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**Philosophical interpretation of spatial archetypes in the spatial analysis of
Baltic sea geopolitics**

Maksym Lepskiy,

Doctor of Philosophy (D.Sc.), Professor, Professor in the Sociology Department,
Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5604-641X>

Nataliia Lepska,

Ph.D. in Political Science, Associate Professor at the Department of Political
Science Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6010-423X>

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article is to develop a formalised methodological framework within the philosophy of history for analysing spatial archetypes in Baltic geopolitics and transforming narratives into structured and comparable models of geopolitical cognition.*

The study is based on an integrative methodological approach combining philosophy of history, historical geography, geopolitics, and sociology of space. Spatial archetypes are conceptualised as historically conditioned topological configurations and operationalised through analytically defined variables (centre,



periphery, boundary, liminal space, route, and zone of chaos). The research employs a coding procedure and an intensity scale, enabling the transformation of qualitative narrative material into semi-structured analytical data. Composite indices of spatial expansion, contraction, stabilisation, and chaotisation are constructed to ensure systematic comparison (see Appendix A; Appendix B).

The empirical analysis, based on a comparative study of the Heracleian cycle and the Estonian epic Kalevipoeg, reveals two distinct spatial regimes of geopolitical cognition. The classical model demonstrates an expansive spatial logic characterised by outward movement and the transformation of peripheral disorder, whereas the Baltic model reflects a contractive spatial logic oriented toward boundary maintenance, containment, and stabilisation. The calculated indices confirm structural differences between these regimes, demonstrating that narrative sources encode coherent and analytically tractable models of spatial reasoning.

The study shows that spatial imaginaries function as constitutive structures of geopolitical cognition and can be systematically analysed through formalised procedures. The proposed framework integrates hermeneutic interpretation with mathematically informed analytical methods, enhancing analytical precision and reproducibility without reducing interpretative depth. The findings contribute to the development of philosophy of history and geopolitics by providing tools for modelling spatial cognition and analysing regional dynamics, particularly in boundary-oriented geopolitical contexts such as the Baltic Sea region.

Keywords: *philosophy of history; geopolitics; historical geography; sociology of space; spatial archetypes; spatial imaginaries; formalisation; mathematical methods; Baltic Sea region.*



**Філософське осмислення просторових архетипів у спатіоаналізі
геополітики регіону Балтійського моря**

Лепський Максим Анатолійович,

доктор філософських наук, професор, професор кафедри соціології

Запорізький національний університет,

Запоріжжя, Україна, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5604-641X>

Лепська Наталія Володимирівна,

кандидат політичних наук, доцент, доцент кафедри політології

Запорізький національний університет,

Запоріжжя, Україна, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6010-423X>

***Анотація:** Метою статті є розробка формалізованої методологічної рамки в межах філософії історії для аналізу просторових архетипів у геополітиці Балтійського регіону та трансформації наративів у структуровані й порівнювані моделі геополітичного мислення.*

Методологічну основу дослідження становить інтеграція філософії історії, історичної географії, геополітики та соціології простору. Просторові архетипи інтерпретуються як історично зумовлені топологічні конфігурації та операціоналізуються через систему аналітичних змінних (центр, периферія, межа, лімінальний простір, маршрут, зона хаосу). Застосовано процедуру кодування та шкалу інтенсивності, що дозволяє трансформувати якісний наративний матеріал у напівструктуровані дані. Для забезпечення порівняльного аналізу сформовано композитні індекси просторової експансії, контракції, стабілізації та хаотизації (див. Додаток А; Додаток В).



Емпіричний аналіз, виконаний на основі порівняння циклу Геракла та естонського епосу «Калевіпоег», виявив два відмінні режими просторової організації геополітичного мислення. Класична модель характеризується експансивною логікою, спрямованою на розширення та трансформацію периферії, тоді як балтійська модель демонструє контрактивну логіку, орієнтовану на підтримання меж і стабілізацію просторового порядку. Розраховані індекси підтверджують структурні відмінності між цими режимами та засвідчують, що наративи містять узгоджені моделі просторового мислення, придатні до формалізованого аналізу.

Доведено, що просторові уявлення виступають конститутивними структурами геополітичного мислення і можуть бути досліджені за допомогою формалізованих аналітичних процедур. Запропонований підхід поєднує герменевтичну інтерпретацію з аналітичними методами, що засновані на математичному підході, підвищуючи точність і відтворюваність аналізу без втрати його змістовної глибини. Отримані результати розширюють методологічні можливості філософії історії та геополітики, відкриваючи перспективи моделювання просторового мислення та аналізу регіональних процесів, зокрема у прикордонних геополітичних просторах, таких як Балтійський регіон.

Ключові слова: *філософія історії; геополітика; історична географія; соціологія простору; просторові архетипи; просторові уявлення; формалізація; математичні методи; Балтійський регіон.*

Problem Statement and Its Relevance to Key Scientific and Practical Challenges

In contemporary philosophy of history, space is understood as a constitutive category of historical cognition [26]. Geopolitical processes are embedded in spatial



imaginaries shaping strategic thinking and perceptions of order. Despite advances [1; 7; 17], approaches remain predominantly interpretative and lack formalised analytical frameworks. Narrative sources, although structurally rich, are rarely operationalised. The Baltic region, shaped by unstable borders and layered sovereignties [21; 19; 14], illustrates this gap. The absence of variables, coding procedures, and indices limits analytical comparison.

However, the analytical tools required to capture these spatial logics remain insufficiently developed. In particular, there is a lack of:

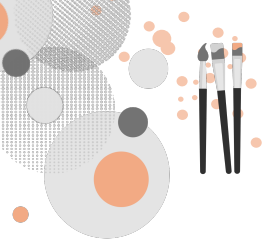
- clearly defined analytical variables;
- standardised coding procedures;
- composite indices enabling controlled comparison of spatial regimes.

As a result, the relationship between philosophy of history and geopolitics remains under-theorised at the level of methodological formalisation.

Addressing this gap is both scientifically and practically significant. It enables the integration of philosophy of history with analytically controlled spatial analysis and opens new possibilities for modelling geopolitical processes and interpreting strategic cultures.

In response, this study proposes a methodological framework that integrates philosophical-historical interpretation with mathematically informed analytical procedures, allowing spatial archetypes to be operationalised and analysed as structured models of geopolitical cognition. This study addresses this limitation by proposing a formalised methodological framework.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The present study is situated within scholarship shaped by the Spatial Turn, which redefined space as a constitutive category of historical cognition rather than a passive container of events. This reconceptualisation is articulated in the works of Karl Schlögel, who emphasises “reading time in space” [26], and Derek Gregory, whose concept of



geographical imagination frames space as a historically constructed epistemological category [10].

From the perspective of philosophy of history, this shift implies that historical reality is structured not only temporally but also spatially. As argued by Jörn Rüsen, historical thinking depends on cultural frameworks organising experience, including spatial forms [25]. Thus, space becomes a fundamental condition of historical cognition.

Within this framework, historical geography has moved from reconstructing physical landscapes to analysing symbolic and representational dimensions of space. Denis Cosgrove conceptualised landscape as a cultural image [Cosgrove, 2008], while Charles Withers demonstrated geography as a historically embedded intellectual practice [29].

Recent developments in spatial humanities and digital history extend this approach. Bodenhamer, Corrigan, and Harris introduced deep mapping as an integration of narrative and spatial data [4]. Gregory and Geddes demonstrated the applicability of spatial analysis to textual corpora [11], while Bodenhamer further conceptualised narratives as forms of spatial storytelling [5].

Cartographic studies reinforce this interpretative shift. J. B. Harley showed that maps encode power relations rather than neutral reality [12], while Matthew Edney analysed cartography as a culturally embedded process [9]. These insights are extended in critical geopolitics, where spatial representations function as instruments of strategic and ideological framing.

In geopolitics, interpretative approaches have become dominant. John Agnew reconceptualised geopolitics as embedded in spatial imaginaries [1], Jason Dittmer analysed geopolitical assemblages as networks of actors and practices [7], and Merje Kuus highlighted the role of expert and diplomatic practices in producing



geopolitical space [17]. These developments converge in the concept of geopolitical imagination as a historically conditioned form of spatial cognition.

Parallel developments are evident in literary and narrative studies. Franco Moretti introduced spatial and quantitative approaches to literary structures [20], while Robert Tally developed the concept of literary cartography [27; 28]. These approaches identify recurring spatial configurations – centre, periphery, boundary, route, and chaos – corresponding to the analytical variables used in this study.

The classical tradition provides a key reference point. Texts such as Apollodorus' Library [3], Diodorus Siculus' Library of History [8], and Pausanias' Description of Greece [23] present coherent spatial models structured around movement and expansion. Irad Malkin interprets these as network-based spatial systems of Mediterranean expansion [18].

In contrast, the Baltic Sea region represents a different spatial formation. Michael North emphasises its role as a zone of exchange [21], while Mänd and Tamm interpret it as a historiographical construct [19]. Recent studies deepen this perspective: Kasekamp highlights geopolitical vulnerability [14], Plakans analyses layered identities [24], and Paasi demonstrates the role of re-bordering processes [22].

Within Baltic literary studies, Kalevipoeg remains central. Foundational editions include Kreutzwald (1982), Annist (1934/2005) and Kirby (1895), while Hasselblatt (2016) examines its comparative relation to classical traditions. However, these approaches often interpret Baltic material through Mediterranean frameworks, potentially obscuring its specific spatial logic.

Thus, despite advances across philosophy of history, historical geography, geopolitics, and literary studies, a key limitation remains. Existing research is predominantly interpretative and lacks formalised and reproducible analytical frameworks for systematic comparison of spatial imaginaries.



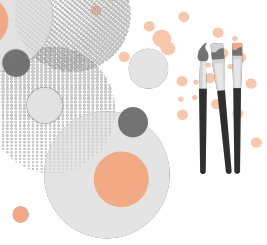
This gap defines the contribution of the present study, which integrates philosophical-historical interpretation with mathematically informed analytical procedures, transforming spatial archetypes into operational analytical tools.

Unresolved Aspects of the General Problem. Despite substantial advances in philosophy of history, historical geography, geopolitics, and spatial literary studies, a fundamental methodological limitation persists: existing approaches remain predominantly interpretative and descriptive, lacking sufficient formalisation for systematic comparison and analytical reproducibility.

From the perspective of philosophy of history, this reflects a deeper epistemological tension. While space is increasingly recognised as a constitutive category of historical cognition structuring narrative and collective experience [25; 26], the tools used to analyse spatial imaginaries remain largely qualitative and hermeneutic, without mechanisms for controlled comparison.

A similar limitation is evident in geopolitics. Although contemporary approaches have demonstrated that political space is constructed through discourse and practice [1; 7; 17], they prioritise interpretative depth over methodological formalisation, limiting the identification of structural regularities. This problem is reinforced in narrative analysis: despite evidence that narratives encode structured spatial relations – centre/periphery, boundary, movement, and chaos [20; 28; 5] – these structures are rarely operationalised for systematic comparison or modelling.

Moreover, a gap persists between interpretation and formalisation. Even recent developments in spatial analysis and digital humanities [11] tend to focus on mapping and visualisation rather than conceptual modelling of spatial cognition. This limitation is particularly significant in the Baltic Sea region, where spatial imaginaries centred on borders, instability, and overlapping sovereignties have been well documented [21; 19; 14; 22], yet remain analytically under-formalised.



Thus, the current state of research reveals three interrelated gaps: the absence of clearly defined analytical variables, standardised coding procedures, and composite indices for comparing spatial regimes. Accordingly, the central unresolved problem may be formulated as follows: how can spatial imaginaries be transformed from interpretative constructs into operational analytical units suitable for formalised comparison? The present study addresses this challenge by proposing a framework that integrates philosophical-historical interpretation with mathematically informed analytical procedures, enabling the operationalisation and comparison of spatial archetypes as structured models of geopolitical cognition.

The purpose of this article is to develop a formalised methodological framework within the philosophy of history for analysing spatial archetypes in Baltic geopolitics and transforming narrative structures into comparable models of geopolitical cognition.

To achieve this, the study conceptualises spatial archetypes as historically conditioned topological configurations and operationalises them through analytically defined variables (centre, periphery, boundary, liminal space, route, and zone of chaos), supported by a standardised coding procedure and intensity scale. On this basis, it constructs composite indices (expansion, contraction, stabilisation, chaotisation) and applies them to a comparative analysis of classical heroic models (the Heracleian cycle) and Baltic narratives (Kalevipoeg), demonstrating that narrative sources can be treated as formalizable models of geopolitical reasoning.

At a broader level, the article contributes to philosophy of history by integrating hermeneutic interpretation with mathematically informed analytical procedures, establishing a bridge between interpretative depth and analytical reproducibility. In geopolitics, it enables a shift from descriptive analysis toward systematic modelling of spatial imaginaries, advancing a methodological synthesis in which philosophy of history serves as the epistemological core, geopolitics as the



applied domain, and formalisation as the operational mechanism for controlled comparison.

Methodology and Analytical Framework

The methodological foundation of this study is rooted in philosophy of history, where space is conceptualised as a constitutive category of historical cognition rather than an external dimension of historical processes [25; 26]. Within this perspective, spatial structures organise historical experience and narrative, aligning with the Spatial Turn, which redefined space as an active component of historical reasoning [10]. The study integrates insights from historical geography, geopolitics, and the sociology of space, treating geopolitical space as a structured field of perception and strategic orientation rather than a purely material entity [1; 7; 17].

The central analytical concept is that of spatial archetypes, understood as recurrent topological configurations structuring narrative and geopolitical representations. These archetypes function as stable patterns of spatial organisation and are treated as analytical constructs enabling the transformation of narrative material into comparable forms. This approach allows the transition from descriptive interpretation to analytically controlled modelling.

To enable formalisation, spatial archetypes are operationalised through analytically defined variables: centre, periphery, boundary, liminal space, route, and zone of chaos. Narrative corpora are segmented into spatially coherent episodes, which are coded according to the presence and structural significance of these variables. An intensity scale is applied to ensure consistency, allowing qualitative descriptions to be transformed into semi-structured analytical data [11].

The coded data are aggregated into composite spatial profiles and used to construct indices of expansion, contraction, stabilisation, and chaotisation. These indices capture structural tendencies in spatial organisation and enable systematic



comparison across different contexts. Importantly, they represent analytical abstractions of spatial logic, rather than measurements of physical space.

Methodologically, the framework integrates hermeneutic interpretation with mathematically informed analytical procedures, enhancing reproducibility without reducing interpretative depth. Epistemologically, it operates at the intersection of interpretative and formalised approaches, establishing a synthesis in which philosophy of history provides the foundation, geopolitics the applied domain, and formalisation the mechanism of comparison. This enables spatial imaginaries to be analysed as structured and partially formalizable models of geopolitical cognition.

Results of the Study. The results confirm the analytical validity of the proposed framework. The application of the analytical framework reveals two distinct spatial regimes.

The Heracleian model demonstrates a high Expansion Index and outward spatial logic (see Appendix B, Table B2), indicating transformation of peripheral chaos into order.

The Baltic model (Kalevipoeg) shows higher Contraction and Stabilisation indices, reflecting boundary-centred spatial logic and internalised instability.

Comparative analysis (see Appendix B, Table B4) confirms:

- expansion vs containment;
- externalised vs internalised chaos;
- movement vs stabilisation.

Thus, spatial regimes represent structurally distinct models of geopolitical cognition.

Discussion: Philosophy of History and Formalisation

From the standpoint of philosophy of history, the empirical results demonstrate that spatial configurations in narrative corpora should be interpreted not merely as descriptive elements but as constitutive structures of historical cognition.



In this sense, expansive and contractive regimes represent distinct modes through which historical experience is organised and rendered meaningful.

The expansive regime, exemplified by the Heracleian model, encodes a form of cognition in which space is understood as open and transformable, with order emerging through outward movement and the incorporation of peripheral zones. In contrast, the contractive regime identified in Baltic narratives reflects an epistemological configuration oriented toward containment, boundary maintenance, and stabilisation, where space is perceived as limited and inherently unstable.

These findings indicate that spatial archetypes function as deep structures of geopolitical cognition, shaping both narrative representation and strategic perception. The distinction between expansive and contractive regimes thus reflects broader civilisational patterns of spatial reasoning that persist across historical contexts and inform geopolitical behaviour.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates the possibility of integrating hermeneutic interpretation with mathematically informed analytical procedures. By introducing analytically defined variables, coding procedures, and composite indices, the proposed framework enhances reproducibility and enables the identification of structural regularities without reducing interpretative complexity. At the same time, these indices remain analytical abstractions whose validity depends on consistent coding and interpretative discipline; formalisation therefore extends rather than replaces interpretation.

Consequently, narrative sources can be reconsidered as structured models of spatial reasoning, opening new possibilities for their integration into geopolitical and social analysis. The proposed synthesis establishes a framework in which philosophy of history provides the epistemological foundation, geopolitics the applied domain, and formalisation the mechanism of systematic comparison, allowing spatial



imaginaries to be analysed as structured and partially formalizable models of historical and geopolitical cognition.

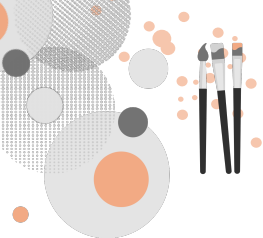
Conclusion and Prospects for Further Research. The study demonstrates that spatial imaginaries can be systematically analysed within a philosophical-historical framework in which space functions as a constitutive category of historical cognition. This approach extends the analytical scope of both historical and geopolitical research by treating spatial structures as forms organising and rendering historical experience intelligible.

The empirical analysis identifies two distinct regimes of geopolitical cognition: an expansive regime, characterised by outward movement and transformation of peripheral disorder, and a contractive regime, oriented toward boundary maintenance and stabilisation. These regimes represent historically conditioned modes of spatial organisation and strategic reasoning rather than merely narrative patterns.

A central contribution of the study lies in the development of a formalised methodological framework that operationalises spatial archetypes through variables, coding procedures, and composite indices. This enables the transformation of narrative sources into structured and comparable models of spatial reasoning, while demonstrating that mathematically informed procedures enhance analytical precision without reducing interpretative depth.

From a geopolitical perspective, the findings show that narrative traditions encode durable forms of spatial cognition shaping perceptions of borders and strategic action. More broadly, the study contributes to philosophy of history by bridging interpretative and formalised approaches and opening new interdisciplinary perspectives.

Prospects for Further Research. The proposed framework may be extended to other regions and civilisational contexts, enabling comparative analysis of spatial



regimes. Its integration with digital humanities tools creates opportunities for large-scale analysis of narrative corpora, while further refinement of indices may support the development of computational models of geopolitical cognition. The approach is also applicable to contemporary geopolitical discourse, offering new tools for analysing strategic narratives. Finally, it opens avenues for deeper theoretical exploration of the relationship between space, cognition, and power within philosophy of history.

Appendix A. Integrated Spatial Analysis Model, Indices, and Comparative Tables

The empirical design of this study is grounded in the operationalisation of spatial archetypes as analytically defined variables that enable the systematic examination of narrative space. Within the framework of Philosophy of History, these variables are interpreted as forms of historical cognition through which spatial order is structured, stabilised, and transformed.

The analytical procedure begins with the segmentation of narrative corpora into structurally coherent episodes, each defined by a stable configuration of action and spatial context. Within these episodes, spatial markers – such as movement, boundaries, environmental features, and symbolic locations – are identified and interpreted. The resulting elements are coded using a set of variables that represent distinct spatial functions and are evaluated through an intensity scale reflecting their structural significance.

Table A1.

Spatial Variables and Analytical Functions

Variable	Symbol	Analytical Function
Centre	C	Locus of order, stability, authority



Periphery	P	Space beyond normative organisation
Boundary	B	Threshold separating spatial regimes
Liminal space	L	Transitional zone of transformation
Route	R	Structured movement across space
Zone of chaos	H	Domain of disorder and destabilisation

Джерело: власна розробка авторів

Each variable is assigned an intensity value from 0 to 3, allowing qualitative narrative structures to be translated into semi-quantitative data. This procedure creates the basis for aggregation and the construction of composite indices that summarise broader patterns of spatial organisation.

Table A2.

Composite Indices and Analytical Meaning

Index	Conceptual Definition	Analytical Interpretation
Spatial Expansion Index (SEI)	Ratio of movement and periphery to stabilising structures	Degree of outward spatial expansion
Spatial Contraction Index (SCI)	Ratio of centre, boundary, and liminality to movement	Degree of containment and stabilisation
Spatial Chaos Index (SChI)	Relative intensity of disorder within spatial structure	Structural presence of chaos

Джерело: власна розробка авторів

The application of this framework to the selected corpora produces analytically comparable results, revealing distinct spatial regimes.

**Table A3.**

Calculated Spatial Indices for Narrative Corpora

Index	Heracleian Model	Baltic Model (Kalevipoeg)
SEI	2.04	1.06
SCI	0.61	1.37
SChI	0.84	0.71
SSI	0.76	0.85

Джерело: власна розробка авторів

The calculated values demonstrate that the Heracleian corpus is characterised by a high level of spatial expansion and relatively weak contraction, while the Baltic corpus exhibits the opposite tendency, with a stronger orientation toward containment and stabilisation. Although the intensity of chaos remains comparable, its structural role differs significantly between the two models.

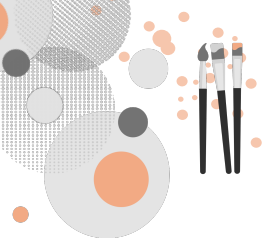
Table A4.

Comparative Spatial Model of Narrative Regimes

Analytical Dimension	Heracleian Model	Baltic Model	Interpretation
Spatial orientation	Expansion	Contraction	Different spatial logics
Movement	Dominant	Secondary	Action vs stabilisation
Boundaries	Transitional	Structural	Passage vs limit
Chaos	Externalised	Internalised	Different localisation of disorder
Stabilisation	Episodic	Continuous	Order vs maintenance

Джерело: власна розробка авторів

The integrated analysis demonstrates that the two corpora are structured by fundamentally different spatial regimes. The Heracleian model reflects a logic of



expansion and transformation, in which spatial order is achieved through movement and the externalisation of disorder. By contrast, the Baltic model is defined by containment, boundary centrality, and the internalisation of instability, requiring continuous stabilisation.

From the perspective of Philosophy of History, these differences may be interpreted as expressions of distinct modes of historical cognition. The classical tradition encodes a conception of space as open and extendable, while the Baltic tradition reflects an understanding of space as finite and vulnerable. The results thus confirm that spatial organisation functions as a fundamental dimension of historical experience and may be analysed through a combination of interpretative and mathematically informed approaches.

From the perspective of Philosophy of History, this comparison reveals that spatial organisation functions as a form of historical cognition, reflecting deeper epistemological orientations toward the world. The classical model encodes a logic of expansion and transformation, whereas the Baltic model expresses a logic of limitation, containment, and the preservation of order.

Appendix B. Calculation and Comparative Analysis of Spatial Archetypes

B1. Coding Matrix for Narrative Corpora

The analytical procedure is based on the coding of narrative episodes according to the variables defined in Appendix A. Each episode is evaluated using the intensity scale (0–3), reflecting the structural significance of each spatial variable.

Table B1.

Example of Coding Matrix (Aggregated Values)

Variable	Heracleon Cycle	Kalevipoeg
Centre	2.1	2.8



Periphery	2.9	1.5
Boundary	1.4	2.9
Liminal space	1.6	2.5
Route	3.0	1.8
Zone of chaos	2.7	2.2

Джерело: власна розробка авторів

Note: Values represent averaged intensity scores across coded narrative episodes.

B2. Calculation of Composite Indices

Composite indices are calculated by aggregating relevant variables according to the conceptual formulas defined in Appendix A.

Table B2.

Index Calculation

Index	Formula	Heracleian Cycle	Kalevipoeg
Expansion Index	Route + Periphery + Chaos	$3.0 + 2.9 + 2.7 = 8.6$	$1.8 + 1.5 + 2.2 = 5.5$
Contraction Index	Boundary + Centre	$1.4 + 2.1 = 3.5$	$2.9 + 2.8 = 5.7$
Stabilisation Index	Centre + Boundary	$2.1 + 1.4 = 3.5$	$2.8 + 2.9 = 5.7$
Chaotisation Index	Chaos + Liminal	$2.7 + 1.6 = 4.3$	$2.2 + 2.5 = 4.7$

Джерело: власна розробка авторів

B3. Comparative Interpretation of Indices

The calculated indices reveal clear structural differences between the two narrative systems. The Heracleian cycle demonstrates a significantly higher Expansion Index, indicating a spatial logic oriented toward outward movement and



transformation. The Kalevipoeg corpus shows higher Contraction and Stabilisation indices, reflecting a spatial logic centred on boundary maintenance and internal coherence. The Chaotisation Index remains relatively high in both cases, but differs in function: externalised in the classical model and internally embedded in the Baltic model.

B4. Typology of Spatial Archetypal Regimes

Table B4.

Based on index comparison, two distinct archetypal regimes can be identified.

Regime Type	Dominant Indices	Spatial Logic
Expansive Regime	High Expansion, High Chaos	Externalisation and transformation of disorder
Contractive Regime	High Contraction, High Stabilisation	Boundary maintenance and containment

Джерело: власна розробка авторів

B5. Methodological Implications

The comparative calculation demonstrates that spatial archetypes can be operationalised as quantifiable analytical constructs, enabling:

- systematic comparison across narrative corpora;
- identification of structural patterns in geopolitical cognition;
- transformation of qualitative narratives into analytically controlled models.

Importantly, the numerical values should be interpreted as heuristic indicators of spatial logic, not as measurements of physical space.

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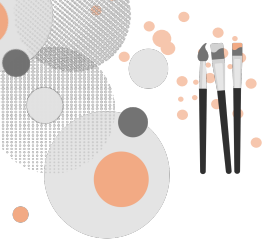
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