

THE GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF MODERN STATES (1)

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With the exception of the inhospitable polar regions and a few scattered areas where colonial relationships survive, the surface of the Earth is now covered by a patchwork of politically organized units: the modern sovereign States, bounded within and confined to their legal limits. The essentials of statehood, both from the functional and legal points of view are territory, people and a government in effective control internally, independent externally, willing and able to assume obligations under international law. Another point of view is that the present pattern of the World partition reflects the particular importance of three societal forces, i.e., nationalism, ideology, and colonialism.

The reality is given by a complex plurality of entities, from the vaster macro-states (over 9 million square kilometres) to the littler micro-states (less than 1000 square kilometres); from the greater super-powers, rich and heavily industrialized, to the least developed and very, very poor states; from the most compact territorial units with high levels of accessibility and connectivity, to the extremely fragmented archipelagical countries; from the states with long elaborated and profoundly rooted *raison d'être* to those that are trying hard to define it. But, invested with their

(1) Texto original, não publicado, de que se apresentou um resumo em reunião do Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais, realizada em Ofir.

sovereignty they all sit on the international *forum* of the United Nations, amounting today to *circa* 160 member-states.

Geography is the science concerned with the study of areal diversity, spatial variations, or regional differences, and the geographers have for long understood the relevance and importance of the pluralism, and attempted to interpret and clarify the spatial distribution of the phenomena and processes that may be considered in a spatial perspective and within the scale of man's observation. Any definition of political Geography must be based on a definition of the field of Human Geography. Being Geography the science of earth-areas, Political Geography shall be the science of political areas and the studies in Political Geography should clearly demonstrate the spatial causes and effects of political processes affecting human groups and territories.

Whatever the historical moment or place is considered, the political space is the scene of a dynamic equilibrium between societal centripetal forces (promoting the internal coesion of its components) and centrifugal forces (threatening the integration of human groups and regions). The primary and continuing problem of every state is how to bind together more or less separate and diverse areas so that an effective whole may be reached. For the political geographer this problem presents a wide range of specific subjects for analysis. In every state-area the geographer finds regions that are more or less separated from each other by physical or human barriers, regions that in greater or lesser degree diverge in their relations with outside states, and regions that differ among themselves in character of population, economic interests and political attitudes.

The fact of a country having a name and a government, its existence and territorial limits recognized by a international treaty, doesn't make of it a real State. To accomplish that, it needs to control the centripetal forces that will bind together its different parts. F. RATZEL, in *Politische Geographie* (1923, 3rd ed.), has defined the State as a section of land and a section of humanity organized as a single unit in terms of a particular, distinctive idea. According to him, the strongest States are those «in which the political idea of state fills the entire body of the State, extends to all its

parts». To determinate the distinctive idea of such a State, we must, therefore, study the current situation, rather than the remote past. In well-developed modern State, politically-minded people in all its regions are conscious of their loyalty to the State and there is common understanding, even though not clearly phrased, of what this one means to them. RICHARD HARTSHORNE, in «The Concepts of 'Raison d'être' and 'Maturity of States' illustrated from the Mid Danube Area» (1940) stated that the *raison d'être* of a mature state does not need to remain constant, but must be continually modified to suit new conditions and new concepts. The terms *raison d'être* and «state idea» are not always completely interchangeable. RICHARD MUIR, *Modern Political Geography* (1975), refers to the exemple of South Africa whose *raison d'être* «is white supremacy, though the state lacks a state idea to which the bulk of its population can subscribe» (p. 82).

The state attempts to establish complete and exclusive control over internal relations (in simpler terms, the creation and maintenance of the law and the order), and local political institutions must conform with the concepts and institutions of the central political organization. In many aspects such as class structure, family organization, religion, and education, a state may tolerate considerable variation in its different regions. But owing to the significance of these factors to political life, there is a tendency — in some states, a very marked effort — to exert unifying control over these institutions. In the economic field, every modern state tends to develop some degree of unity of the economic organization. At the minimum, it establishes uniform currency, some uniformity in economic institutions, and some degree of control over external economic relations. Beyond that, the states of course greatly vary according to the degree they submit all aspects of production and trade to uniform control. Finally, and chiefly, because we live in a world in which the survival of a state-unit is subjected to the threat of destruction, every state must strive to secure the supreme loyalty of the people in all its regions, competing with any local or provincial loyalties, and definitely opposing to loyalty towards any outside state-unit.

A great variability is found in the size of the states, while each state is unique in terms of its shape and location. The diversity in size is overwhelming. The City of Vatican, within the city of Rome, has only 0.44 sq. km.; Pitcairn 5 sq. km. lost in the South Pacific, Nauru 21 sq. km., a point in the Micronesian area, Bermuda 53 sq. km. afore the Caroline coast of the USA, Seychelles 280 sq. km. in the Indian Ocean to the north of Madagascar, Singapour 581 sq. km. in the southern extremity of the Malaca peninsula, etc. are some examples of littler micro-states. The largest states have more than 7 million sq. km.: the Soviet Union encompasses 22.4 million, Canada 10, China 9.6, USA 9.4, Brazil 8.5, Australia 7.7. Adding six other giants (India 3.3, Argentina 2.8, Sudan 2.5, Algeria 2.4, Zaire 2.23 and Saudi Arabia 2.22), these twelve largest states of the World occupy half of the land surface and have half of the world's population.

However, there is no immediate correspondence between the territorial area and the political power of a state. China and India inhabited by 1,000 million and 650 million respectively, being the third and the seventh in area, the first and the second in population, are far from the political and economic powers of the Soviet Union (first in area, third in population) and the USA (fourth in area and fourth in population). The political and economic powers imply many other conditions. In addition to the compromised sovereignty of most micro-states, there is the question of whether a certain minimal size should be a prerequisite for full statehood. Micro-states (less than 5 thousand square kilometres) have a disadvantage in their dependence on the goodwill of their more powerful neighbours, upon which they rely for essential imports and exports of merchandises and ideas, and often for employment. Notwithstanding their peculiarities of size, location and political *status*, they have been exploited, in several cases, as a basis for certain specific activities. The vastness of a State brings serious problems to its effective administration, and the difficulties increase when particular circumstances are present, such as the freezing climatic conditions in Siberia, the dryness of the central Australia, the dense equatorial forest of the Amazonia, creating natural barriers to the effective control of

component parts of the Soviet Union, Australia and Brazil. Moscow is separated by 10 time zones from Uelen, on the Bering strait, and is 7 time zones apart from Vladivostock! Between Ottawa and Dawson (Yucon) in Canada the distance surpasses 4500 km! These are two examples amongst others, of geographical features giving rise to similar problems of communication, *non obstante* the different forms of organization of the two states. In strategic terms the significance of vastness is also variable. There seems to be no upper limit for the size of a State which is now possible to be administered from a single capital, though the devolution of power to component regions may be expected to produce more local and regional governments. Let us also remember that the development of the centrifugal forces early mentioned is favoured by vastness.

In the analysis of the shape, one of the most significant properties of the territorial space, descriptive methods are being replaced by a variety of more efficient mathematical technics. Today there is a number of shape indices available which can provide particular models allowing them to be comparable and also frequently showing their deviation from the most perfect and ideal shape — a circle, with the capital located at or near the middle (SAMUEL VAN VALKENBURG, *Elements of Political Geography*, 1954, p. 110). The real shapes can be appreciated through their cartographic representation. They are products of historical events. In Europe they were modelled along the times, the boundaries being gradually adjusted by treaties between neighbours. In Africa, on the contrary, the actual boundaries were imposed during the partition of the continent by the colonial powers at the end of the last century. And today they are the indisputable limits of the new sovereign states.

While compact states (where compactness would include distance minimization in internal administration, and ease of defence against both external and internal separatism) and fragmented states (the extreme example is that of the archipelagical states constituted by a multitude of islands separated by international waters), represent two extremes in the typology of shape, there are other forms, designed as elongated (Chile, Norway, Somalia, etc.), strangled (Mali, Zambia,

Israel before 1967, etc.), pierced (Italy, South Africa, etc.), and so on. Not the least important of these is the shape of the outliers, i.e., the projection of one state into another, as an exclave-enclave form. The problems raised by territorial fragmentation are well exemplified by the difficulties in binding the islands together, to maintain close political and economic ties, and to sustain a state-idea superior to the separate insular identities.

As important as size and shape is the location, either the absolute location (the position of a state within a climatic zone, or within a continent), or the relative location (the situation of a state among the others). This is a paramount factor affecting the political geography of the states and their inter-actions. From its shape, size and location the state will derive its particular climate characteristics which, in conjunction with its geology, will in turn produce its soils and vegetation. Space, relative location, distance, climate, soils, water, and mineral and human resources, all of them having consequences for the behaviour of the states, are not static commodities. Whether they vary in response to man's action or to natural processes, their changes are predictable. The possession of extensive unintegrated or economically negative areas may result in a drain on the state resources from the costs of administration and communication equipments. However complicated the inter-action of human and natural environments are, they create geopolitical forces that can ultimately be brought into balance. Here is a point where more systematic analysis are needed to clarify the particular connections between state location and state behaviour.

In the history of western civilization the long-term historical trend seems to have been toward larger and larger political units. Nevertheless, small states survived. At several occasions and parts of the world these small states, acting as «buffer states» (N. J. SPYKMAN, «Frontiers, Security and International Organization», 1942) were the solution to the problems of strengthening the barriers to undesirable direct conflicts among larger and stronger surrounding states. The attempt of one of these states to conquer the «buffer» would met, not its relatively weak resistance but the much stronger

opposition of one of the neighbours. Yet they can be seen as large frontier zones, with a special strategic meaning to some larger states or geopolitical regions.

Other examples of the complex relationship between state location and state behaviour can be suggested by the pierced state *versus* the «piercing» unit: the Democratic Republic of Germany and West Berlin, the Republic of South Africa and Lesotho, etc. But, undoubtedly the most relevant is the paradigmatic case of the landlocked-states, without direct access to the sea. Although they make up no more than 20 % of all states, they account for 50.0% of the poorest countries of the world. Africa contains the highest number (14) which gives to this continent the first place, when compared with Europe where there are four (but not including such micro-states as Andorra, Liechtenstein or San Marino), none of which is considered to be underdeveloped, South America (Bolivia and Paraguay), and Asia (5). The overwhelming majority of the extra-european landlocked-states belongs to the group of the poorest countries of the world, totally depending on their neighbours. They are located far from the sea and this is a serious handicap due to the high costs of transportations; they can be considered as isolated. For their relative inaccessibility, they are comparatively unappealing to profit-seeking enterprises. They can be characterized as a «double dependent periphery», occupying a subordinate and dependent position both with regard to one or more neighbouring coastal state, and to the world's capitalist cores. Considering the many disadvantages that the landlocked-states are faced with, as well as the development problems associated with the excessive political fragmentation, one can hardly miss the conclusion that the creation of «Homelands» by the South African government (11 in Namibia and 8 in the Republic) augurs little good for the future of a great part of southern Africa. Not only will most of those «homelands» be landlocked-areas, but several of them will consist of a number of small, separated territories completely surrounded by areas reserved for whites. The result will be an abundance of boundaries which will have negative effects on development, and regional integration and cooperation.

The relative location of a state depends, as written by A.-L. SANGUIN, *La Géographie Politique*, 1977, p. 37-38, on four characteristics. The state has a defined size and shape, a capital or core area, a system of circulation from the centre to the periphery, and a well delimited boundary which embodies its morphology. Based on this morphology it maintains a dynamic attitude represented by a constant flux of authority between the government and the institutions, and also between itself and the populations. In terms of position, the state has a particular place among the others of the same climatic zone or continent and from its location it develops external relationships with neighbouring and further ones. It is obvious that the importance of location varies in terms of its strategic significance, which can be renewed.

With territory, another fundamental part of the state is its population. It consists of a series of intertwined and overlapping subgroups which may be defined with reference to several characteristics such as culture, race, language, religion, national feelings, wealth and many others. Each state tries to have a good demographic analysis of its population, either total (*de facto* and *de jure*) by sex, urban/rural, age distribution and so on, either vital, of live birth, death, foetal death, or marriage and divorce, health, employment, etc. because they constitute fundamental informations for the concrete proposals of the social and economic planning they need.

The state is a spatial entity politically organized, and it is obvious that without a territory and a population there could be no state at all, or for that matter no government either. There isn't a state whose relationship with the territory and the various elements of the populations be completely harmonious. In the exercise of internal sovereignty, government will normally attempt to include rather than exclude cultural subgroups and geographical subregions, and pursue politics of integration and unification, seeking to emphasize and develop centripetal rather than centrifugal tendencies and to create new opportunities for further cultural and spatial integration, while providing facilities for devolution and diversity only on terms compatible with the governmental images and values relating to the state.

Over 90 % of the world's independent states have some form of pluralistic structure. Peoples have attachments to several levels of territory, but the dominant structure in today's world is the State and so, as a generalization, all people on earth are defined by state levels of large group identities since the areal extent of the approximately 160 states, political sovereign states, are said to define the people who live within their boundaries. Unfortunately, however this statement has more basis on theory than in fact, for many groups do not identify themselves with the state they live in. Some of these peoples belong to groups split by international political boundaries which do not conform to cultural distributions. Many others are minorities in their state populations and may be seeking either a degree of political autonomy within the existing states or even total separation to form their owns.

Quoting DAVID B. KNIGHT, «The Dilemma of Nations in a rigid State structured World», (1983), «First, imagine the removal of all existing international political boundaries and then, thinking of all distinctive large population groups and regionalisms, impose new political boundaries around these populations. Two things would stand out: the location of the new boundaries would be quite different from the currently existing ones and there would be hundreds of new political units [...]»; «hundreds of new 'states' might represent the salvation of the world! But would a world of only small (many of them mini) states necessarily be good? Diversity is one of the key stimulants to successful societies, not uniformity. The dilemma to be faced in any such re-drafting of international boundaries would be, what scale of population is «proper» to enjoy a territory and government of its own?». According to the author, «There is no easy answer to this question».

For many authors, the core-periphery dimension in modern European state-building, being identified as chronologically the earliest cleavage, would be superseded by religious and economic cleavages, the cultural and ethnic regional residues tending to be considered as anachronism in the final stage of withering away. This, of course, has not happened. Uneven economic development within states has led to

regional consciousness and where this coincided with earlier cultural peripheral identities of an ethnic nature various types of autonomous political movements have grown. Hence even in Western Europe, the *home* of ideal homogeneous nation-state, ethnic divisions are readily apparent in regional and nationalist political activity. Conflicts whose origins stem from the multi-ethnic composition of the state are the most difficult that governments have to contend with, and their severity can be great enough to threaten the territorial integrity of the state. Therefore, the ideas about the role of ethnicity need to be reconsidered in a new light. By making ethnic differences the salient cleavage the politics of plural societies are effectively defined on lines that cut across economic class divisions.

According to A. RABUSHKA and K. A. SHEPSLE, *Politics in Plural Societies*, 1972, there are four possible situations of inter-ethnic behaviour within a state: dominant majority; balanced competition; dominant minority; and fragmentation (i.e. varied network of tribe-nations). Whereas this model relates only to events within a state, there is a need to expand it in order to cover areas surpassing one state, such as two states, or a state and a neighbouring region where a minority in one state regards itself as a part of a majority in another separate but closely related territory. Two different situations can be envisaged: the minority within a state is concentrated in a small area where it can be considered a majority; and the minority is distributed randomly over the state area. Different behaviours shall result from these two cases, and so we can add a fifth situation to those described by RABUSHKA and SHEPSLE, when their first three situations are exhibited simultaneously, as a result of variable definitions of territory only — e.g. Arabs and Jews in Israel (ARNON SOFFER, «The Changing situation of majority and minority, and its spatial expression. The case of the Arab minority in Israel», 1983).

In the last hundred years Europeans have been responsible for drawing the boundaries in much of the Third World and for twice reordering the map of Europe. Since 1945 the majority of the states are confronted with enormous difficulties related to the maintenance of their unity and even

their existence as states, due to the strong emergence of regionalistic or nationalistic movements. The most remarkable feature of many contemporary separatist movements in advanced industrial states is that both types of separatism, the territorial (resting primarily on the spatial distinctiveness of the potentially independent unit) and the ethnic (resting on the cultural distinctiveness of the community pressing for independence), are being increasingly combined to produce ethno-regional (or ethno-national) movements which seek to liberate their respective peoples firmly settled in distinct, if subordinate territories.

Let us remember that the important political model that equates the cultural phenomenon of a nation (a sociological concept) with the institution of the sovereign state (a juridical and political concept) brought together in a single territory has been the most influential spatial theory in the modern world. It became the central piece of geographical contributions to the boundary drawing of European political units, especially after the First World War. Afterwards the theory has come to be neglected in Political Geography as somehow «old fashioned». However, the majority of the states in the actual world are post-1945 in origin and the geography of their state-formation and nation-building is still to be fully understood. Definitions of «nation» vary according to language, discipline of study, and author. Quite clearly, however, a nation is a cultural identity, separated from other nations nearby. There is the tendency for aspiring nations to put emphasis on the concreteness of defined territories against the vagueness of cultural distributions. With a clearly-defined territory and an internalized cultural unity, a sense of nation may grow stronger. Certainly, this unity of group and land requires full political expression. The national-state becomes by this way the political-territorial synthesis of the nation and the state. There is also the question whether such western european concepts as «nation» and «nationalism» should be transferred just as they were formulated to the post-colonial situations especially in the sparsely populated areas where new states are hardly viable. I. W. ZARTMAN, in «Boundaries and nations», 1979, gave a new dimension to the problem, stating the following: «The basic

political fact of the Sahara, often forgotten in the heat of higher politics, is the fierce independence of its inhabitants and their habit of self-government which favors no master. 'Independent', 'self-sufficient', 'proud': all refer to political traits born out of desert existence. The result may be admirable; it is scarcely endearing or productive of a broader political stability. It also means that integration of such populations within a nation-building state is difficult, (...)». There are sufficient argumentative points leading to the statement that the geographical question of the nation-state must be reviewed.

Political scientists are proclaiming the end of the nation-state as a viable entity. During the first half of this century the nation-state became the political ideal of the European world, and many political researchers assumed that true nationhood requires full sovereignty. On the other hand, most multi-cultural states of the world (and there are many of them) have refused to accept this severely disruptive ideological position, and have preferred autonomy, or less, to the granting of sovereignty. Most definitions presuppose that the nation exists at only one level, and that level is an ultimate, superseded only by concepts such as *humanity*. This is probably the reason why there is such a strong feeling that a nation should also be a state, and vice-versa. In fact we normally allude to relations beyond the state level as being international, not interstate, and the world's forum refers to itself as The United Nations, and not the United-States, which would be more accurate, though confusing.

In Spain, Yugoslavia, United Kingdom, and many of the new states of Africa and Asia, the cultural nations or their equivalent are generally allowed to develop their cultural identities, but at the same time are expected to conform to the unifying regime. This conformity is based upon the possibility of a sense of kinship to some larger social entity beyond that of the more strict cultural nation. Actually we have the opportunity to be spectators and actors of diverse political and social processes. The extension of the concept of nation beyond its strict unlevelled application, to a dual-levelled application is a fact. In this century, the great experiment has been taking place in Yugoslavia, where the

Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, and Macedonians, though still keeping some of their national identities, are nevertheless adopting also a sense of Yugoslavian nationhood. Individuals shall be members of two nations simultaneously but at separate levels and with no inherent conflict between them. Much longer has been the British process. The existence of English, Scottish, and Welsh nations is rarely disputed, at least in the cultural sense, and yet all are commonly included in the concept of a British nation.

The new African states offer many experiments of state-formation and nation-building. All of them have adopted the model of the nation-state and the ideas of nationalism diffused by the Europeans. In order to implement the development of the model they strive to transform rapidly the pluricultural societies within the boundaries drawn by the colonial powers at the end of the last century in such uniquenesses as, e.g. *one Nigeria one nigerian, one Mozambique one mozambican, one Somalia one somalian*, and so on. The aspiring nations-states betted to build the coveted national unity upon the existing ethnical diversity, and besides that within the frame of a desired pan-Africanism. Hence the voices clamoring against the maintenance of the traditional indigenous institutions, which they consider as dangerous and anachronistics; accusing the tribalism, the regionalism, and the racism as the bitter enemies of the national-state building. The Organization of African Unity has defended in several occasions the primacy of the pan-Africanism and has condemned the attempts for either secessionism (within a state), or integration (of part of a state into another). «The problem of integration is essentially one of getting people to shift loyalty from a structure based on tradition to a new artificial entity, the nation-state, whose only justification for authority lies in its constitution» (I. WALLERSTEIN, *Africa: The Politics of Independence*, 1961). The majority of those new independent states are like giant puzzles of cultural pieces without sharing common language, nor the sense of common history. Being linguistically diverse, they are obliged to retain as official, the language of the ancient coloniser which functions as vehicular language or *lingua franca* to transmit the governmental decisions, the

plans and interpretations of the new order. The experience has demonstrated how difficult it is to select one indigenous language among the diversity because every ethnic group fears to be dominated through that privileged one, but also because none of them has such fundamental registers as dictionaries and grammars and without them they will remain local or regional spoken languages as they have been until now.

In Europe, events since 1918 (when Central Europe was shattered in several states) have proven the bankruptcy of the idea of every ethnic nation forming its own state. Today western Europe appears to be moving even further, toward the national concept on three levels. While small groups, such as Welsh, Basque and others, press for autonomy on a local scale, the established state organizations continue, and beyond that a common European consciousness seems to be slowly growing. Thus, in the near future, an individual shall be able to feel himself concurrently a member of the Welsh nation, of the British nation, and of a new European nation. One may point out that the E.E.C. is working steadily towards a shared consciousness of common European cultural background, towards a common economic organization, common planning for the future, and even a common parliament; the three principal languages, english, french and german are widely shared. In time these will surely produce a new sense of national kinship, beyond the range of the present state.

Even before the last World War political geographers had developed a particular interest in the study of international boundaries, in spite of the prime concern being the regional differentiation of the earth surface. The approaches have been historical, juridical and geopolitical, to clarify problems around the delimitation and demarcation, the conflicts, and the evolution of the boundaries. The contemporary renewal aim is the better understanding of how the dynamic forces at the periphery of a state and at the interface between adjacent states impact the human development of a common borderland. Due to the unusual problems associated with borderland research — restrictions on movement, non-comparable data, language differences, difficulty of access to needed information, and the like — these regions

present a real opportunity for international cooperation in research not only among neighbouring geographers but also among other specialists. Frontiers (as zonal components, and therefore containing various geographical features, including populations) and boundaries (loosely described as linear because, in fact, they occur where the vertical interfaces between state sovereignty intersect the surface of the earth) are two fundamental geographical aspects. As the sovereign state has replaced earlier forms of political large regions, it has become essential that sovereignty should have a known exact extent, a territory under exclusive jurisdiction limited by state boundaries. They are not only a line of demarcation between legal systems but also a surface of contact of territorial power structures, and its position may become an index to the power relations of the contending forces. The concept of boundary as a separating line has been substituted by that of a contact zone with sufficient permeability. National boundaries can be compared to the membrane of a cell as they are both separating and permeable. Yet, even when the co-existence of many state ideas and «credes» is generally accepted (with exceptions, of course) it is important to maintain the spheres of the several integrating forces legally delimited. The communists boast they deny the importance of, or even the need for boundaries within their orbit. In 1959, 7th march, in Leipzig, N. S. KRUSCHEV stressed that the boundary questions in Eastern Europe could be safely ignored: «We consider that to us communists the question of boundaries is not of major importance and that there can be no conflicts about it between socialist countries (...). With the victory of Communism (...) state boundaries will die off» (*East Europe*, VIII, 5, May 1959, p. 43). This may be true at a far future; for the moment we know that it does not mean that the Soviets do not have to face knotty problems on the borders of their own ideological ecumene!

The traditional boundary is losing its functions for other new ones, less apparent, from linear to zonal limits, from strict physical to cultural interpretations, from only spatial to functional bounds, from horizontal to vertical dimensions, from non-permeable to permeable interfaces,

from administrative to social *milieu*. The concept of boundary is in a changing process with tendency to be nearer the idea of contact and communication than that of separation and limit. *Da barriera a cerniera* (From barrier to junction) is an excellent legend created by RAIMONDO STRASSOLDO in «Regional Development and National Defense: A Conflict of Value and Power a Frontier Region», 1973. Today, observers can follow whether the depoliticisation of the traditional political boundary or the growing importance of the politicisation of the regional boundaries either within a state, either at supranational levels in the cases of larger regional integration. Proximity to the state boundary can be expected to affect human activities and landscapes in a variety of ways. The economic, sociological and psychological characteristics of the border zone are much more significant, though less obvious than the physical structures.

To close this almost randomish lecture, nothing better than the questionable subject of whether there is a «typical modern state»? According to M. I. GLASSNER and H. J. DE BLIJ, *Systematic Political Geography* (1980), there are six basic characteristics to any state: land territory, permanent resident population, government, organized economy, circulation system and, most important perhaps, sovereignty and international recognition. In other words, each state has certain characteristics such as territory (bounded container for the contents of a particular portion of the earth) and a capital or core area (central place of an effective system of government and circulation) which are common to other states, and each has unique qualities, such as shape, location and arrangement of political-geographical areas within its boundaries.

C. F. J. WHEBEEL, in «Models of Political Territory» (1970) has suggested three models symbolizing three macro-regions on the world. The Old World State model, ethnically based and including a number of cultural core areas which have come together as population expansion has replaced intervening frontiers of separation for frontiers of contact. The modern economic state may incorporate ethnic minority territories, too small to function effectively in isolation, along with other areas. The New World model, based on spatial

economic systems where the cultural differences are only incidental. Economic core areas originated as scattered enclaves of coastal European settlement and expanded along communication corridors leading to the interior. States are generally separated by geometrical boundaries drawn through frontiers of separation, while indigenous populations were frequently displaced into extra-ecumenical territories in the course of the European penetration. Capitals are either coastal metropolises or forward capitals. In the Third World model, developed ethnic patterns of Old World type are overlaid by the economic patterns of urbanization and communications of New World type. Both ethnic and economic core areas exist, with the capital as a coastal economic focus. Political boundaries are superimposed upon the indigenous cultural systems, and are unlikely to reflect their characteristics. The political map of the developing world was largely fashioned by colonialism before nationalist movements secured the independence of the new states.

Of course these models are to be accepted primarily as the loosest generalization. Of the utmost importance is to consider the rank of a state in the hierarchy of the international system, based upon a number of orders of levels of states that are linked across levels (horizontally), and among levels (vertically), i.e. the global and the regional. We must be sensitive enough to how states are organizing themselves within and across the hierarchy. That hierarchical rank can be assessed through a number of measures such as those enumerated by SAUL B. COHEN, «The new map of Global geopolitical equilibrium: a developmental approach», 1982 (p. 230): critical mass of human and material resources including numbers, quality, variety and level of technology and culture; nuclear technology; degree of national cohesiveness, based upon social, religious, cultural, ethnic and racial factors, and sense of national history; political-military energy threshold, from high surplus, to maintenance, to minimum survival levels; geographical range based upon global locations and reach to other orders of the hierarchy within the geopolitical region; pattern and density of network of international links; degree to which national system characteristics are open; economic, political and military strength

relative to neighbouring states; value goals and strategy for wielding influence beyond its border; number and complexity of international issues that a state can handle simultaneously, a measure of its political scope, maturity and options; perception of self-image as to rank in the hierarchy. Geopolitical systems can be analysed from the perspective of agent-environment interrelationships. States may be treated as agents and geostrategic and geopolitical regions as environments. What the agent state knows, feels and values is the basis for selecting the salient objects of the environment, be these narrow straits, minerals, soils, or peoples (S. COHEN, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, 1973, 2nd ed.). It is an inspiring defy, reaching beyond the traditional emphasis upon population, area, economic resources and military capacities. It opens new perspectives when reexamining the too simplistically cast problem of the North-South dialogue. The South, or Developing World is far from being a unified entity. In reality, it consists of diverse clusters of states in different regions, with varying potential and at various stages of development. The interests of each of this clusters are increasingly regional, and states within them are organizing themselves hierarchically. In addition to the likelihood that the dialogue will become more regionally framed, there is the reality that East-West relations within the Developed World will retain their geostrategic or global-spanning primacy. The major lines of cooperation and contention amongst the major powers will continue to play the primary role in determining the geopolitical order. The geopolitical regions that are in developing stages will play equilibrial roles, but in the context of their unique needs for specialized relationships with other parts of the world, both developed and developing. While conflicts confirm that we live in a period of geopolitical disequilibrium, they also provide some insights of the direction that restoration of equilibrium can take into a new and higher stage of Global Order, characterized by a flexible, interactive and stable system, based upon shared responsibilities and shared power.

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RESUMO

O Factor geográfico na formação dos Estados modernos. — Com excepção das terras polares inóspitas e de umas tantas áreas dispersas em que sobrevivem relações coloniais, a superfície da Terra está coberta por uma manta de unidades politicamente organizadas, que são os modernos Estados soberanos, limitados por fronteiras e confinados nos

seus limites legais. A partir daqui analisam-se vários aspectos, tendo em conta o território (localização, tamanho e configuração), a população (volume e constituição, sobretudo étnica) e o governo de cada uma daquelas unidades. Outro ponto de vista analisado é o de o padrão actual da partilha do Mundo reflectir a importância particular de três forças sociais, a saber, nacionalismo, ideologia e colonialismo. São postos os problemas dos conceitos de nação e de nacionalismo, à luz de evoluções diferenciadas recentes, de que são exemplos, entre outros, por um lado, a reclamação de autonomias regionais em certos estados, por outro lado, a associação de países em comunidades (o caso da CEE) e, ainda, as dificuldades encontradas pela maioria dos estados pós-coloniais em se afirmarem como nações (o exemplo da África). A par disso flui a discussão em torno do conceito de fronteira política, ele também em modificação. Algumas conclusões do texto apontam para a necessidade do esclarecimento sobre a existência efectiva de um «estado moderno típico», quais as características básicas de qualquer estado que o assemelham a outro e quais as que o diferenciam. São aflorados ainda os temas das relações entre estados, do equilíbrio de responsabilidades e da partilha do poder.

RÉSUMÉ

Les facteurs géographiques dans la formation des États modernes. — À l'exception des terres polaires inhospitalières et de quelques lieux dispersés où survivent encore des relations coloniales, la surface du Globe est constituée par un puzzle d'unités politiquement organisées, les modernes États souverains, limités par des frontières et circonscrits par leurs limites légales. Dans chacune de ces unités, on analyse divers aspects en prenant en compte le territoire (localisation, dimension et configuration), la population (importance et constitution, surtout ethnique) et le gouvernement. On montre aussi que le modèle actuel de partage du Monde reflète l'importance particulière de trois forces sociales: le nationalisme, l'idéologie et le colonialisme. On pose les problèmes soulevés par les concepts de nation et de nationalisme, en prenant l'exemple d'évolutions différenciées récentes: la revendication des autonomies régionales dans certains États, l'association en communautés de divers pays (comme la CEE) ou encore les difficultés que la majorité des États post-coloniaux ressentent, pour s'affirmer en tant que nations (exemple de l'Afrique). On enchaîne la discussion sur le concept de frontière politique, lui aussi en voie de modification. En conclusion, l'article montre qu'il est nécessaire de prouver l'existence effective d'un «état moderne typique», de préciser les caractéristiques fondamentales qui font qu'un État ressemble à un autre ou au contraire différencie. Les thèmes des relations entre États, de l'équilibre des responsabilités et du partage du pouvoir sont également effleurés.