

## Geopolitical Challenges in Public Governance

Mohd Mizan Aslam<sup>1</sup>, Syed Razak Syed Mahadi<sup>2</sup>, Muhd Nabhan Mizan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Defence University of Malaysia. Email: mohdmizan@upnm.edu.my.

<sup>2</sup> University Malaya, Malaysia. Email: syedabdrzak@um.edu.my.

<sup>3</sup> University College London. Email: nabhanmizan@ucl.edu.uk.

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**Abstract:** *Geopolitics studies how Earth's physical and human geography affects politics and international relations. The Ancient Greek terms γῆ (gê), which means "earth, land," and πολιτική (politikê), which means "politics," are the source of the term "geopolitics." An academic discipline studies how a nation's size, location, climate, terrain, population, and natural resources affect its politics, particularly its foreign policy. Geopolitics has a significant bearing on public governance. Geopolitics provides a framework for comprehending the power relationships that shape our world. It aids in analyzing how geopolitical forces affect human rights, cultural heritage, and the development of public opinion worldwide. It also provides insights into societal divides, migration trends, and the emergence of nationalism. Other than that, geopolitical factors can impact governance strategies in the context of governance. For instance, decision-making procedures within public governance, strategic planning, and policy-making may be impacted by the geopolitical backdrop of a given area. It may also have an impact on how various countries relate to one another, which could have an impact on international accords and policies. Additionally, geopolitics can be understood as a process that makes it easy to comprehend conflicts and tensions at several levels, including local, regional, national, and worldwide. It can also disclose power struggles between actors. This knowledge can help public governance efficiently manage these tensions and conflicts. Geopolitics is a significant factor in determining the tactics and laws used in public government. It offers a prism through which we can view the intricate relationships necessary for efficient public governance, including those involving geography, power, politics, and international relations. Thus, a better understanding of geopolitics can support more intelligent, astute, and successful public governance.*

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### Introduction

Geopolitics is the study of how Earth's physical and human geography affects politics and international relations. The Ancient Greek terms γῆ (gê), which means "earth, land," and πολιτική (politikê), which means "politics," are the source of the term "geopolitics." (Deudney, 2024). An academic discipline studies how a nation's size, location, climate, terrain, population, and natural resources affect its politics, particularly its foreign policy. Geopolitics has a significant bearing on public governance. Geopolitics provides a framework for comprehending the power relationships that shape our world. It aids in analyzing how geopolitical forces affect human rights, cultural heritage, and the development of public opinion worldwide. It also provides insights into societal divides, migration trends, and the emergence of nationalism (McAndrew, 2023).

Other than that, geopolitical factors can impact governance strategies in the context of governance (As-Saber, 2021). For instance, decision-making procedures within public governance, strategic planning, and policy-making may be impacted by the geopolitical backdrop of a given area. It also has an impact on how various countries relate to one another, which could have an impact on international accords and policies. Additionally, geopolitics can be understood as a process that makes it easy to comprehend conflicts and tensions at several levels, including local, regional, national, and worldwide (Subra, 2021). It can also disclose power struggles between actors. This knowledge can help public governance efficiently manage these tensions and conflicts.

In essence, geopolitics is a major factor in determining the tactics and laws used in public government. It offers a prism through which we can view the intricate relationships necessary for efficient public governance, including those involving geography, power, politics, and international relations. Thus, a better understanding of geopolitics can support more intelligent, astute, and successful public governance.

A *radical* is one who advocates fundamental or revolutionary changes in current practices, conditions, or institutions. In other words, a radical is someone who is driven by ideology. Radical Islam in Southeast Asia is further defined as a movement whose ideology is "to establish an Islamic state governed by Shari'ah through violence and extralegal means. Modern Islamic ideology materialized in the Middle East in the second half of the 20th century as a revivalist and anti-nationalist movement. In the early 1920s, most of the Muslim world was under European imperialism, and then by 1925, the Ottoman Empire (Caliphate) was disestablished. Although the Ottoman Caliphate was limited in power by that time, it was seen as the unifying symbol of Islam by many Muslims. Muslim empires and influence were quickly deteriorating and giving way to Westernization. It was under this perceived threat to the Muslim ideals and a "community in crisis" that contemporary Islamic activism emerged. The propagators of the Islamic movement viewed the core of the crisis as having two parts: Western imperialism and Westernization nationalist Muslim leadership. In the movement's early years, the most prominent theorists were Hassan al-Banna of Egypt and Mawlana Mawdudi of Pakistan. The groups founded by each of these religious scholars are Ikhwanul Muslimin (Muslim's Brotherhood) in 1928 in Egypt and the Jamaat i-Islami (Islamic Movement) in 1941 in India; respectively remain the trademark of Islamic movement organizations today. Both leaders viewed their societies as too reliant on the West- politically ineffectual and culturally defunct.

Furthermore, they viewed the increasing incursion of Western culture, such as education, law, customs, and values, as being significantly destructive in the long term because they directly threatened the core of the Muslim community. Al-Banna and Mawdudi believed the internal aspects of the problem were most pressing and, therefore, focused on the Islamization of the Muslim community. They shared the belief that Islam, by providing comprehensive guidance for every aspect of a Muslim's life, was better than capitalism and other ideologies. They established organizations that promoted social and political activism to support this key principle.<sup>93</sup> They also worked to match modernization with scripture and tradition by reinterpreting Islam and applying it to the challenges of modernity. For al-Banna and Mawdudi, the solution for the crisis of the Muslim communities in their respective regions lay in indoctrinating people (socio-religious reform) while changing the government (political reform) at the same time. For Mawdudi, a truly Islamic state recognized only the sovereignty of God (*hakimiya*), worshipped God alone, and implemented His law, which means Sharia Law. Anything short of this was *Jahiliya*.

Another prominent scholar of Muslim radicalism was Sayyid Qutb. Following the assassination of al-Banna in 1949, Qutb emerged as the leader of the Ikhwanul Muslimin. Although influenced by Banna and Mawdudi's ideological theories and the concept of the Islamic state, Qutb saw the means for attaining their goals as requiring a more radical program of action. By rejecting all forms of nationalism, Qutb declared the Egyptian policy illegitimate. His uncompromising delegitimization of all artificial political communities, prompted in part by the state's violent attack on the Brotherhoods and its teaching, led many of their members to embrace violent struggle. Qutb wrote his most influential and radical works while in prison from 1954 until his execution in 1966, named *Ma'alim Fi al-Tariq* (Milestone). As explained by Anthony Bubalo, Qutb was best known as "the man whose ideas would shape Al Qaeda."

## Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. Data were obtained from several political

analyst institutions in China and Europe that have played a role in geopolitical study. Data comes from library research regarding the role of geopolitical studies and public governance in delivering significant change in the current situation, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and all relevant entities. Data were obtained through documentation, literature review, and internet searches. The literature review was based on reference journal articles. The open-ended interview and data analysis was conducted using a descriptive approach.

All the data collected was analyzed in detail to produce findings that fulfilled the research objectives. Several cities were visited in the research process, including Kuala Lumpur, Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani, Phnom Penh, Singapore, and Jakarta. Primary and secondary data were also collected from several Malaysian governmental institutions such as the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and National Security Division (NSD) as well as the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM). Based on the data gathered through extensive fieldwork and theoretical assessments, this study provides an empirically detailed analysis of how radicalism takes form and emerges in a given society over a period of time

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Resource Competition**

In a variety of circumstances, competition for resources has a substantial impact on governance decisions. Competition for resources, like water and pasture, was traditionally settled peacefully by local resource governance structures that complemented the political economy of the area. Even with additional demands, these mechanisms could still handle conflicts efficiently. However, violent confrontations have recently broken out due to flaws in these governance institutions and ineffective dispute-resolution mechanisms. The pressure on natural resources has increased due to farmland expansion, climate change, population growth, and land privatization; however, the underlying cause is the increasingly ineffective and exclusive local governance structures.

For example, in Burkina Faso, power relations rather than unequal access rights or resource rivalry cause inequality between farmers and pastoralists. Pastoralists' structural marginalisation raises concerns about access to resources and land. Thus, for sustainable resource management and conflict avoidance, it is essential to comprehend governance dynamics and correct governance shortcomings (Bisson et al., 2021). Furthermore, as the externalities of domestic enactments increase, globalisation also influences national policies, driving policy convergence among states, either upwardly or downwardly (Chen & Wang, 2021). Cooperation and adaptability are crucial in our highly interdependent world to overcome global issues that cut across national boundaries, such as pandemics and climate change (Downie, 2022). Moreover, international organisations (IOs) cooperate based on shared governance goals and compete for material resources; they can also adjust by modifying their goals and boundaries (Stiglitz & Rodrik, 2024).

### **Security Concern**

Security issues have emerged as a key geopolitical problem for public governance, requiring the creation of strong policies and encouraging international collaboration to maintain stability on a national and worldwide level. The growth of cyber threats, terrorism, and international crime has drastically changed the security environment in an era of extraordinary technical breakthroughs and globalization. As a result, governments are forced to consistently innovate and adapt to a myriad of complex and shifting hazards.

Cybersecurity poses a severe threat, with state and non-state actors increasingly using digital weaknesses to compromise vital infrastructure, steal confidential information, and influence political processes. Because cyber threats are so ubiquitous and can attack from anywhere in the world while remaining anonymous, traditional defence strategies are less effective.

As a result, countries are substantially investing in offensive and defensive cyber capabilities, sparking an arms race. Today, governments have to safeguard physical and virtual borders to maintain the security of vital services, communication networks, and financial systems. Aside from the significant dangers associated with conflict, other risks that the globe faces include those associated with uncontrolled and increasingly potent artificial intelligence (AI) techniques, heightened protectionism that impedes the flow of vital minerals, and the neglect of macroeconomic and financial market vulnerabilities (Kaya, 2024). The need for comprehensive cybersecurity policies is highlighted by the growing sophistication of cyber-attacks, as demonstrated by events like the SolarWinds hack and ransomware attacks on vital infrastructure.

In addition, the ongoing danger of terrorism necessitates the need for thorough counterterrorism plans and alert intelligence. Terrorist methods are constantly changing, from well-planned, large-scale attacks to isolated instances and responding to the calls for a multipronged strategy incorporating cutting-edge surveillance technologies, international intelligence cooperation, and community involvement initiatives. Due to this ongoing monitoring, governments are challenged to balance security and individual freedoms, frequently sparking contentious discussions about civil liberties, privacy, and the scope of state surveillance.

The governing environment is made more difficult by transnational crime, which includes drug and arms smuggling, human trafficking, and other crimes. These crimes take advantage of the interconnection of the globalized globe, crossing boundaries with ease and necessitating well-thought-out, coordinated responses. In order to disrupt criminal networks that operate across borders, international law enforcement organizations need to cooperate more than before, exchanging intelligence and tactics. However, given that many nations have distinct legal systems, agendas, and capacities, this calls for overcoming substantial administrative and diplomatic obstacles.

### **Shift in Geopolitical Power Dynamics Impact on Governance**

The growth of China is an example of the changing global power dynamics that significantly impact public governance by altering political systems, redefining national priorities, changing international norms and standards, and maintaining regional stability. First, the increasing power of China puts into question the political structures in place, forcing many nations to reevaluate their governance models in light of China's state-led development strategy. The foundations of our governance systems are called into question by the democratic failures that have occurred worldwide, including in the US and Europe (Ramphele, 2022). This paradigm, which contrasts with Western democratic values by combining economic liberalisation and authoritarian government, may encourage other countries to follow suit to attain swift economic growth. Second, when nations coordinate their plans to capitalise on China's economic rise, the priorities of each nation are redefined. To draw Chinese investment, for example, countries taking part in the Belt and Road Initiative modify their infrastructure and economic policies, strongly emphasising economic development and connectivity over traditional priorities. In part, these processes are driving the attempts by the political and economic elites of the world to construct ever more comprehensive systems of trade regulation that reduce the diversity of state arrangements (Dalby, 2000).

Third, global norms and standards are changing as China grows, especially in commerce, technology, and human rights. China challenges established norms through its technological developments and prominent position in global supply chains, creating new standards that frequently reflect its ideals and interests. For instance, using TikTok worldwide has significantly affected people's lives. Last but not least, China's forceful activities in the South China Sea and its economy might significantly impact regional stability by changing the region's dynamics. Adjacent nations must tread carefully when taking advantage of economic prospects and dealing with security issues brought on by China's growing sway. With China at the centre, the changing balance



of power in the world calls for flexible public governance that can successfully handle the changing political, economic, and security environment.

### **Regional Conflict**

Wars, disputes, or tensions in a particular geographic area are regional conflicts (Bharti & Aryal, n.d.). These conflicts frequently involve neighbouring states or governments. These conflicts are closely linked to a feeling of place, regardless of whether they are social, political, economic, or environmental. Regional conflicts also pose distinct issues for the global community and may alone be handled via the collaborative efforts of numerous governments. Organisations at the regional and subregional levels are in an excellent position to support political discourse and confidence-building initiatives at different levels while comprehending the underlying causes of conflict in their respective domains. After that, over time, war has taken on a different character, with violence becoming more intra-state in nature but still having the ability to threaten global peace and security. Conflict is caused mainly by unresolved regional tensions, a collapse in the rule of law, the absence or appropriation of state institutions, illegal economic gain, and resource shortages made worse by climate change.

Historical, political, economic, and social contexts can lead to regional conflicts. One of the reasons conflict can occur is unresolved tensions within the region. Conflict can result from long-standing disagreements or tensions between nations or factions in a region. Long-standing conflicts or disagreements between nations or groups within a particular geographic region are unresolved regional tensions. These conflicts, which can have historical, political, economic, or social roots, frequently last for several years or even decades. Conflicts and violence, which have changed significantly over time, might result from these tensions. Domestic organisations rather than states are frequently involved in less lethal conflicts.

Nonetheless, they are currently increasing, with numerous conflicts being fought by non-state entities like criminal organisations, political militias, and international terrorist organisations. More nations saw violent conflict in 2016 than at any other time in nearly 30 years. The regionalisation of conflict, which combines political, socioeconomic, and military challenges across borders, has caused many conflicts to grow longer, more protracted, and less amenable to traditional resolution mechanisms. As a result, conflicts are becoming more fractured. For instance, since the conflict began, the number of armed groups engaged in the Syrian civil war has exploded, rising from eight to several thousand. Likewise, protracted hostilities in other parts of the world, like the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and the India-Pakistan conflict over Jammu and Kashmir, have been primarily fueled by unresolved regional tensions.

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### **Impact to Governance**

National governance can be significantly impacted by regional conflict. These impacts can be a threat to the state. Indeed, the stability of governance is seriously threatened by regional conflicts. They can erode institutions, upend social order, and threaten the rule of law. This is because violence and instability frequently result from regional conflicts, which can upset the social order. This may result in a collapse of community trust and social cohesion, making it more

challenging for governments to uphold peace and stability. The disintegration of social structures and norms within a society is referred to as disruption of social order, and it is frequently brought about by events like natural disasters, political upheaval, economic shifts, or large-scale human migration. Frustration, detachment from democracy, division, polarisation, and intensification are possible outcomes of this disturbance. In addition, it may lead to political polarisation and conflict, endangering people's lives, property, and security. Understanding the underlying problems and coordinating community, political, and stakeholder activities are necessary to address these disturbances.

Next, one of the impacts on governance is based on economic disruptions. Regional conflicts disrupt trade, investment, and economic development. Stable governance relies on a thriving economy. Regional conflict can have both short-term and long-term implications on the economy. In the short run, infrastructure damage can stop services and manufacturing, resulting in job losses, lower personal incomes, and less money for the government. In the impacted area, this may make poverty and inequality worse. In the long term, both domestic and foreign investment may be discouraged by the unpredictability and instability brought on by conflict. Growth and economic recovery may be hampered by this lack of investment long after the conflict has finished. In addition, the relocation of individuals in conflicts may result in a depletion of human capital due to the loss or underutilization of skills and expertise (Aziz, 2024).

In addition to having an immediate impact on the region, trade route disruptions can also have far-reaching repercussions on neighbouring nations that depend on it for import and export. This may result in shortages and price rises for items in these nations, impacting their economy. Furthermore, the economic disruptions brought on by conflicts may compromise the government's capacity to maintain peace and deliver services. An expanding economy is a necessary source of income for governments, and its disruption can affect their capacity to pay for social welfare, infrastructure, and public services. This may cause people to lose faith in the government, further destabilising the area.

Thus, resolving the economic ramifications of regional disputes is essential to fostering development and stabilising the economy. To achieve this, the international community must work together on programs for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and economic reconstruction. Policies supporting commerce, investment, and economic growth in conflict areas are also necessary.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, navigating the intricate landscape of geopolitical challenges is crucial for effective public governance in the 21st century. The interplay between international conflicts, economic shifts, environmental changes, and technological advancements demands adaptive and resilient governance structures. Governments must prioritise diplomacy, security, and sustainable development to manage these complexities and safeguard national stability. Ultimately, the ability of governments to anticipate, respond to, and manage geopolitical challenges will determine their success in ensuring prosperity and security for their citizens. Through proactive and adaptive governance, nations can navigate the uncertainties of the global landscape and emerge stronger in an interconnected world.

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