin to play a more prominent role in the foreign policies of other established and emerging powers as well moving forward.

⁵⁸ Choi Kang, "A Changing East Asia and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 2012 accessed on June 4, 2016, <http://www.cfr.org/south-korea/changing-east-asia-us-foreign-policy/p28385>

Southern Africa also looks to be an increasingly important region in the international system. While many countries in Southern Africa are not currently as strategically valuable as several East Asian and Central Eurasian states, there is some sense of the region's growing strategic importance as countries like Zambia, Angola and Botswana rival some of their Central Eurasian and East Asian counterparts in terms of resources and advantageous geographic location. These attributes specifically could have more importance across the international system moving forward as powerful states emerge in all corners of the planet. It is difficult to classify Southern Africa as a true pivot *region* yet though due to its combined relatively low score on the list developed in this study. While there are pivot states located in Southern Africa with varying degrees of strategic value, the area as a whole needs to continue strengthening its strategic assets to be considered a pivot region similar to Central Eurasia or East Asia.

Nevertheless, many of the pivot states listed in this study will find that they could have a greater role in international security efforts moving ahead. Countries specifically found near the top of the list such as Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, Canada, South Korea, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Vietnam might be able to grow their influence and play even more integral roles in matters of international stability and security. Many of these countries are already considered 'regional powers' or 'middle powers.' As long as they continue to enhance their strategic importance and build their own capacity to influence international relations, they will continue to strengthen their status as 'second-tier' powers moving forward. Some of their future importance will certainly be attributed to the fact that they are pivot states of interest to powerful countries, but it could also be due to their own resolve to impact international affairs. In this way, their future standing may be as impacted by their own internal and external affairs as they are by the policies and practices of established or emerging world powers.

Conversely, states ranking lower on the list of pivots may be able to improve their international position if they continue to build on their strengths and improve areas of weakness. While variables like geographic location cannot be changed, though their neighbours' status as a world power in some cases can be, factors such as economic size and technological advancement could be improved to build importance in the global system. There may also be new resource discoveries in the future or a shift in the

population or resource levels one country contains versus another. Much of this manoeuvring will rely on the way in which these countries and societies manage themselves and the respective issues that arise within their borders in the future. Certainly, more stable countries will be better equipped to pivot, while countries in turmoil will struggle to use their geostrategic assets to their advantage. It will also depend on the way in which these pivot states interact with other countries in the international system. Should some less pivotal states become comparatively more strategically valuable in the future, there will be implications for international security as well. Locations of conflict and locations of international problem-solving and response will shift. In turn, it will signal a new period of international stability and security affairs.

While many aspects of geostrategy will be shaped by the ways in which pivot states interact with other countries, it will also be shaped by the competition that takes place between world powers for access to pivot regions. Both emerging and established powers will seek to build alliances with pivot states, gain access to certain markets, and increase their influence vis-à-vis other states in the international system. Incidents such as Russia's recent standoff with western countries in Ukraine or its foray into the Middle East to support allies there, despite western opposition, are good examples of the ever evolving nature of geostrategy and the ways in which powerful states and pivot states interact and influence international security.⁵⁹ In this way, pivot states may be subjected to pressure from powerful states to act according to those powerful states' interests. However, pivots may also be able to use their valuable assets to their advantage in order to gain influence in world affairs.

Existing relationships based on trade, military alliances, and shared values may also make it more difficult for some countries to actually pivot. For example, Turkey's membership in NATO and its desire to join the EU will constrain its ability to pivot in real terms. Still, Turkey does have certain geostrategic assets which are attractive to many states, and it may decide to pursue stronger relations with other countries in the future.

⁵⁹ See Michael Bell, Tom Najem, and Neil Quilliam, "Syria is just the beginning of Putin's global ambitions," *The Globe and Mail*, October 20, 2015 accessed on October 30, 2015, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/syria-is-just-the-beginning-of-putins-global-ambitions/article26875384/> or Anna Borshchevskaya, "Does Putin Have a Plan for Syria?" *The Washington Institute*, 2015 accessed on October 30, 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/does-putin-have-a-plan-for-syria> for discussion of recent Russian geostrategic plays in Ukraine and the Middle East

Potential future policy decisions to end the country's EU membership bid or a decision by the EU to reject Turkish membership could have important implications for how Turkey pivots and the resulting international security environment. Additionally, there are cases highlighted above, such as Ukraine, Vietnam, and Kirgizstan, which demonstrate that alliances can shift and values can change. Further, while countries such as Canada and the United States share rather strong relationships, there are still opportunities for other states to make inroads with pivots as illustrated by recent trade deals between China and Canada. This is not to say that there is a significant weakening of relations between historic allies, but that pivots are indeed able manoeuvre to some extent when given the opportunity.

The emergence of pivot states across many different regions additionally signals that there is a new era of international security on the horizon. Future security operations will rely upon the actions and reactions of powerful states as they interact with pivot states across the global system. As true pivot states (distinguished from the 'wildcard pivots') are located within Central Eurasia, East Asia, and Southern Africa, there will be numerous fronts of potential instability in the future. Some conflict will continue to take the form of conventional warfare. Yet coalition building, intelligence operations, trade relations, diplomatic coercion, and economic means will also be used by powerful states as tools for gaining influence in pivot areas.

Pivots will also likely look to play more powerful states against one another, in order to improve their standing. Yet while these competitions will likely make pivots more influential in world affairs, they will also increase the potential for conflict. As witnessed in cases such as Ukraine, civil strife may result as certain segments of the population support one policy option or pivot option over another. In some societies, civil strife might lead to increased potential for extremism and violent non-state actors to gain momentum, as a mix of internal and external players attempt to influence a state's policy making. Similarly, various groups within pivot states might form to seek power as their respective countries gain regional and international influence. As illustrated in various cases from Asia to Africa over the last century, civil wars will result when various groups within non-democratic or weak democratic countries attempt to gain control. Further, as technological advancement becomes an increasingly viable method for

smaller states to improve their geostrategic value, it will also give both powerful and pivot states alike an advantage in the form of cyber warfare. By conducting cyber-attacks and stealing digital information which can be used to their advantage, states will once again increase the potential for regional and global instability.

The expansion of pivots outside the Heartland will also likely create insecurity amongst some traditional allies. In reality, pivots and powers rely on each other for national security. Relationships such as South Korea and the United States or Tajikistan and Russia provide good examples of the ways in which countries across the globe depend on each other to secure national interests. Yet these states are also ultimately constrained in their abilities to defend themselves by a variety of factors, including budgets, political realities, and military capabilities. As powerful states seek to build relationships with states not traditionally considered pivots or allies, and vice versa, insecurity might ensue within existing alliances. Those insecurities may then lead to a weakening of defence capabilities, which will make it easier for states to conduct offensive operations against each other. Conversely, insecurities amongst traditional allies may lead to military build ups in certain countries, which could ultimately lead to heightened regional and global instability.

Nevertheless, there will also be new opportunities presented with the rise of pivots outside of Central Eurasia. For instance, states with increased capabilities and improved global impact will be able to take on leadership opportunities more readily in a multipolar world. They will also have the ability to bring new issues to the fore, which may have been relatively ignored by powerful states and traditional pivots in the past. New zones of international investment will open up, which may positively impact international development. Finally, states with growing amounts of influence and capabilities can work alongside other states in order to solve pressing issues such as terrorism, piracy, and climate change. In this manner, new pivots in a multipolar world may lend themselves toward a stable, more secure international system.

Finally, international security will be influenced by the way in which pivot states increase or decrease their geostrategic value moving forward. In addition, it will rely on how other states across the world attempt to increase their respective geostrategic values as well. The list developed in this study is not meant to provide a full range of countries which may or may not be pivotal in the international system. Indeed, there are numerous

other countries that could have some strategic value and could act as pivots as well. The fact that there are now powerful states located across the globe in an increasingly multipolar system indicates that pivot states and regions may be found in several new areas where they were not considered in the past. The findings of this study provide support to the notion that there are indeed pivots located outside of Central Eurasia. While Central Eurasia will continue to be strategically important in the future, East Asia's ability to match the former's geostrategic value reveals that there is at least one pivot region located outside of the historic 'heartland.' In addition, while this study provided a broad range of states located across several geographic areas, there may still be pivot states situated elsewhere on the map. Countries in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula are strong possibilities as pivots as well. Other countries located in East Asia may also be considered pivot states moving forward. These possibilities provide guidance for areas of further research. Other foci of future research could be to look at the pivot states listed in this study on an individualized basis to evaluate their existing arrangements with powerful states and/or to determine whether they will become more or less pivotal in the international system in the future. Nevertheless, there will be strategic manoeuvring by powerful and pivot states alike in Central Eurasia, East Asia, and Southern Africa moving into the future. These developments will help to form geostrategy and the international security environment for years to come.