


Chapter 2

Hyperland: Transforming Past Theories of Geopolitics to Explain Contemporary Strategic Competition

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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that many geopolitical theories have been conceived, the conditions of the contemporary geopolitical environment have changed dramatically, leading major actors to behaviours that cannot be explained such as the New Space Race, massive (dis)information campaigns/operations, and cyber operations. The purpose of this Chapter is to introduce a new theory of geopolitics that facilitates the interpretation of this behaviour, in the context of the emerging dynamics of the geopolitical arena and identify the new strategic domains that contribute to the enhancement of a state's national power.

INTRODUCTION

Geopolitics is an International Relations (IR) term coined by *Rudolf Kjellén* (1864-1922)—a Swedish politician and political scientist (Britannica, 2024b)—which describes the interconnection of geography and politics, dealing inter alia with the distribution of power around the globe, the way geography affects this distribution, etc. (Mirza & Ayub, 2022:187), thus providing according to Deudney (2025) an:

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“[...] analysis of the geographic influences on power relationships in international relations.”

In the course of time, several geopolitical theories have been conceived in an attempt to explain the behaviour of major international actors, the most known of which are the theories of *Heartland* and *Rimland*. The geopolitical environment though has changed dramatically through time, leading actors to behave in a way that the aforementioned theories cannot explain. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce *Hyperland*, a new geopolitical theory that –in the context of our modern interconnected world– facilitates the interpretation of the behaviour of major international actors in the context of the emerging dynamics of the geopolitical arena and identify new strategic domains that contribute to the enhancement of a state’s national power. Its importance lies in the fact that –as a novel theory– takes into consideration the contemporary conditions of the geopolitical environment, thus complements the existing literature in regard to geopolitics, providing scholars with an additional analytical tool through which they can support their research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology implemented in the current research is the *comparative analysis*, bearing in mind that comparison –especially due to the nature of political science– is a fundamental tool of analysis that enhances the power of description and facilitates concept-formation (Collier, 1993:105). In addition, comparison is fundamental to our cognition and –as long as it examines enough independent, self-contained cases in order to identify casual patterns (Azarian, 2011:120)– it:

“[...] brings into fore what is otherwise hidden in the totality of social reality [...] thus helps create an ordered perception of this reality” (Azarian, 2011:123).

To be more precise, the research uses the *encompassing comparison* type of comparative analysis, which aims to explain the characteristics of different cases that take place in different locations, placing them in the same system (Tilly, 1984:82). According to Tilly (1984:125):

“Encompassing comparisons begin with a large structure or process. They select locations within the structure or process and explain similarities or differences among those locations as consequences of their relationships to the whole”.

Tilly (1984:125-126) stresses that this type of comparative analysis initially requires a mental map of the whole system and a theory of its operation, without necessarily being correct as they can be improved in the process, while the main danger that lies from the implementation of encompassing comparison is that:

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