The Scope of Postmodern Geopolitics Studies

Fatemeh Sadat Mir Ahmadi
Ph.D. of Political Geography, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

Yashar Zaki
Associate Professor of Political Geography, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

Received: 12 July 2016 Accepted: 31 May 2017

Extended abstract

1. Introduction
Post-modernism is amongst those paradigms that has recently penetrated into many fields with its theoretical innovations and critical streams. As an academic field of study, political geography has been undoubtedly influenced by this movement. Within the field of political geography, postmodernism has mostly affected geopolitics, shaking most of its basic assumptions which has, accordingly, made a fundamental re-conceptualization essential. By reviewing the intellectual and philosophical foundation of postmodern geopolitics, the present article attempts to determine what topics are included in the study of postmodern geopolitics.

2. Methodology
This study is of theoretical-fundamental type with a descriptive-analytic research methodology. Given the nature of selected subject matter, required information was collected through library and internet research, meaning that the data were extracted from books and articles and then classified for more qualitative analysis.

3. Results and Discussion
In order to understand the nature of postmodern geopolitics, one should first know its intellectual and philosophical foundation. Postmodern topics within the field of political geography and geopolitics have been influenced by general postmodern discussions in social sciences as well as human geography itself: “Post-modernism”, in general, refers to some criticisms related to the project of modernism and also a break from it; and stands as a rebellion against the modern rationality and modernist epistemology. It is difficult to write about postmodernism or postmodern turn; because it is almost impossible to find an uncontroversial definition for the word ‘postmodern’. Nonetheless, there are two general perceptions of postmodernism. First, the perception of postmodernism in a linguistic-cultural-philosophical context based on which postmodernism, more than anything, is the rejection of grand

1 Corresponding author. Email: yzaki@ut.ac.ir
narratives and epistemologies of modernity. This understanding of postmodernism, which has gradually been intermingled with post-structuralist, post-colonialist, and feminist views, is determined by deconstructive, textual-lingual, and discourse approaches and is often considered as skeptic to metanarratives. The second perception of postmodernism deals with changes of the world itself and provides necessary cognitive tools for exploring these changes. Such changes as globalization of many economic processes, technology revolution, spatial dissemination of certain consumption models, fragmentation of cultures, emergence of myriad political and cultural issues, victory of flexible accumulation regime in capitalism, and debilitation of governments’ sovereignty are considered as the closure of one era and emergence of a new ‘postmodern’ society and culture. Postmodernity, in this understanding, is deemed to be a new stage in the development of capitalism and a production of the change of global capitalism. Thus, postmodernism examines the changes created under the influence of global capitalism change.

4. Conclusion
There is no general consensus regarding the “postmodern geopolitics”. However, two general routes can be recognized in postmodern geopolitics; first, skepticism towards metanarratives; and second, studying the consequences of undermining the modern geopolitical imagination. In the former approach to postmodern geopolitics, resulting from perception of postmodern in a cultural-linguistic-philosophical context, geopolitics is deconstructed. Accordingly, classical geopolitical theories are considered as metanarratives and discourses within them the reality are produced and phenomena have become meaningful. These theories as a kind of language game, shaped by theorists in the light of a specific discourse in a specific period of time, are skepticized and deconstructed. Therefore, postmodern geopolitics haunts the reality beyond discourses and metanarratives and is interpreted as the negation of essentialism, foundationalism and certainty in geopolitics. This approach has been intermingled with and absorbed into post-structuralist, post-colonialist and feminist views. The second understanding of postmodern geopolitics deals with studying the consequences of undermining the modern geopolitical imagination and recent phase of capitalism development. In that regard, in their geopolitical analyses, political geographers address such issues as: space of streams and deterritorialization due to time-space compression and its consequences for geopolitical analyses, governance crisis, importance of time factor and such topics as infopolitics and chronopolitics, importance of scale factor and internal continuity of spatial scales instead of focusing on the unique and singular scale, collapse of expectations of enlightenment and its consequences for such issues as meaning and objective of nation-state, established territorialization and technical-scientific advance within a fixed international order, and postmodern spaces.

Key Words: Postmodernism, Geopolitics, Postmodern geopolitics, Metanarrative, Modern geopolitical imagination.
References (In Persian)

References (In English)