

" New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration "
Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim

New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration



Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim
University of Tripoli, Libya, abualqassem.uot.edu.ly@gmail.com

Received date: 24/02/2025

Accepted date: 14/03/2025.

Publication date: 20/03/2025

Abstract:

The political world map shows a set of border lines separating different countries, which run in various directions (land, sea and air), sometimes linked to natural phenomena such as mountains, rivers, forests and swamps or imaginary borders, sometimes conflicting with these natural phenomena in order to limit different human phenomena or clarify the efforts of the military force of countries in planning their borders.

Considering that the concept of security is characterized by the feature of change according to the circumstances of time and place, today it is no longer limited to the traditional understanding that means protecting regional borders from a military perspective only, but rather has taken on broader dimensions than that, involving the development of modern security phenomena and transformations, which prompted a re-reading of the real dimensions that changed the concept of sovereignty - absolute - of the state, especially with regard to its border area, which will be focused on in the study to understand the geopolitics of modern spaces that must be controlled - susceptible to penetration and damage.

Key words: Geopolitics of borders, information technology, penetration and control, fragmentation of states, security and sovereignty.

* Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim, abualqassem.uot.edu.ly@gmail.com

" New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration "

Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim

Introduction:

The contemporary state is one of the most prominent manifestations of the political division that humanity has known to this day. After the state was empires and kingdoms in conflict, not geographically defined and characterized by flexibility in maritime, land, cultural and political borders, and without talking about air borders as is the case today, what is important today is to remind that the borders that the state possesses are basically to supervise its sovereignty over its territory. Global political maps have also witnessed changes every three or four decades, and internal unrest in the middle of a single country and regional unrest in a specific regional center are usually an introduction to these geopolitical changes.

Among the factors that are considered to contribute effectively to changing the political map of a specific region are the multiplicity of cultures and ethnicities and the conflict of economic interests, which explains the outbreak of two world wars in the European continent while it did not explode in the American continent in its north and south, where two cultures dominate, Anglo-Saxon in the north and Latin in the south.

Among the factors that are considered to contribute effectively to changing the political map of a particular region are the multiplicity of cultures and ethnicities and the conflict of economic interests. (Majdoubi, 2015) This explains the outbreak of two world wars in the European continent, while they did not explode in the American continent, north and south, where two cultures dominate, Anglo-Saxon in the north and Latin in the south. In addition, border security threats emerge in light of the complexity of matters and their overlap with the increasing severity of the spread of weapons and religious extremism, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration. What is more dangerous than that is the alliance of organized crime with terrorism (hard threats) to diversify its sources of funding. Therefore, it appears that the main purpose of setting political borders is to secure the population belonging to this region, whether on the military side or the health side, etc. Without clearly drawn and agreed upon borders, no country will be able to prevent anyone from smuggling drugs and weapons into its territory, nor will it be allowed to set up checkpoints and quarantine to prevent the entry of people infected with infectious diseases to avoid any epidemic. Therefore, the more the political borders of the state increase and take a clear geometric shape, the greater the burden on governments to secure them.

1- What is geopolitics:

The term geopolitics is a compound expression of two parts: Géo, meaning land, and Politic, meaning political. Therefore, geopolitics means "the science of land policy". It is a fruit of the sciences of geography and politics and relies heavily on them, especially political geography (Mohamed Riad, 2012).

Rudolf Klein was the first to use the term geopolitics, and defined it as the natural environment of the state and political behavior, while Karl Haushofer defined it as the study of land relations with political significance, as the natural features of the Earth's surface draw the framework for geopolitics in which political events move.

This science grew in military conditions and was closely linked to war, as war conditions and military preparations, in the period between the First and Second World Wars, played a major role in the birth of this science. With the outbreak of World War II, geopolitics rose to the ranks of high sciences, because it charted the way to achieve the national interests of the state in a self-directed manner, and helped politicians and army officers in making political and strategic decisions. (Sultan, 2013) Political geography is based on the analysis of the geographical factors that determine the foreign

" New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration "

Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim

policy of countries. Political geography is the science that studies the impact of geography on politics, i.e. the way in which area, terrain and climate affect the conditions of countries and people. It studies man and his internal and external relations on a specific area of land, international problems and the relations of countries with each other, the components of countries and their political borders, the stages of development of countries, and international relations.

2- Modern asymmetric security threats:

After the end of the Cold War, security became a difficult equation in government agendas, due to the major transformations that the world witnessed that affected the security and stability of many countries, due to the emergence of threats that were not effective before in light of the dominance of symmetric threats that originated from the military power of countries, and multiplied with the multiplicity of their sources, which made security in its narrow traditional concept unable to combat asymmetric threats, and thus the concept of security was expanded to include new areas that are in themselves sources of threat, and in light of globalization, these risks became cross-border and characterized by rapid spread, which made them exceed the security capabilities of the state:

a- Challenges of identity borders and cultural penetration in light of globalization:

Our historical and geographical existence is linked to cultural existence, this existence that defines our cultural specificity and shapes our identity and affiliations, but this existence has become threatened at a time when Western societies have begun to promote their cultures and behavioral patterns that contradict our personality and national identity through various media outlets that have invaded minds and have become a form of our cultural identity in front of others. There has been much talk about identity at a time when the necessity of the agenda of our society's issues is pressing the reasons and means of presence in the arena of life in light of globalization, which has become the most effective means of penetrating national and transnational borders (Al-Saad, 2006).

Globalization is an economic, political, technological, civilizational, cultural, and educational outlook and trend in which the borders between countries, between the North and the South, and between civilizations, dissolve. It is a complex movement with economic, political, social, civilizational, cultural, and technological dimensions produced by the circumstances of the contemporary world and affecting the lives of individuals and societies. Accordingly, cultural globalization means spreading the principles and standards of Western culture, foremost among which is the American-Western model, and making it a universal model that must be adopted and imitated. These cultures have become widespread due to the tremendous and rapid development in the media and scientific and cognitive technologies in transferring and presenting this model to other societies and cultures. (Khalifa, 2002)

b- Identity functions:

The most important functions of identity in societies are as follows:

- Ensuring the historical continuity of the nation, as its affiliations cannot be questioned.
- Achieving a high degree of homogeneity and harmony among the population in different parts of the same country.
- Representing the national identity and personality that preserves the image of the nation before other nations, by preserving the distinctive entity of that nation.

" New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration "

Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim

Culture has recently undergone many rapid changes that carry within them the ideology of stereotyping and cultural penetration, and they are manifested in an integrated global cultural formulation that has values, standards, behavior and customs, and Western control over other cultures by investing in the gains of science and technological progress in the field of the communications revolution and the information revolution and the historical culmination of a long-term experience of control that began since the launch of the invasion process, which leads to the emergence of values that have no reference in the national culture, which has led to confusion of cultural identity and loss of balance. (Boulaachb, 2011)

Perhaps the first thing that comes to mind when talking about Arab identity is the self-privacy and uniqueness with certain qualities and characteristics that reflect this privacy and distinguish these societies from each other. In light of the trend towards globalization, we find that there is a new trend towards defining identity. When an individual turn to globalization, he tries to confirm his identity and distinctive personality. Identity appears everywhere and confirms its axis in all societies that have become divided into multiple groups. In the midst of all this, there are countries that disappear at a time when we find countries that confirm their identity and flourish on a global level. Considering that the national cultural identity is the common identity of all the sons of the homeland, the historical function of this culture is the function of moral, spiritual and mental unity and the elevation of the homeland and finding reasons for openness to external culture and identity. All transformations and changes are based on social structures that live within specific regional frameworks. Therefore, the question is about how this change in identity and social structures occurs. (Saeed, 2011)

Therefore, adopting globalization leads to the penetration of borders and the destruction of traditional values and identities of national cultures and the promotion of imported values. The above-mentioned effects of globalization on our cultural identity can be summarized as follows:

- Unequal exchange between cultural elements: The exchange is one-way, which creates the problem of privacy in light of the comprehensiveness of communication.
- Cultural invasion: which shows the continuation of mechanisms that achieve control and the extension of their effectiveness in the form of a penetrating force in our societies that stand in a stagnation position in the face of the changes occurring within them, which develops a sense of marginalization and alienation from the original culture and the growing sense of losing our national identity.
- Cultural dependency: This dependency is represented in several manifestations, including the replacement of values, customs and behavioral patterns with the prevailing values in these societies, as dependency appears in the dependent society as a shattered and contradictory society dominated by disintegration and lack of authenticity, and more dangerous than that is the weakening of the spirit of belonging and patriotism and thus the transformation of loyalties, especially among the youth.
- Cultural poisoning: This is done by denying the national role and erasing the cultural character of the nation by questioning the value of Arab and Islamic culture and highlighting its negative aspect and reviving Western cultures to break our cultural presence and highlight the cultural identity crisis. (Al-Ghamdi, 2002)

3- The phenomenon of border penetration and division of countries:

The new transformations in the structure of the coming global geopolitical system have begun to take shape and appear early, especially the phenomenon of fragmenting existing countries and dividing them into new entities, which will later form with those international entities that demand separation and independence from the political center that they follow according to the current political geography, which will later be recognized in one way or another in the list of countries that will draw the features of the new map of political geography in the twenty-first century. (Arab, 2013)

It has become likely, according to many political and geographical studies, and some theories, analyses and predictions issued by many prestigious research centers and specialized scientific figures, that in the world today there are at least approximately 50 countries threatened with division and fragmentation into smaller states and entities. And as these potential transformations in the current international geographical system are on the path of fragmenting the existing geography, - in other words - the theory of "displacing states" and their fragmentation and division geographically and politically on the one hand, and the isolation of other states and their integration geographically and politically with other entities larger than them, or similar to them on the other hand, or through the emergence of minorities, pockets and internal geographical divisions that will be given some autonomy while maintaining their connection to the center, has become, from a "theoretical" perspective at least, almost certain during the coming period of time, especially since the push towards confirming these geographical and political transformations has begun to take shape in reality and practice even before we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century. (Futaisi, 2014)

The important thing is that what we are witnessing today in terms of the spread of this phenomenon in our Arab world is not much different from what is happening in many countries of the world. The state of fragmentation, division and the rise of voices of independence have begun to rise in the United States of America and the countries of the European and Asian continents. The Mediterranean region, and its extensions to the north in Europe, to the south in the Maghreb and to the east in the Middle East, is considered the region in the world that has recorded major geopolitical changes since the end of the nineteenth century through the disintegration of countries and the emergence of other entities. By looking at the map of this region at the end of the nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century, the changes that occurred and left a political map that is constantly changing become clear, a continuity that almost occurs from one generation to the next. The European political map changed in World War I with the collapse and disappearance of empires, and it changed in World War II as it changed with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and all of this happened between 1914-1991, in less than ninety years, that is, only three generations.

Perhaps one of the prominent reasons that helped to fragment these entities is the ethnic and cultural diversity that reached the level of confrontation and extended over long periods, as is the case in Europe and the Mediterranean group, which has continuously contributed to the making of the political map. Europe is now recording attempts at change, as Kosovo and Montenegro have emerged, and there are attempts in Spain through Catalonia and the continuation of Scotland's dream of seceding from the United Kingdom, and the silent conflict in French Corsica and northern Italy as well, and the latest episode is what Ukraine is witnessing, which lost its political map within a year by losing the Crimean Peninsula and the east of the country.

Similar to Europe, including the Mediterranean, the Arab world is currently witnessing the beginnings of a new political map that is taking shape, and since the nineteenth century until the present time, the Arab world has witnessed two main political maps, which the peoples did not contribute to shaping because they are the result of external factors, but the third is linked to internal factors more than external ones without diminishing the strength and influence of the latter.

" New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration "

Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim

The geopolitical map was drawn by the Sykes-Picot Agreement and subsequent agreements such as San Remo when France and Britain divided the Middle East region at the beginning of the twentieth century. In recent years, the Arab world has begun to record real signs of the crystallization of a new political map. There are two main turning points: the first is the American-British war against Iraq and the resulting unrest so far, and the second turning point is the repercussions of the "Arab Spring".

The American-British war caused a radical change in Iraq with the transfer of power from a Sunni regime, albeit one that raised the slogan of progress under the leadership of the late Saddam Hussein, to a Shiite regime. This led to the strengthening of the Iranian role in the entire region from Lebanon and Syria to Yemen recently, in addition to Iraq. In conjunction with this war, the leaders of the White House in Washington wanted a new political map for the Arab world through the so-called "Greater East", which did not succeed and was not absent from their agenda at all.

In relation to the repercussions of the Arab Spring, ethnic, cultural and religious nationalisms have revived in the world, including mainly Shiites and the demands of the Copts who dream of an independent state in Egypt, in addition to what is happening in Libya as well. These demands are the historical engine of the greatest political changes, and these different nationalities have begun to demand political reforms that respect their rights, including the adoption of new systems such as confederation and self-determination. Foreign powers are exploiting these demands in an attempt to control developments. (Salih, 2008)

These demands coincide with the decline of the role of the nation-state, especially in the Arab world, which has never been strong in the past. Geopolitics experts confirm that if the demands of nationalities come together and take a violent form due to the absence of dialogue mechanisms and negotiation traditions, then expect the emergence of new entities in the future. The greatest manifestations of this situation are in countries such as Libya, Syria, Iraq and recently Yemen, and take the form of cultural-ethnic ethnocentrism such as the case of the Kurds in Iraq and Syria, and the religious and ethnic-racial appearance in countries such as Lebanon, Yemen and Syria. The Arab political map is gradually changing, and perhaps its greatest manifestations are as follows: (Majdoubi, 2015)

First: The area of Sudan decreased in 2011 after the secession of the south following a war between Muslims and Christians. It is a purely religious war, and accordingly the Arab world before 2011 is not the same as after 2011. Sudan lost 619 thousand square kilometers, which is an area greater than the combined area of countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Gulf states with the exception of Saudi Arabia. The map of Sudan remains threatened in the east of the country due to ethnic conflicts in Darfur.

Secondly, there are now Arab countries that do not have any control over their borders and lack a central authority, and this has been going on for years: Iraq, Syria, and Libya. The countries are at the mercy of political forces whose influence is only in the capital and militias across other regions. This scenario will last for a while and may give rise to entities, most notably the Kurds in northern Iraq, and the fragmentation of Syria into undeclared states at the mercy of ISIS, the regime, and the Free Syrian Army, as Syria has begun to take on the features of the Yugoslav scenario that will produce states, the same thing for Libya.

Thirdly: The specter of division returns to Yemen following recent developments that worsened with "Operation Decisive Storm," as Yemen began to transform into a northern Yemen close to Iran and a southern Yemen close to the Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia. In practice, Yemen is

" New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration "

Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim

experiencing the chaos of the specter of division, and the return of the two-state scenario that existed before the nineties cannot be ruled out.

Fourth: The demands of the Sahrawi people for independence continue, and the file is in the hands of the United Nations, as it has not been decided on self-determination, and it is a file open to all possibilities. On the other hand, Libya remains the most difficult case, as actual separation and the emergence of entities have not yet occurred due to recent intensive international efforts, as well as due to the presence of powerful neighbors that have so far guaranteed the Libyan borders, especially Algeria, because the security of its borders is linked to its security depth in Libya. Reading Arab events from the explosion of ethnicities, conflict and religious polarization between the beginning of the twenty-first century and speculations about what may be recorded at the end of the current decade or even the middle of the next, in addition to global developments towards a multipolar world that imposes new geopolitical interests, and in conjunction with the absence of a culture of dialogue and negotiation mechanisms, confirms the inevitability of major political changes that are occurring now and are likely to worsen in the future.

All this began to result in the harbingers of changes in the borders of the Arab countries that will crystallize in the medium and long term, which will produce the "third geopolitical map of the Arab world" after the map of the Ottoman Empire and the partition maps imposed by France and Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century.

4- Borders and national sovereignty

Weber believes that the distinguishing feature of the state is its right to monopolize the means of violence within a specific geographical area, and the modern state system is based on mutual recognition by members of the international system, and this system is based on the state being the only political reference with exclusive ownership of a geographical area, and the state has become the dominant form of government, and the state has not only monopolized internal violence but also external violence.

The emphasis on the nation-state has passed in the era of globalization, and control at the national level is ineffective in light of global economic and social processes. Capital is mobile and free from any national ties and settles where economic benefits dictate. There are those who believe that the nation-state has transformed into local governing authorities for the global system, and the threat to national sovereignty, whether external or internal, is no longer from countries or groups, but rather from other parties such as multinational companies, which are considered one of the most important means that capitalism currently relies on in order to recolonize independent countries, but in a new way that appears in the form of investment. Also, these companies, with their deepening and penetration into societies and developing countries, have become a threat to the economies of these countries, especially to the principle of permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, and even individuals. In addition to terrorism and the operations they carry out against the state, non-violent opposition methods (such as peaceful demonstrations) may have a major impact on changing existing political systems. (Yabala, 2005)

As societies have transformed into civil societies and states have become linked by agreements such as the G8 bloc on economic grounds, globalization has weakened the state's exclusive control over the earth through communications and information technology, and the information revolution has formed the basis for a global civil society composed of people who share interests and ties that transcend traditional national borders.

" New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration "
Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim

Conclusion:

National sovereignty has become an important element of the sources of conflict between countries, especially in the field of borders and interference in internal affairs. In addition to the meanings of identity, belonging, existence, and independence that national sovereignty carries, it carries meanings related to the status of the state and society, its local and international prestige, and carries the essence of its existence and independence. Borders are no longer what they used to be, preventing, selecting, and filtering those entering and leaving them. These cross-border civil groups, such as Doctors Without Borders, Greenpeace, human rights groups, and others, force countries to open their prisons and detention centers for investigation and require economic aid.

It also appears that cultural globalization is one of the major challenges that threatens its cultural specificity and penetrates the borders of its sovereignty, and is considered a serious threat to national unity. The sense that is still growing in societies of the danger to the self-existence of its individuals as they belong to a universal nation of multiple civilizations, this awareness that has begun to give the issue of culture attention is gradually growing, as culture is considered the basic component of the conscience of any society and expresses the historical and accumulated depth in society, as it expresses identity and national belonging, and cultural globalization is considered a threat to national identity through an attempt to transform the lifestyle into a Western lifestyle, and thus eliminate the true meaning of the values of citizenship and belonging.

References:

- Al-Ghamdi, A. A. (2002). Media and Security. *Journal of Naif Arab University for Security Sciences*.
- Al-Saad, S. M. (2006). *Security Planning to Confront the Era of Globalization*. Riyadh: Journal of Naif Arab University for Security Sciences.
- Arab, M. E. (2013). *Border Security in the Arab Region" Symposium*. Kuwait: Gulf Center for Strategic Studies, Security Media Center.
- Boulaachb, H. (2011, feb 02). *Challenges of Arab Cultural Identity in the Light of Globalization*.<https://www.aranthropos.com/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%88%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9/>
- Futaisi, M. b. (2014, sep 14). *The phenomenon of state fragmentation and the end of political geography*. Retrieved from times-arab: <https://times-arab.com/?p=4486>

" New transitions Geopolitics' of boundaries Between controlling and penetration "
Ahmad Abu Al-Qasim Ibrahim

- Khalifa, F. H. (2002). *Ideology and Cultural Identity - Modernity and the Emergence of the Third World* (Vol. 1st ed). (A. t. book, Trans.) Cairo: Mabdoli Library,.
- Majdoubi, H. (2015, 04 15). *Signs of a new geopolitical map in the Arab world*. Retrieved from
<https://chamalpost.ma/2015/04/15/%EF%BB%BF%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84/>
- Mohamed Riad. (2012). *General Principles of Political Geography and Geopolitics*. Egypt, Egypt: Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture.
- Saeed, A. b. (2011). Citizenship values among youth and their contribution to enhancing preventive security. *Journal of Naif Arab University for Security Sciences*.
- Salih, J. a.-D. (2008). Intellectual Terrorism, Its Forms and Practices, , Riyadh, . *Journal of Naif Arab University for Security Sciences*.
- Sultan, J. (2013). *Geography and the Coming Arab Dream - Geopolitics When Geography Speaks*,. Beirut, Lebanon : Tamkeen for Research and Publishing,.