

Week One: Intro to Geopol. – Theories of Boundaries and Inescapable Geography

Q. What is Geopolitics?

Politics and geography

Human geography (structure, agency, power)

Interactions between humans and geographic realities

Flint: Geopolitics founded on “situated knowledge” – not just about territory, but over many other kinds of conflict

Scale, and relations between scales in geopol.

Starr: Geography presents both opportunities, and limitations (eg:China/India)

How the interactions between places and spaces present opportunities and limitations to agents.

Geopolitics remains relevant even through rapid globalisation and interdependence.

Places and Spaces

Places

Location: functional role of that place in the world; what happens there; site

Locale: Institutions that organise activities, politics and identity; how people are organised socially; opportunities pertaining to that place

Sense of place: Collective ID and belonging, or lack thereof that results; gender, race, social class; politics of in/exclusion

Spaces

Hierarchical division of the world – regions, sovereign territories, etc.

Time-space: time takes between places (tech, means of transport, context)

Cost-space: costs of that time-space engagement

Social-space: ethnic or other make-up of a space

Lecture: SECT (Sovereignty, Economics, Culture, Territory)

Week two: Origins of Geopolitics in the age of imperialism

Q. What drove imperialism in the 1800s, and how did this era inspire classical geopolitical theory?
Confluent spread of Imperialism and Capitalism

Doyle 1986: Scramble for (and partition of) Africa as a key focus for understanding the most accelerated period of imperialism, following a persistent and steady expansion until 1870s.

Three main views

- 1) *Metrocentric* or economic: commerce, strategy, finance religion and cultural expansion
- 2) *Systemic*: Balance of power imperialism in response to overcrowding in Europe and elsewhere
- 3) *Pericentric*: steadily growing informal and formal empire, energised by trade, ext. of metro centric. – oversaving and underspending in rich centres makes conditions such that imperialist trade expansion becomes inevitable.

Hobson: imperialism as result of three forces – economic, political and sociopsychological

Lenin: Imperialism is necessary for capital – Capitalism develops unevenly

Schumpeter: War machine – objectless, unlimited, forcible expansion

Gray 1999: Inescapable Geography: all politics is geopol., all strategy is geostrat., geography is both physical and imagined/ psychological

Geography: (1) physical environment/terrain (2) driver for tech, tactics, organisation and logistics (3) spatial and temporal relations inspiring grand theories

Mackinder 1904: How does Mackinder define the World's Heartland? (and why should it be controlled/ is it of concern to him?)

He who controls the heartland controls the world. [[POLITICAL POWER = geo cond. + quality of ppl]]

Railways, and forethought about strategic advantages of a landpower with the advent of rail – threat to British sea power, especially if aligned with Germany.

God view – global awareness of how geographic realities contribute to state power

Large land mass, large resource and population pool equals large power source especially coupled w China who would deliver sea power

Control over the heartland to control over Eastern Europe and beyond – material conditions of mobility

Threatening balance of power, functioning without Britain, who would be deprived of possible gains.

Lecture:

Kjellen and Ratzel: Social Darwinist perspective. the right to expand - cultural and social cohesion as the engine of expansion.

Spykman: The Rimlands – response to Mackinder and basis for containment theory. Containing the heartland to control it.

In what ways does geography present dangers for states?

Physical limitations, costs and opportunities mean that they are susceptible to threats outside of political control, plus neighbours, conflict, power, alliances etc.

Why did the world become more geopolitically connected during the 1800s?

Travel tech – imperialism, maps (world view), great race