

## Investigation of Geographical Factors of National Power

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### ABSTRACT

National power as a geopolitical concept reflects a characteristic and collective trait of the people of a nation and at the same time, it is manifested as an individual trait in relation to a country and a government. When power is viewed in the form of a society or a nation, its general and overall power appears from the outcome of that society's abilities. In political geography, which examines the role of geographical environment factors in the power of nations, The role of each country in the national power does not depend only on the thoughts and opinions of the rulers of that government, but there are factors that increase or decrease the national power. To identify and measure the national power of a country, you cannot rely on one element alone; Rather, national power has various origins and principles that produce national power in a collective function. In other words, the main factors shaping the national power of countries are located in different fields. One of the main areas influencing national power is geographical factors. Therefore, geography has a special importance in examining and analyzing the national power of a country. While providing a detailed description of the geographical factors of national power, this article seeks to answer the question, which geographical factors are effective in the national power of countries, based on reliable library sources? The results of this research show the value of the geopolitical position, the size, shape, nature of the borders, and the structure of the land or unevenness in the national power of the countries.

**Keywords-** border, geography, geopolitical position, national power.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The international arena is the arena of conflict and competition for power. Every country on this earth is somehow trying to gain power. Gaining power, maintaining power, or displaying power, which is followed by countries, all take place in the global arena. In order to achieve the planned goals in order to ensure development, prosperity, security, and respectable dignity compared to its surrounding countries, each country needs to formulate different strategies, which may be economic, political, military, cultural, scientific, etc. to crystallize. Despite its advantages, developing strategies separately is not a comprehensive solution. When multiple strategies are considered and inter-departmental functions are taken into consideration, it will definitely bring efficiency and positive and desirable results. Today, political geographers, geopoliticians, and many experts and

politicians consider a comprehensive and comprehensive strategy based on geopolitical strategy. In geopolitical strategy, all factors and variables affecting the categories of development, prosperity, security, and geopolitical dignity are taken into consideration... National power is made up of components that do not have the same value, experts have different opinions in this field, so some consider large size, suitable geographical location, and geographical factors to be more important and some consider other factors. National power is the determination of the national goals and interests of each political unit; Therefore, today in the field of world politics, any change in national power will result in a change in national goals; Therefore, in this article, we have tried to examine the effective geographical factors of national power, and by identifying the geographical factors of national power of countries, they can be taken into account in order to achieve the planned goals, in order to ensure development, welfare, security and dignity.

Consider the necessary measures compared to their neighboring countries.

## II. MATERIALS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method of this article is of a descriptive-analytical type, which has been investigated and analyzed through the study of authentic documents, and geographically effective factors on national power. The method of collecting library information is that it is tried to use reliable library resources such as books and articles as a supplement.

## III. THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL POWER

The concept of power is at the center of all analyses that are carried out in the world of politics, and many experts, like Morgenthau, consider power to be the basis of international policies and believe that all policies are an attempt to gain It is power (Zarqani, 1389: 150). Hans J. Morgan, who is one of the founders of the school of realism in international relations after the Second World War, says about power: the ability of a person to control the minds and actions of others (Hafeznia, 1396: 357). David Jalensky writes in the definition of power: Power is ability, A power or ability that gives its owner the power to influence the behavior of other actors towards his goals. Max Weber sees power as a possibility that the subject and the owner use it to impose his will on another, even if he resists. Actors may be individuals, groups, or governments. (Alam, 1383: 89). Power basically refers to the ability and talent of a person to do what he wants. In fact, it can be said that power is the ability and talent of a person to do work and exert his will on other people (Hafeznia, 1396: 355). Or power means having the material possibility of forcing another to obey and obey (Sadiq, 1400: 49). From all the definitions and concepts that have been presented about power, it follows that Power is the attribute and characteristic of a being that allows him to take action in the direction of his desires and to fulfill his desires and goals (Hafeznia, 1396: 357). The importance of power and its presence in the world of politics is so great that some people like Wolfers compare it to the role of money in economic relations and believe that power does the same thing in international politics as money does in the global economy. Based on this, what is important in international relations is the power of political units, especially countries, which are called national power. (Zarqani, 1389: 150). It is possible to believe that the concept of national power has become more evident after the collapse of the bipolar system during the Cold War and the subsequent formation of independent political units (state-nation). (Abdul Alipour, 1400: 173). The concept of national power After the emergence and formation of national governments, it

spread from Europe to other places, and now its achievement is considered the most important mechanism for the realization of national interests and goals for all countries. National power is one of the concepts that are in the minds, thoughts and actions of nations and governments are very important. Power acquires a national aspect when it is viewed in a society or nation and is considered a result of the material and spiritual capabilities of that nation. Dr. Hafeznia considers national power as a geopolitical concept that reflects the characteristics and collective attributes of the people of a nation and at the same time it is manifested as an individual attribute in relation to a country and a government. When power is presented in the form of a society or nation, it is the result of the abilities of that society, the general and general power of others, 2016: 679).

## IV. FACTORS OF NATIONAL POWER

National power has various origins and principles that produce national power in a collective function, the main factors shaping the national power of countries are in various economic, political, military, social, scientific, etc. fields. Some of these factors play a fundamental role and some are secondary. Considering the consideration of national power for political geographers and geopolitics as well as experts in political science, international relations, and strategists and presenting a list of factors influencing national power, most of these theories are common (Sataish Manesh, 1402: 127). In general, in relation to the factors and sources of national power presented by experts, the nine-factor theoretical model presented by Hafez-Nia in terms of the multiplicity and variety of variables, attention to different dimensions of national power, emphasis on the positive function and Negative variables, emphasis on new dimensions of national power is considered more comprehensive than all models (Hafeznia et al., 2015: 51).

- Social factors
- Economic factors
- Geographical factors
- Political-government factors
- Scientific and technological factors
- Transboundary factors
- Cultural factors
- Spatial factors
- Military factors

## V. GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS AFFECTING NATIONAL POWER

In the equation of the national power of a country, there are many components and variables, some of which are caused by the factors of the environment, geography, and natural state of the country, and others are affected by internal and external factors and variables (Sifzadeh, 2015: 42). The sources and foundations of

power are made up of various factors. Some of the factors and sources of power are located in the geography of each country most importantly, geographical characteristics often play a fundamental role in the formation of other elements of power such as economic, political, and military power. Therefore, they have a special importance in the study and analysis of the national power of a country. All the experts who have investigated the sources of national power have mentioned geography as one of the main bases of national power. Even some have considered geography as the main factor of national power. Among the sources of power, Goldstein emphasizes the country's geography and geopolitical situation and says that the three most important considerations of a country's true dignity are: Situation, situation, and situation. Undoubtedly, the most stable factor of a nation's power is its geography. Geographical factors such as size, shape, location, geographical situation, unevenness, water sources, vegetation, climate, etc. are all directly related to national power. (Kamran and others, 1389: 10-11).

## VI. GEOPOLITICAL LOCATION

The geographical location of a country is considered one of the important sources of power. Climatic conditions, weather, lowlands and heights, land extent, and land and sea borders of the country are all factors that cause the strength or weakness of a country. they do. (Sharifi, 1395: 161). Geographical location has a significant effect on a state's ability and power to persuade, reward, punish, bargain, and wage war with other countries. This is because controlling and possessing strategic areas is a major advantage for the political system. Settlement in the neighborhood of small powers or adjacent to big powers is considered one of the consequences of these factors (Rahimi, 2011: 99).

Geographical location refers to how geographical locations are located. Geographical location specifies where a particular region is located, what advantages it benefits from, what deficiencies it suffers from, and which regions it is adjacent to (Azeimi, 2015: 121). Paying attention to the geographical location, in addition to making us familiar with the weak and strong points of the country, makes us address the shortcomings in adopting a political policy and making the maximum use of the available facilities. (Ezzati, 1388: 78).

Geographical or geopolitical location is one of the important factors that has been the focus of sociologists. The main distinctions that can be made in this context are the distinction between island societies and continental societies on the one hand, and between societies that have access to the sea and societies that do not, on the other hand. (Naqibzadeh, 2016: 69). Although it is not easy to define the influence and influence of these geographical factors precisely and optimally on the fate of individuals and governments, in general, it can be said that the limits of each country's participation and activity

in international affairs often depend on its geographical location. And the relationship of that country with its neighbors, both strong and weak countries, as well as its relations with major world governments, in other words, in the study of relations between countries and the foreign policy of governments, taking a certain way and method depends on their geographical positions. (Ezzati, 2008: 77).

Many thinkers have discussed the role of geography in the power of the country and many books have been written in this field. Among others, we can mention Friedrich Ratz, Scottish Macender, German Haushofer, and Morgenthau. Regarding the role of geographical factors on the power of the country, many examples can be presented. For example, Russia has survived foreign invasion twice in modern times thanks to its vast territory. The first time was when after the French Revolution in 1789, Napoleon Bonaparte rose to power and launched a massive attack on European countries, including Russia, in order to destroy the governments of European nations and form an empire. The most important factor that caused Napoleon's defeat was the vast land of Russia with its cold and excruciating winter. The second time the Russians survived a full-scale foreign invasion was in World War II. When Hitler and his allies attacked Russia on June 22, 1941, with four million soldiers. In this war, which was the biggest attack in human history. 3350 planes, 2270 tanks, and 7200 mortars were used. Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, ordered a retreat until the Germans advanced more than 2,900 kilometers into Russian territory and reached the gates of Moscow. The cold winter of Russia made it doubly difficult for the German army. Soldiers who were not trained for the cold of nearly 30 degrees below zero in Russia. Equipment, tanks, and personnel carriers were all frozen on Russian soil. It became very difficult to deliver equipment, aid, facilities, weapons, and food to the soldiers who were nearly three thousand kilometers away from Germany. It was like this that the Soviet forces using their geographical factor in a counterattack defeated all the German forces present in their territory and occupied half of Berlin (Sharifi, 1395: 161).

Another example of the influence of the geographical factor is the United States of America. During the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, this country was far from Europe, which was the center of international development. The vast and fertile land and the great distance from Europe allowed this country to be safe from the sting of the First and Second World Wars and to become a global superpower by weakening the European colonialist powers (Sharifi, 1395: 162).

## VII. THE TERRITORY OF THE COUNTRY

There is a hypothesis that powerful countries have enough scope in the international arena. The Soviet Union and the United States are witnesses to this claim.

In the past, size played an important role in the power of a country. Achieving greater size tempted many countries and started many wars, including World War II. One of the characteristics of every country is its size. Some geopoliticians have acknowledged: "The size of a country's territory is the best representative of that country's political power and cultural progress, and the wider a country's territory is, the greater its power and civilization will be." On the other hand, small countries live in a constant feeling of insecurity due to being occupied by other powers. Iraq's occupation of Kuwait for a few hours in 1990 is a clear example of the aforementioned conditions (Rahimi, 2011: 102).

The size of the territory is of special importance both in hard policies which are based on military power and in soft policies which are based on economic power and also in the political power of a country from the aspect of unity and cohesion of the many regions of a country. (Azeimi, 2015: 64). The vast land, while it contains a lot of manpower and resources, During the war, it also provides the possibility of retreating military forces and gives it an impregnable position; For example, Russia in 1812 following Napoleon's attack on this land and the Soviet Union in 1941-1942 after the invasion of the Nazi German forces to this country, managed to destroy their enemies; Because the vastness of this country's territory allowed its forces to retreat hundreds of kilometers, and this tactic created many problems for the enemies in terms of support and supplies (Qawam, 2011: 67).

Therefore, the amount of land in a country is effective in its strengths and weakness. The size of a country can sometimes strengthen that land. Usually, the large size of a state, with the idea that it has more diversity in terms of climate and natural resources and is superior in terms of defense and military compared to smaller countries, is considered a factor of power. (Royan and Amiri, 2012: 87). For example, although Switzerland is one of the economically advanced countries in Europe, it is militarily vulnerable due to its small size, and for this reason, it has always withdrawn from political-military groupings throughout history. (Mirhaider, 1389: 98).

According to Ponds's classification, the countries of the world are divided into eight groups in terms of size (very large countries, huge countries, very large countries, large countries, medium countries, small countries, very small countries, and tiny countries) (Rahimi, 1391: 104). As a result, the ideal size is the size that is combined with geographical unity (unlike very large countries) and political unity (unlike tiny countries) which increases the national power of a country.

## VIII. THE SHAPE OF THE COUNTRY

Another important factor that contributes significantly to the political fate of countries is their geometric shape (Azeimi, 2015: 66). The meaning of geometric shape is the distance between the diameters of a country and its geographical center. The most important

effect of shape is geometry in the way of exercising the power of the central government over the country (Ezzati, 2008: 91). If the geographical shape of a country has a regular geometric shape; For example, in the form of a square or a circle, that country will have a suitable defensive position; Because the existence of a specific center provides considerable facilities in terms of communication. For example, France and Spain have a favorable situation in terms of their natural situation; Because Paris and Madrid are suitable centers in two countries; While in the past, the unfavorable geometrical shape of Czechoslovakia's land had made this country face many defense problems (Qavam, 2011: 67). Therefore, the shape of the country is very important in issues such as communication, unity and integration, defense considerations and national power in general (Rahimi, 2011: 105).

According to the shape, the countries can be classified into the following types; circular, elongated, separated, trailing, and peripheral. The territorial form of government becomes important in issues such as communication, unity, and integration of the country, defense considerations, and national power in general. In this sense, the best situation for political systems, in terms of the mentioned conditions, is achieved in a circular form. Because the distance between the diameters in this case is close to each other. It seems The next priority is given to extended countries because the units whose expansion is in length have better security conditions than the systems that are extended in width. Other territorial forms around the realization of the aforementioned security-creating situations are facing obstacles. The best form for a country is a circular state and the worst form is a peripheral state (Rahimi, 1391: 104-105).

## IX. THE NATURE OF BORDERS

The border is the basic and primary tool of the government because no government can progress in political, economic, and social fields without having a territory with specific and limited borders (Hafeznia and Kaviani Rad, 2015: 266). In spite of the social nature of life and some of his activities, because of the difference in his characteristics with respect to each other, he always carries separation and separation and the border between himself and others in his mind. Therefore, it can be said that man has been a territory-oriented creature interested in limiting and defining the geographical limits of his personal and social life. The oldest form of separation of the state - cities, empires, regions, and territories from each other was done by borders (Zarei, 2012: 280).

The boundaries of a state actually determine the area under its jurisdiction and sovereignty. That is, the area on which the government has exercised its power, can and should not step beyond it; Because beyond the defined borders of the mentioned government, the area or territory under the rule of another government begins. The borders of the government are natural or artificial, and the



natural borders are defined by the natural elevations of the region, such as mountain ranges, seas, reservoirs, plains, lakes, and the like, and the artificial borders are defined by geometric lines from one fixed point to another with Signs such as shells, stones, walls, canals, roads, foundations, and the like are determined and formed (Safi, 1399: 85).

The geometric shape of borders can be discussed in three general ways: 1) convex; 2) concave; 3) direct. Convex borders are always tempting; For example, most of the geopolitics of Poland have been affected by the convex border of that country; For this reason, during the First and Second World Wars, the enemy's efforts were mostly aimed at achieving this convex border, and with all the recent developments in this country, the issue of the western borders of Poland could be a factor in starting a possible war between Germany and Poland. Of course, this phenomenon has complicated the geopolitical issue of Poland in relation to its neighbors. In the military confrontation between Iran and Iraq, first of all, the convex borders of Iran were attacked by Iraq. Convex borders cause that at the beginning and the beginning of military conflicts, the initiative is in the hands of the country that owns it, and on the other hand, a country that does not have such a border privilege tries to take this initiative away from the other side at the beginning of a crisis. (Ezzati, 2008: 88). In the form of military/strategic approaches, concave borders provide more suitable conditions for defense. All kinds of convex borderlines are always coveted by aggressor countries and are tempting (Rahimi, 1391: 107).

From the point of view of political geography researchers, basically, borders are suitable that provide the best conditions for defense, increase the security factor of the country's borders, and are not easily accessible to enemy forces (Rahimi and Arefi, 2019: 58). Suitable borders are borders that can be defended easily, and from this point of view, the best types of natural borders are seas and mountains. The insular position of Britain and its encirclement by the sea caused this country to not be attacked by enemies for more than 900 years (Qawam, 2011: 68).

## X. UNEVENNESS

The unevenness is one of the other geographical factors that affect the national power of countries so that if the heights coincide with the political borders of a country, they provide suitable defense conditions for it. Also, the highlands can have a superior position in the economic, political, military, etc. relations with the neighbors by providing the sources of running water resulting from the melting of the snow while boosting the internal economy. (Kamran and others, 1389: 14).

Roughnesses and heights are natural factors that are effective to some extent in the political destiny of countries. Basically, whenever the political borders of a country are in harmony with the natural boundaries,

especially the heights, more favorable defense conditions are provided for that country. Although the advancement of technology has caused changes in the political and military value of the heights to a great extent, the heights are still effective in the geopolitical issues of the countries (Ezzati, 2008: 90).

The mountainous nature of a land, may cause a series of communication problems, but it can be beneficial from a defensive point of view. Sometimes, the depressed state of the land creates facilities or defense problems for it. The cantons of Switzerland were able to maintain their independence against the Habsburgs in the Middle Ages due to the existence of low and high and ups and downs of the land. In the wars that occurred during this period, the existence of the Alps made the Germans never think of conquering Switzerland. Also, the mountainous location of Yugoslavia made the Germans unable to dominate it completely during World War II (Qawam, 2011: 68).

The heights of the Pyrenees, which are like a huge wall between France and Spain, prevented the penetration of Islam into France in the 7th century and basically formed two completely distinct cultures on both sides. One of the main features of the former Czechoslovakia is the diversity of the country's natural environment in terms of the shape of the highlands. Huge parts of the western borderlands of this country are mountainous, and from the human point of view, it is drastically different from other parts of it. This feature caused the region to become an independent country called the Sudetenland after the First World War, which was occupied by Germany between the two wars and annexed to Czechoslovakia again after the Second World War. The presence of the Apennines in Italy is also one of the geopolitical factors that has been effective in this country's entry into the NATO defense pact; Because the existence of this series of huge heights and the way it is placed has caused the control devices to be installed on the heights and used as an artificial satellite for military purposes (Ezzati, 2008: 91).

## XI. CONCLUSION

Based on the topics presented in this research, national power is a factor for the survival and life of countries in the international system; among the elements that make up the national power of a country, there are many influencing components and variables that have been investigated and identified in this research as fixed variables or in other words geographic factors affecting national power. The results obtained from the present research show the special value of factors such as geopolitical location, the size of the country, the shape of the country, the nature of borders and unevenness or the structure of the land, which, when a country is located between regional systems, has its value in the regional connection of systems. They are far apart. As a result of the regional connection of the regions of a country, it

enables the political, economic, and social stability and finally the national power of the country. It also creates a suitable scope for creating a strategic depth for the survival and preservation of national power. Finally, one of the effective elements in the national power of the countries is the land structure and the lowlands and heights of land, which throughout history is considered as a strong and stable point against external threats and the invasion of foreigners.

Therefore, it is necessary for the countries to understand the objective realities in the region and the world by adopting a policy and using the strategic geography to be able to gain and expand national power by strengthening the regional connection of a stable, strong, and beat unbroken.

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