

Modern geopolitics versus Post-Modern geopolitics: a critical review

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Abstract:

Geopolitics had emerged as a rare combination of the Ratzelleian heritage of natural sciences, and the Kjellenean lineage of political science in the late nineteenth century as a discourse to conceptualize politics as a territorial practice for space and power. Mackinder's spatialization of the world politics through his global strategic views further enhanced the objectivity of geopolitical discourse. The history of modern world politics has been structured and conditioned by spatial practices and representations of space, based on a set of understanding about the way the world looks and works, which together constitute the elements of modern geopolitical imagination. The spatialization of the world politics through spatial practices and representations of space is the crux of the modern geopolitics, which is now being greatly challenged / frayed by the informational technological revolutions, which have problematized and pluralized the world politics in a way as to render the modern geopolitics redundant, with the post-Modern geopolitics replacing it. The post-Modern geopolitics is, thus, characterized by the growing significance of informationalization and the telemetrical visualization of the world politics, with geo-graphing being replaced by info-graphing. The present paper holds a critical review and assessment of both Modern and post-Modern geopolitics in the light of the spatialized impact of informational technological revolution on the world politics.

Keywords: *Spatialization, spatial practices, representations of space, informationalization, telemetrical visualization, world politics.*

Geopolitics, taken to mean the statist, Euro-centric, balance of power conception of world politics that dominated much of the twentieth century, was earlier closely bound up with, both, professional and academic geography. It goes back to the birth of self-consciously geographical analysis in the nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism of the fin-desiecle Europe. What developed was geopolitik, particularly during its embryonic stage towards the close of the nineteenth century.

From the outset, geopolitik, the word introduced to the north European academic world during the closing years of the

nineteenth century, by a Swede Professor of Political Science of the Upasala University, Sweden, Rudolf Kjellen, was intrinsically based on Friedrich Ratzel's classical exemplar *Politische Geographie* (1897), in which he (Ratzel) developed the idea of *lebensraum* (living space) that foregrounded the philosophy of social Darwinism, together with the idea of endless struggle among political units for space, power, resources and hegemony. In 1898, just one year after the publication of the *Politische Geographie* (1897), Rudolf Kjellen defined *Geopolitik* as the 'study of the state as an organism in the space'. Kjellen's book:

Staten sam Lifform appeared at the height of the World War I in 1916, in the Swede language. The popularity of the book went beyond the boundaries of Sweden to northern and central Europe, particularly in Germany, and in the following year, it was translated into German language: *Der Staat als Lebensform* (1917). Geopolitik, emerged as a rare combination of Ratzelleian heritage of natural sciences and Kjelleneian lineage of political science, and developed into an objective science of the art of statecraftship.

From the beginning geopolitik was closely bound up with the competitive ambitions of European states for space, power and hegemony (Strausz-Hupe, 1942; Parker, 1998). Ratzel's ideas of *Lebensraum* grew out of the widespread anxiety about the position of Germany in the European politics, and the British Professor Mackinder's geographical pivot vis-à-vis the heartland model reflected the same anxiety in Great Britain. Geopolitik, in fact, had promised a privileged scientific perspective on the world affairs, and conceptualized politics as a territorial practice in which states and nations naturally struggled for power. It, thus, seemed to be an objective science, at detached 'god's eye' view of the world affairs (O' Tuathail, 1996). Geopolitics was designed to justify interstate rivalry for space and power throughout the twentieth century (Agnew, 1998; Atkinson & Dodds, 2000).

Academic geography lost its relevance in the face the increasing practical relevance of geopolitik, as Europe drew closer to the World War II. In Germany geography was forced-replaced by geopolitik, and in the late 20s, and 30s, it got an association with the intellectual apparatus of the Third Reich. In Germany, itself an institute for

geopolitical study was opened at Munich in 1924, with the soldier-turned geographer Karl Haushofer as its Director. A journal, in the name of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* was started. Otto Maull, the disciple of Karl Haushofer defined geopolitik, as one 'that concerns itself with the state, not as a static concept, but as a living being.....it investigates the state primarily in relation to its environment...its space....and attempts to solve all problems resulting from spatial relationships.....geopolitik is concerned with the spatial requirements of a state while political geography examines only its space conditions. In putting geography at the service of space-conscious politics, geopolitics devotes itself to question of future. It is a discipline that weights and evaluates a given situation and by its conclusion seeks to guide practical politics (Maull, 1936).

It is believed that the crisis that led to the outbreak of the World War II was mainly due to the testing and applicability of the principles of geopolitik by the Germans to achieve mastery over Mackinder's World Island through military conquests (Strausz-Hupe, 1942). Soon after the end of the World War II, geopolitik was banned from the intellectual world, but its notions survived as applied political geography (Kasperson & Minghi, 1969). The demise and rise of geopolitics since the World War II has been quite remarkable.

The revival of geopolitics has taken three distinct forms: geopolitics became a most popular term for describing global rivalries in world politics; re-conceptualization, re-evaluation, and re-assessment of its academic value; and the rise of critical geopolitics with post-structural interpretations of geopolitical

practices (Taylor & Flint, 2000). Geopolitics is concerned with rivalry between states, and describes rivalry relations between them. The Cold War geopolitics had ‘east-west’ spatial pattern, while the modern geopolitics stands across the ‘north-south’ spatial pattern. Many of the contemporary problems in the world politics are on the threshold of the ‘north-south’ spatial pattern of conflictuality.

Geopolitics had produced many analyses of the complicity of geography and geographers in colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism, and later on the Cold War vis-à-vis the super power rivalry. Many of these early analyses had historical relevance. Most of them traced the geopolitical theorizing to the emergence of European geopolitical imagination during the period of Renaissance and the Age of Exploration. They showed how geopolitical thought—the god’s view of the world as a structured whole that can be captured and managed from the European point of view—emerged as a part and of parcel of European exploration and colonialism.

The earlier geopolitical analyses had sought to highlight those many of the key territorial assumptions of international politics, which have European origin—often more specifically north European origins. The history of geopolitics shows the ways how the concepts were made to impose inside and outside Europe, particularly its illuminating role of geographical knowledge in legitimizing the balance-of-power politics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Holder, 1992; Gregory 1994; O’ Tuathail 1996).

The history of modern world politics has been structured by practices based on a

set of understanding about the way the world looks and works that together constitute the elements of modern geopolitical imagination. The geopolitical imagination, with its beginning in the sixteenth century Europe, has structured and conditioned world politics ever since. Though the balance of power between the dominant world powers has changed down the centuries, as has the nature of international economy, the modern geopolitical imagination still remains prevalent in framing the conduct of world politics (Agnew, 1998).

Modern geopolitics and geopolitical imagination

Geopolitics in the late twentieth century and in the early present century became a widely used signifier for the spatiality of world politics. Agnew and Corbridge (1995) have given the concept of modern geopolitics some form of clarity and specificity, offering what is perhaps the most comprehensive historical and materialistic theory of modern geopolitics. Agnew (1998) provided a general theory of geopolitics that treats it both as practices and ideas, as the materialist world order, and as a discursive set of understandings and enframing rules, by blending together the Marxian political economy, the idiosyncratic writings on space, and the anti-textualist critical geopolitics. A new word geopolitical economy has been (geopolitics and political economy taken together) introduced, and which became increasingly associated with the modern geopolitics.

Spatial practices and the representations of space are the two extremes of the continuum that characterize the modern geopolitical imagination. Spatial practices are the everyday material practices across

space that help in the consolidation of the global orders of political economy, while the representations of space involve all the concepts, naming practices, and geopolitical codes, used to talk about and understand spatial practices. Spatial practices are a pre-discursive materiality, while the representations of space are ideology and discourse (Agnew & Corbridge, 1995). Fundamental to spatial practices and the representations of space are the geopolitical order and geopolitical discourse – the former is related to the political economy of spatial practices and the later is a congealed hegemonic organization of the representations of space. The term ‘order’ refers to routinized rules, institutions, activities, and strategies through which the international political economy has operated in different historical periods. Geopolitical order is always conceived in terms of space and time. Geopolitical order cannot be conceived without a hegemon (dominant state). Geopolitical order is hegemony.

Geopolitical discourse is the discourse by which intellectuals of statecraft, both formal theorists and practioneres spatialize world politics. Agnew (1998) identified three major geopolitical orders with corresponding three major geopolitical discourses:

The first three geopolitical orders and geopolitical discourses are reflective of three relatively stable and sweeping historical modes of spatial practices and representations of space. The fourth one, i. e. transnational liberalism of the contemporary period is still fluid, yet to be stable. The contemporary period is characterized by the continuous expansion and extension of the US-induced market democracies through the process of globalization, and therefore the representations of space has been termed as enlargement geopolitics. In all cases, the practical geopolitical reasoning of political elites is the link between the dominant representations of space, and the geopolitical order of dominant spatial practices (Agnew 1998).

It is said that the beginnings of modern geopolitical discourse could be traced back to the encounters between the Europeans and the non-European Others during the Age of Exploration. The earlier European empires and social orders had notions of Otherness, and the singular trait of modern geopolitical discourse can be said to be its representations of Others as backward or permanently disadvantaged if they remained as they are. Europe’s Others were fixed for all time in a state of inferiority to Europe (Agnew & Corbridge 1995).

Table - 1 : Modern Geopolitics

Spatial practices	Representations of space
Geopolitical Order	Geopolitical Discourse
British geopolitical order: 1815-1875	Civilizational geopolitics
Inter-imperial rivalry: 1875-1945	Naturalized geopolitics
Cold War geopolitical order: 1945-1990	Ideological geopolitics
Transnational liberalism: 1991-?	Enlargement geopolitics

Characteristics of modern geopolitical imagination

Agnew (1998) has identified four major meta-theoretical characteristics of modern geopolitical imagination:

- Global visualization;
- Time being turned into space;
- State-centered approach to world politics; and
- Pursuit of primacy by dominant states.

It is the global visualization that makes the world politics possible. The development of philosophy and cartographic techniques of global visualization in Europe from the sixteenth century onwards made geopolitics possible, for it enabled the seeing the world as a unitary, albeit still incomplete, whole. The technical invention of perspective made possible the consideration of the world-as-a-picture from a single eye vantage point. This objective of seeing the world as a unified homogeneous whole led to its differentiation by Europeans into horizontal hierarchy of places (a departure from the traditional medieval conception of space as a part of sacred vertically hierarchical order). Ancient binary geographies and hierarchies were recycled to differentiate the globe into the vast swathes of fixed and essentialist space (Crosby 1997).

Blocks of spaces are isolated and labeled with essential attributes of different time-periods relative to the idealized historical experience of one of the blocks. This spatial mode of representing the modern generates those binary geographies, which have been persistently part of geopolitics since the Renaissance: developed and backward, modern and traditional, West and East, the Occident and the Orient. Each hegemonic

geopolitical order gives its own particular meaning value to these terms. Hegemonic states become the laboratories of modernity producing hegemonic vision of modern politics, economy, culture and ordinary everyday comfort. They project an idealized vision of their present to the rest of the world as its future. The Cold War divisions of the world into three worlds and Walt Rostow's modernization-as-development theories on the stages of economic growth were mainly the latest manifestation of this long standing feature of the modern geopolitical imagination (O' Tuathail, 1998).

The state-centered representation of global space is underpinned by three assumptions: (i) that states have an exclusive power within their territories as represented by the concept of sovereignty; (ii) that domestic and foreign affairs are essentially separate realms in which different rules obtain; and (iii) that the boundaries of the state define the boundaries of the society such that the later is 'contained' by the former. All these assumptions, however, function in the practice of everyday statecraft to give world politics a geopolitical segmentarity and territorially-defined boundaries. These identities are reinforced by a complex state of institutions, international organizations and everyday social practices (Murphy 1996).

The states in modern inter-state system, though equal in terms of sovereign status or equal sovereign entities, are in reality radically different from each other in geographic location, territorial extent or size, natural resource endowment, demographic attributes and characteristics, social organization, political leadership and power potentials. These differences have long been classified and conceptualized

within the context of relative struggle for power between states. The pursuit of primacy, at the local, regional, and global level, by the dominant states has generated discourses which have sought to explain and justify the state militarism, territorial expansion, overseas imperialism and warfare as inevitable consequences of uneven distribution of power across the globe and timeless 'law' of competition between states under conditions of anarchy for finite resources.

Once O' Tuathail and Agnew (1992) suggested a framework to develop a historically sensitive geopolitics that can transcend national biases. They defined modern geopolitics as particular form of reasoning that values and orders places in terms of the security of a single state or group of states. This broad definition allowed them to identify two basic types of geopolitical reasoning: the practical geopolitical reasoning, which is the function of the state elites, both military and civilian. Their task is to evaluate places beyond the borders of the states as potential threats to their national security. Places were, thus, reduced to security commodities. Second is the formal geopolitical reasoning, where the practical ideas are organized into theories in academic geopolitical writings. Formal geopolitical reasoning divides up the world and argues for differential valuing of the resulting parts.

Geopolitics, particularly the practical geopolitics has always been conceived, and nurtured in the capitals of the great powers, their learned academics, in the map, and war rooms of ambitious expansionist states. A parochial imperialist gaze that represented lands beyond the horizon as

spaces of destiny, it helped to colonize the globe with networks of communication, logistics of war, and ethnocentric modes of territorial organization (Matellart 1996). The modern geopolitical imagination is a legacy of the imposition of European territorial forms across the globe from the sixteenth century, an order of power over the Earth that sought to discipline its infinite spaces – internal and external, mountain and valley, and sea – around sovereign presence and immanent logos. Global space was stamped by essential presence (absence), organized into natural regions and hierarchies, graded for its inherent value and worth value, and marked as the destined property of providential authorities (O' Tuathail 1998).

However, the modern world, now, lives in complicated and confusing times, spaces traversed by global flows and warped by the intensity and speed of information technologies. The conventional and classical geopolitical imagination that maps the world in terms of spatial blocks, territorial presence and fixed identities does not seem to be adequate in a world where space appears to be left behind pace, where territoriality is replaced by telemetricity, and where simple settled identities are blurring into networks of complex unsettled hybridity. These developments, with impacts on the world map and politics, have made the modern geopolitics more precarious than before, and to some, these developments mean the end of the modern (geopolitics). Or, in other words, the modern geopolitics is being frayed with the global life slipping territorial bonds, accelerating beyond modern map, prompting the declaration of the end of the modern, and the beginning of the post-modern.

Post-modern geopolitics

The end of the modern (geopolitics) seems to have been conditioned by the relative decline of the American hegemony in world politics. The steady rise of China relative to the US, and Russia, and to an extent India also, create conditions, which appear to problematize and unsettle the modern geopolitical map of the world, eroding the inherited ontologies and fixed imagination of 'how the world works'. The changing intensity of economic globalization, a phenomenon that is hardly new rather centuries'-old, beginning with the Age of Exploration, in the sixteenth century, has substantially caused profound structural change in the contemporary political economy away from a predominantly statist international political economy toward a deterritorialized global economy (Kofman & Young, 1996).

The ever-increasing diffusion of new information technologies throughout the interstices of societies, economics, and politics have led to the development of facsimile machines, satellite technologies, personal computers, cable television, and in recent years, networked computer, wireless communication, and the internet (Tapscott, 1996).

All these three major developments together with the increasing ease of transportation and mass travel, the consolidation of transnational media empires, and transnational migration have caused or conditioned the de-embedding of societies from their normal territorial roots, the shrinkage and collapse of traditional scale, and the emergence of fluid experience of life. In a world, where traditional centers no longer hold their traditional characteristics, with the technologies of

time-space compression hitting modern scales into each other and generating post-modern global / local fusion that may be termed 'glocalization' (Robertson, 1995; Agnew & Corbridge 1995; Appadurai, 1996). The emergence of new forms of imagining of global space in the condition of post-modernity, and new modes of representation through flows, networks and webs have conditioned the fusion of global and local into glocalization, which might cause the 'implosion of geopolitics' (Luke, 1994). Global webs are the emergent economic geometry of the contemporary epoch of post-modernity.

The threads of global webs are the computers, facsimile machines, satellites, high resolution monitors, and modem – all of them linking designers, engineers, contractors, licensees, and dealers worldwide. Thus, the contemporary information technologies have become fundamental to the new geometry of power. A new network system has come into being, together with a new social morphology, which are making new types of spatial practices and representations of space. The science of geography, of mapping, measuring and triangulating physical space that seeks to define the universal measure of proximity, distance, and scale, based on the physical measurement, now appears useless. Proximity, distance, and scale are, however, defined by the connectivity of a network. The notion of a network helps to lift the tyranny of geographers in defining space and offers a notion which is neither social nor real, but associations (Latour, 1997; O' Tuathail 1998).

Luke in his successive studies (1994, 1995 & 1996) has provided a three-stage geopolitical narratives (Table: 2) for

conceptualizing the shifting relationship between humans and nature in the time-space perspective, and has attempted to show

how cultural and technological changes have caused transformative environments and orders.

Table - 2 : Three-stage geopolitical narrative

First Nature	Second Nature	Third Nature
Agrarian antiquity	Modern industrial capitalism	Post-modern informational capitalism
Natural biosphere	Artificial technosphere	Information cybersphere
Earth and Gods	Map and clock	Television and computers
Organic spatiality	Engineered spatiality	Cybernetic spatiality
Terrestriality	Territoriality	Telemetry
Bioscape / Ecoscape	Etnoscape / Metroscape	Cyberscape / Infoscape
Geoscape	Plutoscape	Mediascape

The first nature is expressive of the pre-modern geopolitical narrative, which had a social order, primarily based on primordial communities with rudimentary spatial organization, was organized by terrestrial vision and practices, and that existed before the invention and foundation of the urban culture and state-building. The second nature narrative started with the beginning of the industrial capitalism from the eighteenth century onward when the Europeans moved beyond Europe in search of overseas territories, and began colonizing new territories in Africa and Asia. It was the period of industrial revolution, discoveries, inventions of machines, migration, urbanization, building of cities, and states, transformation of the primordial societies into peoples and nations with ethnic identities. The period also witnessed the beginning of nationalism, urbanism, colonialism, and imperialism, and interstate rivalries for space and power within and outside Europe in Asia and Africa. The natural, biosphere was replaced by the artificial technosphere. The space was mastered by states, nations, and hardware

complexes of railways, steamships, hard surface roads, canals, electrical grids, telegraph and telephone system. It was the classical era of territorial geopolitics.

Luke's second nature, however, appears to coincide with Agnew and Corbridge's three geopolitical orders and discourses (Table: 1): the British geopolitical order with civilizational geopolitics (1815-1875), the inter-imperial rivalry with naturalized geopolitics (1875-1945), and the Cold War geopolitical order with ideological geopolitics (1945-1990).

Luke's third nature of geopolitical narrative is characterized by the domain of informational cyberspace, its electric landscape, infoscape, and mediascape of post-modern informational capitalism. Territoriality has been replaced by the telemetry, and as a result, the informationalization has pluralized the spatialized operational potentialities of existing cultures and societies, with the modern geo-graphing becoming post-modern info-graphing. The traditional divisions of the space between local, regional, national,

and global appear to have become weakened following the quickening of the space flows. Though, O' Tuathail (1998) has called Luke's schema as too abstract, sweeping, and intellectually isomorphic, but at the same time, he found some usefulness in the schema in clarifying immanent tendencies in contemporary world politics.

O' Tuathail (1998) has sought to distinguish between the modern geopolitics and the post-modern geopolitics with the help of Agnew and Corbridge's modern geopolitical discourse and Luke's schema of the three-stage geopolitical narrative.

Table - 3 : Modern geopolitics versus post-modern geopolitics

Modern geopolitics	Post-modern geopolitics
Cartographic visualization: maps	Telemetrical visualization: GIS
Perspective theater	Post-perspective simulation
Inside / outside; Domestic / International	Global webs: glocalization
East / West	Jihad / McWorld
Territorial power	Telemetrical power
Hardware ascendant	Software ascendant
Territorial enemies	De-territorialized dangers
Fixed and rigid posture	Flexible and rapid response
Geopolitical man	Cyborg collectives
States / Leaders	Networks / Cyborgs

The Table: 3 reveals that the post-modern geopolitics since the last decade of the twentieth century has been conceived of being the expressions in the practices of the great and powerful nations' strategic complexes of institutions, intellectuals, and actor-networks. The United States of America is suitably situated in this respect, but China is not far behind the US, as it is striving hard to gain a suitable position to counter the US monopoly in the world politics. There is no doubt to India's ascendance in the field of information technology, but it is far behind China so far as its strategic power, strength and imperatives, and foreign policy practices are concerned in the light of its informational capability.

Characteristics of post-modern geopolitics

The post-modern geopolitics is increasingly characterized by the growing significance of the telemetrical visualization of the contemporary world politics. This is largely because of the telemetrical simulation – a model that makes a phenomenon of dispute or conflict to look more real than the real phenomenon of the dispute. The displacement of modern cartographic representation of global space by the post-modern telemetrical simulation is reflective of a much broader techno-cultural transformation in how the world politics is imagined and visually represented in the contemporary scenario. It has made the world politics to be turned into an information spectacle. It is now a hyper-

reality of television spectacles and military simulations, a universe of information that encompasses and overwhelms all. Visions are eclipsed by vertigo (O'Tuathail, 1996). The speed, quality, and intensity of information problematize the very possibility of foreign policy as deliberative reflection and decision-making. This is how the post-modern global space is imagined and represented (Luke & O'Tuathail, 1999).

In the post-modern condition of deterritorialization, configurations of people, place, and heritage have lost all semblance of isomorphism. The contemporary cultural forms are fundamentally fractal, that is, as possessing no Euclidian boundaries, structures, or regularities. The question that is needed to be asked in 'a world of disjunctive global flows', which Appadurai suggests, 'should rely on images of flow and uncertainty, hence chaos, rather than older images of order, stability, and systematicness (Appadurai, 1996). This is not to suggest that the world politics has necessarily transcended the imaginarity of the territorial state rather it is to admit the disintegration of its traditional mythic Euclidian forms and to acknowledge the strange new (con)fusions of delocalized trans-nations, simulated sovereignty, post-modern war, deterritorialized currency, and a glocalised networked economy of production and consumption (Gray, 1997; Burton, 1977).

The post-modern global space is divided into essential blocks with identity and difference. This is exemplified, or revealed by the existence of the post-spatial binaries like Jihad and McWorld (Barber, 1996). The post-spatial binaries have replaced the traditional binary conception of space as modern versus backward, East versus West, and the three-world of the Cold War. Jihad represents the primordialist's

reaction, the rally to fundamentalist myths, moral absolutes, and rock-like certainties in a boundary-collapsing world. Jihad is a dangerous disease of transition, and has the potential of causing destruction to humanity, and designed to reverse the accelerating destiny of the contemporary world. The McWorld represents deterritorializing pace of globalization, leading to the diffusion of MTV, FTV, McIntosh and McDonald, the Utopia of free markets across the globe.

In the assessment of power potentials, the significance of information technology, education and institutional flexibility has increased enormously at the expense of geography, population, and resources / raw materials, whose relevance has fallen. The role of intelligence collection, surveillance, and reconnaissance, besides command, control, communication, computer-processing, and intelligence has increased to the extent as to decide the world politics. Nye and Owens (1996) predicted that the country with a powerful information technology, and consistent innovations in this sector would be more powerful than the country with low information capability and potentials. The country with the potential ability to collect, process, act upon, and disseminate information will always maintain an information edge over the others. This information edge is a force multiplier as it gives greater potency to hard military power and its soft economic and ideological power. Software power turns the existing hard and soft power into power plus. The country which has informatioalized its battlescape knowledge, together with its foreign policy practices is always in a position to play proactive role in the world politics. Informationalization of the world politics, however, tends to deconstruct the solid state presence and old-styled frontiers

- cyberspace is, therefore, the latest frontier proliferating freedom (Rochlin, 1997).

Since the end of the Cold War, the meaning of security is essentially contested and threats are increasingly represented as emanating not only simply from the territorial enemies, where containment imperatives remain in force, but from a plethora of deterritorialized dangers, which include stateless terrorism, cybernetic crime and sabotage, narco-terrorism, global corruption, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, humanitarian crisis, infectious diseases, and environmental degradation. The Jihad versus McWorld conflict / dichotomy has made most of the iconic structures of different civilizational realm of the Occident and the Orient vulnerable or susceptible to destruction. Threats to humanity, now, have no specific location or site rather it can happen any time at any site or location. Anywhere on the globe is now a potential battlefield. This is how the global threats are spatialized and strategic of response is conceptualized. Therefore, it needs strategic mobilization and mobility, speed and flexibility fundamental to its operation.

The world is made up of collectives of humans and non-humans, and it is best described as consisting of actor-networks, which are more than technical or social networks. The information age is inducing a new network society, and the information technology is providing the material bases for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure. Networks constitute the new social morphology of the societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcome of processes of production and experience, power and culture. They are

making new type of spatial practices possible in the world politics. Being a part of a network, a set of interconnected nodes, is crucial to the exercise of power in the information age – ‘the power of flows takes precedence over the flows of power’ (Castells, 1996).

With the collectives and cyborgs, being the part of the theorization and practice of geopolitics at the end of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the present century, the contrast is foregrounded by the question, how are the major actors shaping geopolitics identified and conceptualized, but that appears to be an unacknowledged and an un-theorized one. Critical geopoliticians need to begin to recognize the pervasive yet unproblematized presence and anonymous functioning of collectives of humans and non-humans in the world politics. Contemporary geopolitics obviously gives life and sustenance to military collectives and their networks, but do the networks of every day collectives have secret geopolitical lives? Many recent wars in the Middle East, in which the United States was a major participant, simply revealed the involvement of many geopolitical quasi-objects and quasi-subjects with the collectives of actor-networks.

Actor-networks do have geopolitical lives, and it is time to acknowledge and theorize these rather than chronicle the stories of Geopolitical Man, the Mackinder-like or Spykman-like Fig. that views the globe and divines the secrets necessary for mastering it. Agency in geopolitics is now with the thoroughly cyborgized networks and not with the geopoliticians. The new cybor-organized forms of geopolitical life are perpetually being conceived by the proliferating networks, expressing the fears

and fantasies of competing and cooperating collectives (O' Tuathail, 1998).

As the technical knowledge enhances, so enhances the capability, speed and intensity, which together sustain persistent change and continuity in every day life and in the world politics as well. With the informationalization, following the technical revolution, the spatial structure of the world politics has been thoroughly cyborenized, enabling the ruling elites of the powerful nations to create flexible decision time in dromological crisis situations. This is what may be called the continuity and change in the geopolitical discourses and practices.

To quote Agnew (1998)... 'as a result of the dialectical interplay of spatial practices and representations of space, the modern geopolitical imagination...while having an essential continuity...one can identify distinctive epochs in which geographical representations and practices implicit in the world politics have undergone important shifts. The theme of continuity and change, however, manifests a certain wisdom that sometimes eludes schematic theorizing about modern and post-modern. In designating the modern and its transformation into the post-modern, there is often an irresistible urge to branding and ordering the messy complexities of human history into clean and precise categories'. Nevertheless, mess is a characteristic of human society past, present and, may be in the future also. The human societies consist of multiple, entwined networks of interaction operating at a variety of scales (Shenk, 1997).

On modern and the post-modern geopolitics, O' Tuathail (1998) writes: 'We do not live in a world constituted essentially by modern or post-modern geopolitics, but

by conjunctural congealment of geopolitical theories and practices that are points of entry into the visual techniques, transportational technologies, communicational capabilities, war logistics, political economy, state forms, global crises, spatial ontologies, and pervasive anxieties...while the categories of modern and post-modern geopolitics have pedagogic merit, we should always be cognizant of how the density, hybridity, and impurity of contemporary socio-spatial and socio-temporal practices often escape the grasp of our theory...we struggle to untangle and describe the (con)fused, fragmented, and fractal post / non/ modern geopolitics of the twenty-first century.'

Conclusion

Geopolitics, which was earlier, spelt like Geopolitik, has structured and conditioned the world politics, since its beginning in the sixteenth century, though the term was coined in the late nineteenth century. Basically, geopolitics was a Euro-centric balance of power conception, between the dominant world powers, vying for space and power, justifying the *raison de etre* of the interstate rivalries, disputes, and conflicts. Though, the balance power conception has changed down the centuries, but the geopolitical imagination still remains prevalent, and holds its relevance in the world politics. Geopolitics has become, in the late twentieth century, and in the early twenty-first century, a widely used signifier for the spatiality of the world politics. Spatial practices and the representations of space are the two extremes of the continuum that characterize the modern geopolitical imagination, the former is a pre-discursive materiality, involving different kinds of flows, interactions and movements that characterize features of production and

reproduction, while the later is ideology and discourse, including all the concepts, naming practices, and geographical codes to understand the practices. Fundamental to the spatial practices and representations of space are the geopolitical order and the geopolitical discourse, the former is related to the political economy of spatial practices, and the later is a congealed hegemonic organization of representations of space. The modern geopolitical imagination is characterized by the global visualization of the world politics; increasing relevance of space over time, state-centric approach to world politics, and the struggle for dominance in the world politics.

However, the world since in the late twentieth century, particularly since the end of the Cold War has been witnessing relative decline in the US hegemony in the global affairs, followed by a de-territorialized or re-territorialized global economy, ever-increasing diffusion of information technologies, and the dis-embedding of societies from their normal territorial roots, the shrinkage and collapse of the traditional conceptions of scale, and the emergence of fluid experience of global life. The modern geopolitics is being frayed with the daily practice of global life slipping territorial bounds, and accelerating beyond the modern, a situation, thus, created is referred to the 'end of the modern, and the beginning of the post-modern conditions in the global geopolitics'. The increasing significance of the telemetrical visualization of the contemporary world politics, the losing semblance of isomorphic features of people, place, and heritage, state, nation as a result of de-territorialization or re-territorialization, the replacement of the traditional binary conception of space by the post-spatial binaries such as the Jihad

and the McWorld, and the increasing role of the actor-networks combination in shaping the destiny of the world politics, are some of the relevant manifestations of the spatialization of the world politics, through informationalization, and cyborgization which necessarily condition the post-modernity in geopolitics.

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