

Importance of geography to international relations politics essay



At first, it is necessary to identify the important issues that are going to be developed, I rather to start with the international relations which is “ the study of human interactions through national borders and the factors that affect those interactions”. This definition briefly gives a globalized approach that makes people understand that nations are not the unique actor involve in the developed of the international relations but now there are many other institutions that actually affect those relationships and in some cases can change its complete direction. Those new actors can be intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, international nongovernmental organizations and multinational corporations.

On the other hand, there is the geography that would be explained based on this quote: “ Geography is the study of the patterns and processes of human (built) and environmental (natural) landscapes, where landscapes comprise real (objective) and perceived (subjective) space.”[1], in a simple way the previous definition immediately reminds us to the key problem to treat.

The most important relation between the geography and the international relations appeared when countries realize the differences they had with their neighboring countries, in culture, thinking and the last but the relevant one, the resources. In the final years of the XIX century began the study of the geopolitics[2]that appears as consequences of three important situations that occurred in the international level. The first one is the consolidation of nation-state that is a territory with a population whose has sovereignty and the power to manage that territory, when this word was defined, the head of the states was concern about having the bigger territory as it was possible, also appears terms related with the national interest. The second event that <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-geography-to-international-relations-politics-essay/>

marked the study of geopolitics is the II industrial revolution where the main resource demanded was the economic capital and in a secondary instance, the natural resources; with the revolution, states become aware of the need of the resources that they did not have so they had to get it from other nation-states. The third thing is related to the liberalism and the socialism that in few words, are expansionist ideologies. The socialism that says that the best government is the one that guarantees the equality between the members of the society people under this believe thinks that the socialism is possible just if it is in a global scale, and the liberalism is the ideology of the believe that the democracy is the best polity and every single country must have it, these theory arises and develop the idea of the universal rights.

The factors already named, are the causes of the emergence of the interrelation between the geography and the international relations because the strategic countries started to look in the non strategic countries a sources to get everything they needed to increase their economies and guarantee a successful development of their society, so they began invading other territories already delimited (randomly) and tried to impose their authority everywhere they arrive, this caused a drastically changed in the international relation because every single country realized that they were not alone and that now had to fight to keep the current state they had, also states were seeing each other as a treat, because of this there were continues fights. A significant example of this, is what happened in Europe in the final years of the XIX centuries, the time know as the " age of imperialism".

Having occurred a list of situations that changed the image that Europe had of themselves. European countries saw Africans as defenseless people that needed to be defended. They sent people to study the behavior of the people living in the “black continent”, after a period the powerful European countries were completely inside of Africa and had a control over it. The imperial that used strategies to get the richest (resources) places in Africa was Great Britain who developed important naval and military power to fight not just with Africans but also to defeat the other European countries such as Portugal, France and Germany that were also trying to expand their territory and sovereignty in the dominated country. Finally Great Britain got the power from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and from Cabo to Cairo. This has many consequences for the world order and organization, in this moment began the overseas trade of slaves and caused the emergence of African countries as nations whose has their power based on guns. There some important authors that consider that without the “age of imperialism” do not hear were possible things like the spread of European languages in the hold world, also were an absence of institutions that makes the international relations what it is today.

The previous paragraph shows how the application of the geography in the decisions to make in the international level (that affect another nations and their relation) can produce a lot of consequences, those would be positive or negative but the history shows that most of them has been positives and those that were negative, evolved while the time was running and now we live in a organized world that obviously is not perfect but at least spite of that are many potential fights, this can be and are controlled with the tools

that international institutions has to keep the world order and the peaceful relations between nations.

Another example that can be explained to prove the affirmation at the beginning is what is happening in the Antarctic, the polar caps are being thawed. But what happens with this situation? At first, it is known that many countries have their economy based in the freight transport or activities related to, some countries are Malaysia, Netherlands Panama and Singapore. The way how they are affected is because this important geographic change, caused because of an environmental issue, makes that the ports that are placed in those countries are not going to be as crowded as they used to be. All this because of the National geography showed a documental about how a group of Fishers in a big fishing boat decided to explore the Antarctic and see how difficult would be to cross from the Atlantic to the pacific to arrive to China, avoidant passed by the Indian Ocean. Second consequences is that now exist (for some countries) the possibility to distributed the last part of the world (the only one that has not being distributed) experts in geography and geopolitics affirms that it could (and most likely) leads to a struggle for having control over that zone. The third issue related to this change is about Netherlands, some projections demonstrate that if the polar caps continue thawing, this country , that is place under the sea level and that has survive with the develop of very specific engineering, would be partially awash.

Again it was prove, the international relations is considerably affected by the geography, this example is just a supposition of what would happen, but there consequences (positive or negative) may be much deeper of what it has been explained.

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Not to go too far, there is perfect example happening inside of Colombia and involve United States on one hand and on another hand is Venezuela and Ecuador. This is related to the military bases that United States has and use in Colombia. The interest of the US on having a close relation with Colombia is not exactly to help the country, but is for the geographical position. It is known that allied countries on Venezuela's side are facing the consequences of having a revolutionary government and in the case of Venezuela; they are having many structural changes to become a socialist country. Because of this, Venezuela and Ecuador are seen as potential threats. So, what US want is to somehow have a control over the region or at least being constantly reported about what is happening in those neighboring countries. The example shows how a geographical position of one country could become this attractive, for another country that is a world power, and leads to create and maintain a relation just to explore around him.

Nowadays it still being important the geography in the international relations but, for many people, has took a secondary position in order of relevance, this is because of the globalization, with developing of technology, the media communication and the many cheap and fast means of transport, the hold world is constantly connected and easily what happens in one place has consequences in another extreme of the world. So, is not necessary to being neighboring countries to attack or to have influence over a region or country.

Can be said that the affirmation made in the last paragraph is truth but has a critic and is that spite that the economies are highly developed, somewhere almost everything can be produce or invented and the transportation is not a problem anymore; there are some resources that are vital for a society to <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-geography-to-international-relations-politics-essay/>

exist but that are scarce resources and the real fight will come when countries begin to use the force or the military force to obtain those scarce resources. Those are water and oil, but the last one is the one about the countries are already concern, everywhere there is people trying to find a complete substitute of this and there are many advances on it but oil continue having its key importance. Everybody would think that maybe the coming war is going to be in Europe again or maybe Asia but it is not, this war will be in the Middle East exactly where are placed Iraq, Iran and Syria. All this is because between those countries they have the 55% of the world [3]s oil reserves.

Finally, can be said that the geography is not a physical study but also gets involves in the human activities and interactions, also is related to the international relations being more specific, is related to the foreign policy of a country, this is because when an issue about distribution (resources, land, space, sea) emergence every single country need to establish their position and an idea of how are they going to act when facing the issue.

When the geopolitics appeared, there were some events that mark the way it was going to be studied and how would be that study based on. Those events are the definition of nations-states (territory, population and sovereignty), the II industrial revolution that made countries to see the need of interdependence they should create and have, to develop the production and the new definition in that time, the economies of scale. The third factor that influence the study of the geopolitics is the liberalism and the socialism that are theories about the best polities to be applied on a state.

Another important argument that supports the affirmation was the historical approach, because there plenty of evidence that shows that we are not alone and is needed to interact with other countries and organizations in order to get an improvement or to decrease a threat. Well, States are interconnected, and is important to keep a peaceful relation to maintain a world order and stability in the international level. When a problem is being studied, it is vital to go to a Geographic map to understand which could be the geographical factors that influence in the develop of the problem or also doing this, can be conclude that the problem is a totally about a geographical factor. Also many people involve in the geopolitics believes that the international relation just talks about “ who can do what to whom[4]” and this would not to be answer without taking into account many other science but from all of it, the most determinant is the geography.