Identity and Discourse in Critical Geopolitics: A Framework for Analysis

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Abstract

The paper discusses the methodology of critical geopolitics in the part related to critical discourse analysis and the use of this methodology to explore the relationship of identity and discourse in critical geopolitics. Through the presentation of the basic postulates of critical discourse analysis as the main method of analysis in critical geopolitics, the relationship of discourse and identity was studied through a critical discourse analysis, which focuses on the political and social context in which identities arise and develop. The critical discourse analysis has no unified approach or method. It is a broad set of methods, adjusted to each critical approach. Identity as a dynamic phenomenon is inseparable from the social and historical context. It is the result of a continuous interaction between a community and the space occupied by that community. The scientific knowledge about the depth and nature of the relationship and the relationship between the territorial identity and discourse in contemporary critical geopolitical considerations are also discussed in this paper.

Key words: critical geopolitics, critical discourse analysis, identity, geopolitical discourses, poststructuralism.

Introduction and Theoretical Perspectives

Identity and especially discourse are the terms that represent concepts probably used the most in critical geopolitical reasoning. Besides terms such as territoriality, visions, and power,

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1 A discourse conveys both the social and intellectual life of the speakers. Discourse as ‘language in its social context, as it is used to carry out the social and intellectual life of a community’. This meaning of discourse emphasises the importance of looking at language in context and usually involves an analysis of actual stretches of spoken and written language, often referred to as ‘texts’. See: Mercer, 1995: 79.

Discourse can be also defined as ‘different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice’ (Fairclough, 1992: 3). This is a more abstract meaning of the term than Mercer's, as it is not used to refer to particular texts, but rather to explain how certain ideas and values are embodied in the communications of a community or society. Discourse in this sense cannot be observed or recorded but is rather a theory of social reality.
the aforementioned terms are the ones that are very often used to describe geopolitical relations in the theoretical reasoning behind contemporary geopolitics, or through the application of geopolitical analyses in the studies of regional geopolitical relations and problems. The interdependent relation between identity and discourse is a main feature of this paper, since identity, as a dynamic category, influences the discourse formation, and the discourse formed by the influence of identity influences the changes in identity. In this paper, the important features of structuralist and post-structuralist theory (particularly when it comes to the studying of identity and discourse) and critical discourse analysis (as a methodology used in critical geopolitics, representing a useful tool for analysing discourses from a critical scientific perspective) are also elaborated.

In contemporary social sciences, identity is studied as a changing, variable category, and not as something given and fixed. Identity is also understood to be less and less defined by the geographical determinants and it is less and less perceived as a deeply embedded feeling of belonging to a particular limited geographical area found in every individual. Critical geopolitics has accepted this notion of identity, which has evolved under the influence of the contemporary condition that has brought human societies on the brink of post-modernity; however, with the influence of modernity still being very strong. The geopolitical discourse, which is the second most important concept that will be studied in this paper (besides identity), is at the micro-level of geopolitical structure, under geopolitical imagination and geopolitical culture (macro-level), as well as geopolitical tradition and geopolitical visions (meso-level) (O’Tuathail, 2003). The micro-level is especially interesting and the most intriguing when it comes to analysing, since geopolitical discourses are the geopolitical categories that are the most likely to change. They are also the most communicated, shared with the public, and are most exposed to manipulations.

Geopolitical discourse, the rhetorical and symbolic forms of reasoning used by powerful coalitions within dominant states to explain world politics and justify the exercise of power by their own state. Geopolitical discourses are shifting cultural and political explanatory systems used by state leaders to give meaning to their actions and justify them in the eyes of the public. It is also one of the four distinct concepts used by critical geopolitics to analyze the history of geopolitics (besides geopolitical world order, techno-territorial complexes, and geopolitical economy) (O’Tuathail, 2002b). The discipline of geopolitics studies conflicting discourses in the forms of different stories (written and spoken production noted by the media) and cultural representations of space.
What is significant about geopolitics, above all, is that it is the form of knowledge and reasoning favored by the most powerful forces in a state, coalitions of politicians, military institutions, defense contractors, research scientists and others with a vested interest and commitment to a state-centric and Darwinian survival-of-the-strongest vision of world politics. Geopolitics is not a language of the poor but of the powerful (O'Tuathail, 2002b). Therefore, by analyzing geopolitical discourses, we are actually analyzing the language of the powerful and the context (mostly formed by the same powerful) in which this language was spoken and/or written.

Mastering space, through cultural expansion and the creation of identities connected with a certain space that also influences the creation of that same identity is the goal of the geopolitical reasoning conducted by the intellectuals of statecraft. They further form and influence policies (practical geopolitical thinking and actions) of the elites that influence (and are being influenced by) this reasoning. Therefore, a two-fold dialectical relation exists: between identity and space, and between geopolitical reasoning and practical geopolitics.

By adopting a constructivist perspective, critical geopolitics examines the very construction and social effects of geopolitical imaginations and geopolitical identities, i.e. the imaginary spatial positioning of people, regions, states, and the shifting boundaries that accompany this positioning. The concept of discourse has been at the heart of a critical geopolitics right from the beginning (Muller, 2008: 323). Geopolitics is seen as being about that ideological process of constructing spatial, political and cultural boundaries to demarcate the domestic space as separate from the threatening other (Dalby, 1990: 173). Critical geopolitics attempts to deconstruct this historically embedded results of geopolitical imagination which are not “natural“ or “given“, but constructed.

Critical geopolitics, which studies geographical determinants and factors that influence global and international politics, is indivisibly connected with the studying of geopolitical discourses. Critical geopolitics has mostly been focused on documents, speeches and papers commonly referred to as “texts”, on studying their narrative and linguistic features, thereby analysing discourses. Critical geopolitics studies and explains actions through which the intellectuals of statecraft give geographical and spatial features to international politics, representing the “world” marked by certain types of places (“locations”) which are tied to a
certain identity (dialectical relation between space and identity)\(^2\). Critical geopolitics investigates the geographical assumptions and designations that enter into the making of world politics (Agnew, 2003: 2). It seeks to illuminate and explain the practices by which political actors spatialize international politics and represent it as a “world” characterized by particular types of places (Ó Tuathail, Agnew, 1992: 190). The adoption of the discourse concept in critical geopolitics has brought attention to the contexts of the geopolitical construction of meaning. Proponents of critical geopolitics have argued that a discursive analysis of geopolitics must take into account the particular political and social contexts in which geopolitical power is embedded (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992; Dalby, 1991). This “call”, however, produced almost no theoretical responses (Müller, 2010: 1): “frequent claims to 'do a discourse analysis' in critical geopolitics are accompanied by a rather vague specification of the methodology that underpins this analysis. Indeed, this problem is not limited to critical geopolitics but affects discourse research across disciplines.

The concept of discourse was not studied or explained enough, and at the same time, various meanings (as many as possible) were being connected with the concept of discourse. O’Tuathail (2004: 82) however notes that the concept of geopolitical discourse is perhaps the one concept associated with critical geopolitics more than any other area of study.

The paper Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy, written by O’Tuathail and Agnew, and published in 1992, can today be considered almost “epochal”, since it marked a beginning of a new era in geopolitics, providing the theoretical framework of critical geopolitics. Although it was published after Dalby’s Critical Geopolitics: Discourse, Difference and Dissent, which was published in 1991, and which also profoundly studied discourse as the object of study in critical geopolitics, O’Tuathail and Agnew’s paper remains one of the most cited papers when it comes to the theoretical framework of critical geopolitics. In Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy, what is studied is the role of geopolitical discourses in imposing the attitudes, reasoning and visions of the intellectuals of statecraft and practical geopoliticians (such as politicians and political elites) who produce discourses in relation to the public opinion. Discourses were defined as: sets of socio-cultural resources used by

\(^2\) To underscore the spatiality of world affairs is not to add a token “geographical” perspective to international studies. It is rather to insist that a critical inquiry into the spatiality of world affairs must be central to the study of politics. All analyses of international affairs make geographical assumptions, whether acknowledged or not. Critical geopolitics seeks to make these assumptions visible so as to submit them to analytical scrutiny. See: Kuus, 2010: 683.
people in the construction of meaning about their world and their activities as well as sets of capabilities, an ensemble of rules by which readers/listeners and speakers/audiences are able to take what they hear and construct it into a meaningful organised whole (O’Tuathail, Agnew, 1992: 191-192). Geopolitical discourse is drawn upon and used by officials and leaders to constitute and represent world affairs (O’Tuathail, 2002a: 607). Discourses that become dominant are actually more often products of the practical geopolitical reasoning of statesmen and important political figures, who may or may not be under the stronger or weaker influence of intellectuals of statecraft (theoreticians) that are tied with political elites and structures (intellectuals of statecraft, but mainly as practitioners of statecraft) of the state.

When studying discourses, two different categories must be distinguished: texts, connected with the autonomy of the subject and representations of geopolitical events (by free will of the narrator/writer), and discourse, which is always more than just a text, since it reflects contextual structures (i.e. “the context”). These structures cannot be expressed through the text only. The knowledge of history and geography is also needed. However, this knowledge is also constructed and subjected to manipulations. Therefore, the critical discourse analysis suffers from more potential abberations than it can be noted at first glance. Critical geopolitics, both as a perspective and a field of study, does not have its own theory. Rather than developing its own theory, it “borrows” certain theoretical perspectives, such as the poststructuralist, from social sciences, meaning that it gives much more attention to the capillary micro-levels of power in a certain society and not just to the macro and global levels of power relations. Nevertheless, a clear difference between the poststructuralist perspective and other perspectives does not exist. Therefore, critical geopolitics uses various sources that study economic issues and problems, and, among others, use Marxist perspectives. Heterogeneity of perspectives has turned critical geopolitics into a distinctive perspective (from the poststructuralist, feminist, and postcolonial critique of traditional geopolitics), thereby making it an integral part of the human geography3. The scientific debates on the possibilities of certain social groups to influence the production of geopolitical discourses represent an integral part of critical geopolitics.

3 In geography, this relational and anti-essentialist work produced a marked interest in the discursive construction of political space and the role of geographic knowledge in this process. Approaching geographical knowledge as a technology of power – both the result and a constitutive element of power relations – it pushed geography out of the illusion of political neutrality and fueled a critical examination of the discipline itself. Whereas traditional geopolitics treats geography as a nondiscursive terrain that preexists geopolitical claims, critical geopolitics approaches geographical knowledge as an essential part of the modern discourses of power. Thus, the 1990s produced numerous analyses of the complicity of geography and geographers in colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, and Cold War superpower enmity (Kuus, 2010: 686).
Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis

There are many different conceptions of geopolitical imaginations, geopolitical visions, and geopolitical discourses. From the scientific point of view, the discussion about geopolitical discourses is placed under the influence of the framework of geopolitical information. One of the definitions of geopolitical imagination claims that the geopolitical imagination is a kind of understanding or mentality that possessed by persons, political institutions and actors from geographical circumstances, features and contents e (i.e: micro or macro). Discussion on the discourse of geopolitical imagination is a kind of psychological-propaganda strategy that is employed by political actors through media tools and technology of media as well as psychological knowledge against rivals/competitors (Ahmadypour, Hafeznia, Juneidi, 2010: 8-10). If we define geopolitical imagination in this way, we are accepting the possibility that the debates about geopolitical discourse can be reduced to propaganda and psychological aspects only, which are used according to plans, thorough mass media. But is the reality that simple, or are there other aspects behind the scientific debates about geopolitical discourse? The discussion that will be presented in this paper also tries to respond to that question.

In critical geopolitics, geopolitics is understood in terms of that group of professionals – as the study of how intellectuals of statecraft represent international politics. Geopolitical discourse, in a way that Agnew and Corbridge understood it, is the discourse by which intellectuals of statecraft – both formal theorists and practitioners – spatialize the world of politics. It refers to the reading and writing of a geography around the international political economy. It involves the "deployment of representations of space which guide the spatial practices central to a geopolitical order". Rejecting what they see as the idealism of the textualist approach and the determinism and functionalism of geopolitics-as-ideology, they stress the contingent relationship between thought and practice: modes of representation are implicit in practice but are subject to revision as practice changes". Spatial practices and representations of space are dialectically interwoven. (Agnew, Corbridge, 1995: 47, in O’Tuathail, Dalby, 1998: 19-20).

The popularity of critical discourse analysis (CDA), as a methodology used by the constructivist social sciences, has risen with the development of discourse as a concept. The international relations experienced a notable increase in the use of approaches that critically analyse the discourse of global politics (Milliken, 1999). Crucial for critical discourse analysts is the
explicit awareness of their role in society. Continuing a tradition that rejects the possibility of a "value-free" science, they argue that science, and especially scholarly discourse, are inherently part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction. Theory formation, description, and explanation in discourse analysis, are sociopolitically "situated," whether we like it or not. Reflection on the role of scholars in society and the polity thus becomes an inherent part of the discourse analytical enterprise. This may mean, among other things that discourse analysts conduct research in solidarity and cooperation with dominated groups (van Dijk, 2001: 352-353). These assumptions are the basis of most texts that belong to the perspective of critical geopolitics, which studies inequalities in the societies, media and political discourses. Critical geopolitics also studies the patterns of control in the society, as well as ethnocentrism, nationalism, racism and anti-semitism.

As Taylor states, “Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes, and of how language works within power relations. CDA provides a framework for a systematic analysis—researchers can go beyond speculation and demonstrate how policy texts work” (Taylor, 2004: 436).

Given the role of political discourse in the enactment, reproduction, and legitimization of power and domination, we may also expect many critical discourse studies of political text and talk (van Dijk, 2001: 360). Most of this work has been carried out by linguists and discourse analysts, because political science is among the few social disciplines in which discourse analysis has remained virtually unknown, although there is some influence of "postmodern" approaches to discourse (Derian and Shapiro 1989; Fox and Miller 1995). A central notion in most critical work on discourse is that of power, and more specifically the social power of groups or institutions (van Dijk, 2001: 354-355).

Meyer and Wodak have developed a critical discourse analysis in geopolitics (Dahlman, Brunn, 2003) which gives special attention to narration techniques. The sources that study the analysis of discourse per se are quite rare. However, the ones that analyse or re-examine particular discourses as concepts that comprise certain techniques of narration can be found much more often.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271-280) summarize the main tenets of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as follows: 1. CDA addresses social problems; 2. Power relations are discursive; 3. Discourse constitutes society and culture; 4. Discourse does ideological work; 5.
Discourse is historical; 6. The link between text and society is mediated; 7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory; 8. Discourse is a form of social action.

The term “discourse analysis” is used to refer to several different approaches to analysing language (both spoken and written) and to quite different methods. Within linguistics, its use usually indicates an interest in the organisation and functions of continuous text. It can signify research on monologic texts as well as on dialogue. Within sociology, psychology, anthropology and educational research, it usually refers to the analysis of episodes of talk in social context. In sociology ‘discourse’ can also be used to refer to the general social climate of ideas associated with a topic rather than specific conversations and so some discourse analysis may amount to a branch of cultural studies. (Mercer, 2004: 141).

Why does critical geopolitics need critical discourse analysis? Because analysing something critically means that you are not taking something for granted. CDA aims to critically investigate social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized, etc. by the use of language (or in discourse). Therefore, the window for complexity is open, and at the same time reductionism, dogmatism and dichotomies (which are so common in the traditional, classical geopolitics, but also in the contemporary geopolitics created by the intellectuals of statecraft; the most important dichotomy is the “us vs. them” dichotomy, which presumpts that “we” are positive, “good” and “them” or “Others” are negative) are prevented. By analyzing discourses critically, we are opening the possibility to study structures of power and ideologies in a transparent way. To be critical does not mean to be negativistic (especially not a priori). It means to be skeptical. To be critical also means that new alternatives should be proposed. The critical analysis also relates the analyzed text to other, connected discourses (intertextuality) and to historical and synchronic contexts (Wodak, 2007: 6). Wodak et al. (1990) were able to show that the context of the discourse had a significant impact on the structure, function, and content of the antisemitic utterances. Critical analysis and assessment of human actions, goals and customs is necessary, if an accurate result of human behavior has to be found.

The critical discourse analysis draws a part of its persuasiveness from the fact that no scheme for developing the discourse analysis exists. Since uniform framework, which would include all forms and needs of discourse analysis does not exist, various forms of discourse should therefore be accepted, depending on the research goals. There are no uniform methods in the
critical discourse analysis, only methodology at the general level exists. Every approach in the critical discourse analysis is multidisciplinary, since it studies complex social phenomena.

The undeniable power of the media has inspired many critical studies in many disciplines: linguistics, semiotics, pragmatics, and discourse studies. Traditional, often content analytical approaches in critical media studies have revealed biased, stereotypical, sexist or racist images in texts, illustrations, and photos. Early studies of media language similarly focused on easily observable surface structures, such as the biased or partisan use of words in the description of Us and Them (and Our/Their actions and characteristics), especially along sociopolitical lines in the representation of communists (van Dijk, 2001: 359).

Critical discourse analysis can be defined as a type of analytical research that primarily studies the mechanisms of power conduct and reproduce domination, abuse of their power and inequality in the societies (Wodak, 1996). At the same time, critical discourse analysis studies responses and resistance to the performed by the dominant powers in the societies. Critical discourse analysis uses the terms such as power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, discrimination, interest, reproduction, institutions, social structure, social order, apart from some other analytical ideas, such as the central idea about the social power of groups or institutions, defined primarily through the frameworks of control in the society. Questions about the control of public discourse by the powerful groups, and how this discourse controls attitudes and actions of weaker groups are posed, as well as questions about the consequences of this control (e.g.: social inequality) for the society (van Dijk, 2001: 354). Critical discourse analysis should put into question what kind of knowledge and wisdom produces specific types of discourses and relations between discourses and power, and should observe the processes and behaviors through discourse and systematise them. Critical discourse analysis should study the founding and the development of identity or mentality, again through discourse, as processes that are acting on each other mutually.

Discourse analysis, critical or not, is falsely considered a method of data analysis. Nevertheless, discourse analysis is more than a method, it is a methodology, claims Angermüller (2001: 4). It does not just comprise methods of data collection and analysis; it integrates them with a group of assumptions that relate to constructive effects of language and participle of a society (Milliken, 1999). The language and pattern of behaviour construct our “reality”, i.e. our mental map of the world.

Laclau and Mffe (1987: 97-132) have proposed a systematisation of discourse analysis approaches in critical geopolitics, according to the three key dimensions: context of analysis
(near and distant), analytical form of analysis (post-structuralist and interpretive-explanatory), and political attitude towards the analysis (involved or detached, separated). Political attitude towards the analysis is considered to be a key principle of critical geopolitics since its foundings, which was clear in the papers of O’Tuathail, Agnew, Dalby, and Dodds form the early 1990ies (Müller, 2010: 4). Radical political views are the basic driver beneath the critical attitude towards the geopolitical ideologies and their claims about the “truth” that these visions represent. The essence of critical geopolitics is critical analysis of geopolitical discourses and historically entrenched forms of knowledge and power that are embedded in discourses, and involved in ideological production of writings (knowledge) about space (O’Tuathail, Agnew, 1992: 192). ‘Global space is incessantly reimagined and rewritten by centers of power and authority (O’Tuathail, 1996: 249) through discourses that are historically constructed and imposed on people (Dalby, 1991: 276).

Critical geopolitics, adopting a constructivist perspective, has generally been regarded as a poststructuralist enterprise by its proponents. It studies the very construction and social effects of geopolitical imaginations and geopolitical identities – the imaginary spatial positioning of people, regions, states and the shifting boundaries that accompany this positioning. (Müller, 2008: 323, 326). There is a clear distinction between interpretive-explanatory and post-structuralist forms of discourse analysis. Interpretive-explanatory research tries to reconstruct the tacit rules, the shared experience, and the collective knowledge of social actors. The reconstruction of meaning structures resists complete formalization and measurement but they are open to empathetic understanding (Verstehen) (Angermüller, 2005: 4). This definition squarely establishes discourse as an actor- and action-oriented concept, locating it in the realm of the interpretive paradigm with clear references to social constructionism (Müller, 2008: 325). Linguistic expressions of discourse are usually combined with non-linguistic forms of data such as practices in order to get a fuller understanding of the mechanisms of discourse (Müller, 2009).

4 The value of poststructural work is intellectual and conceptual. The critical relationship to truth enabled through Foucauldian problematisation does not mean that there is no truth—it means that truth is always contingent and subject to scrutiny. Truth is no longer immutable and this opens the door to powerful possibilities for change (Graham, 2011: 667). For the discourse analyst using Foucault, the first step in understanding how ‘things’ have come to be as they are, is to trace the processes involved in their constitution. This involves the need to identify statements or articulations within a field of regulation that may function with constitutive effects. In order to understand how ‘words’ become ‘things’ in a Foucauldian sense, such an analyst would examine specific bodies of knowledge which, in validating certain statements build a discourse that reaffirms not only that particular perception of phenomena and the way it is described, but also outlines the specific and technical expertise required to deal with it (Graham, 2011: 670).
A discourse can be considered hegemonic from the moment in which it succeeds to unite the society around certain meanings and its articulations. Every hegemonic discourse is therefore political, in a sense that it acknowledges only one meaning, excluding the others. All discourses shape their meanings in accordance with the context from which they pull their own authority (Shapiro, 1992: 38).

In a deliberate attempt at breaking with the interpretive-explanatory tradition, structuralist and post-structuralist analytic forms are less interested in the interpretation of the content of discourses or their intentionality than in the processes and mechanisms of the discursive coupling of text and context. Post-/structuralist analysis of discourses stresses the processes and mechanisms of the construction of meaning and its social effects, rather than meaning itself (Strüver, 2007: 688-690). The act of decentring the subject from the analysis of discourse and conceptualizing it as a product of discourse lies at the heart of both structuralist and poststructuralist theory (Angermüller, 2001: 14).

**Tab. 1: Discourse analysis in critical geopolitics by the type of analysis: potential case-studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretive-explanatory analysis</th>
<th>Post-structuralist analysis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study of meaning in rules, common experiences, and knowledge of social forces</td>
<td>Processes and mechanism of the construction of meaning and its social effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation on the study of linguistic features (texts: documents and speeches)</td>
<td>Orientation on the study of non-linguistic features (besides linguistic): actions, processes, mechanisms</td>
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<tr>
<th>Geopolitical visions</th>
<th>Key features of discourses</th>
<th>Key features of discourses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological geopolitics of the Cold-War Era: proponents of discourses</strong>&lt;br&gt;G. F. Kennan&lt;br&gt;R. Strausz-Hupe&lt;br&gt;Neoconservatives from the 1970ies and 1980ies</td>
<td>“Free” and not “free world”&lt;br&gt;Communism versus capitalism&lt;br&gt;Soviet Union as the “evil empire”</td>
<td>Containment (strongpoint and militaristic)&lt;br&gt;Division of the World into blocs&lt;br&gt;Arms race&lt;br&gt;Allies in the “Third World” involved in egional conflicts: “proxy” wars of the great powers through allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmodern geopolitics: proponents of discourses</td>
<td>U.S. geopolitics from the late 20 and early 21 century: proponents of discourses</td>
<td>Environmental geopolitics: proponents of discourses</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. N. Luttwak</td>
<td>S. P. Huntington</td>
<td>R. D. Kaplan</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. Friedman</td>
<td>T. Barnett</td>
<td>T. Homer-Dixon</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Fukuyama</td>
<td>Contemporary neoconservative intellectuals of statecraft</td>
<td>Al Gore jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideologists of globalization rhetorics</td>
<td>The West against the Rest</td>
<td>Environment as a threat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geo-economics as modus operandi</td>
<td>Integrated vs. non-integrated Gap</td>
<td>Environment as a scarce resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The End of History”</td>
<td>Neoconservatism</td>
<td>Climate change acceleration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Globalization as a process that benefits the World</td>
<td>G. W. Bush and neoconservative rhetorics: “Light versus darkness”, The U.S.A. and its allies versus global terrorism</td>
<td>Opposing environment degradation, environment as a resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening of the borders, freer circulation of goods, capital, ideas</td>
<td>Conflict of civilisations</td>
<td>Neo-Malthusianism, exclusivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. geopolitics from the late 20 and early 21 century: proponents of discourses</td>
<td>War against terrorism</td>
<td>Environment protection movement activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. geopolitics from the late 20 and early 21 century: proponents of discourses</td>
<td>The U.S. military interventions</td>
<td>Initiatives for environment protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. geopolitics from the late 20 and early 21 century: proponents of discourses</td>
<td>Huge increase in defence expenditure</td>
<td>Inclusive environmental geopolitics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. geopolitics from the late 20 and early 21 century: proponents of discourses</td>
<td>Rising of U.S. exceptionalism, nationalism, conservatism, xenophobia</td>
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**Discussion: Identity and Discourse**
The central place of geopolitical culture in the research of identities in critical geopolitics assumes that identities are deeply embedded in social structures. Geopolitical culture is understood as formed not only by the institutions of a state, its historical experiences and geographical embeddedness, but also by networks of power within society, debates over national identity, prevailing geopolitical imaginations, codified geopolitical traditions and the institutional processes by which foreign policy is made in the state (O'Loughlin, Ó Tuathail, and Kolossov, 2005: 324). The change in the analyses of geopolitical discourses by means of including the social practice (practical actions) in the more focused context of research, together with the focus on structure instead of intentions, can be successful only if it is done within the framework of an analysis that reflects these rules.

Identity is visible through writings (texts) comprised of words, and actions. The emerging shifts towards the inclusion of social practice in the proximate context and towards an emphasis on structure instead of intention in the analysis of geopolitical discourses and identities can only bear out, however, if they are methodologically framed within a kind of discourse analysis that reflects these propositions and incorporates them into an analytic framework (Müller, 2010).

The emerging trend in critical geopolitics to devote greater attention to practices and the situational context of discourses is bolstered up by theoretical interventions that have put forward a reconceptualisation of discourse and geopolitical identities along poststructuralist lines (Kuus, 2007; Müller, 2008). Consequently, identities are considered to be linguistically based, and transposed to other, practical expressions. Social practice also forms identities, which are formed in a certain context. Study of policies connected with identity (such as transition and social changes) has become one of the important new developments during the 1990ies. The language policy, integration of social theories and linguistic analyses are also some of the recent moments in the critical discourse analysis, as well as the analysis of the new media.

The shift from the structuralist to poststructuralist discourse analysis represents a very important moment in the contemporary understanding of identity. Structuralist discourse analysis considers identity to be a relatively non-changeable group of certain attributes. Poststructuralist discourse analysis treats identity as a changeable category that can be put into question at any time since humans are constructing and reconstructing different aspects of
their identity through various experiences in their lives. Poststructuralist discourse analysis⁵ often uses the term “subjectivity” in order to accentuate that identity is a continuous process of self-creation (as a subject). The term “identification” is also used for a similar reason, to mark identity as a continuous, interactive process, and not as a finished, non-changeable product formed under the influence of discourse and many identities that exist in the context that surrounds and influences the subject.

Discourses are carriers of valid knowledge in the sense that nothing can acquire the status of knowledge without being subjected to a system of specific rules and constraints (Foucault, 1992). Speaking with Foucault, individuals can only acquire meaning if they identify themselves with the positions that discourses construct and thereby become subjects (Müller, 2008: 327).

Poststructuralism rejects that the hegemony of a particular discourse over others and, thus, the prevalence of a certain regime of representations can be conceptualized as the outcome of intentional choice, or that this hegemony can be challenged by intention. The structural constraints inherent in discourses may offer subjects several subject positions, but subjects are not free to occupy any position that can be imagined. If these subject positions are not articulated in a particular historical context, it is because a hegemonic discourse has positioned the subject in a way that excludes other subject positions (Müller, 2008: 328).

Perhaps the most general perspective on studying discourse and identity, one that provides a very basic way of thinking about identity, is social constructionism, the assumption that identity is neither a given nor a product. Rather, identity is a process that takes place in concrete and specific interactional occasions, yields constellations of identities instead of individual, monolithic constructs, does not simply emanate from the individual, but results from processes of negotiation, and entextualization that are eminently social, and entails “discursive work” (De Fina, A., Schiffrin, D., Bamberg, M., 2006).

Social and discourse practices frame, and in many ways define, the way individuals and groups present themselves to others, negotiate roles, and conceptualize themselves. Taking the concept of practice as central to processes of identity formation and expression entails looking more closely at ways in which definitions of identity change and evolve in time and space, ways in which membership is established and negotiated within new boundaries and

⁵ Poststructuralists argue that ‘the process of analysis is always interpretive, always contingent, always a version or a reading from some theoretical, epistemological or ethical standpoint’ (Wetherell, 2001: 384).
social locations, and ways in which activity systems impact on processes of identity construction (De Fina, A., Schiffrin, D., Bamberg, M., 2006). In critical geopolitics, identities that can be considered sovereign and certain can be most appropriately studied not as objects that are taken for granted, but as socially constructed identities.

Identity is also less about the fact of who we are than about the perception of those facts. Because one is dealing with perceptions, one should emphasize too that they are selective and strategic by nature. Discourses of identity produced by the state or cultural mainstream always make claims about the nature of identity as though they are based on natural facts, when in actuality they are just claims or representations that must be constantly legitimated. By choosing to identify, people are thus dealing with a priori categories about who they are supposed to be as persons and how they relate to others in the group (Chun, 2009: 333)\(^6\). Identification\(^7\)—of oneself and of others—is intrinsic to social life; ‘identity’ in the strong sense is not, not to mention the weak sense. The rest is a matter of social dynamics. In both senses, identity is a product of social processes (Bourdieu, 2004: 41).

In several major works, such as the ones by Agnew (1998), Agnew and Corbridge (1995) or Dijkink (1996), the analysis of geopolitical visions and identities as manifested in texts is embedded in the changing political and social conditions of different times. Resembling the Foucauldian understanding discourse in critical geopolitics can be understood as as a comprehensive social meaning structure that permeates all aspects of society, studies of geopolitical identities often cut across disciplines and social fields to grasp the complexity of identities that are formulated in a multitude of different sites, in different situations and across scale levels (Müller, 2010). The founding and specification of the state as a national community is a geopolitical act. This involves making one national identity out of many, establishing a boundary with an outside and converting diverse places into a unitary space, and to forging scattered and heterogeneous histories into a transcendent and providential duration (Dijkink, 1996). Geopolitical and territorial changes are indivisible and mutually dependable.

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\(^6\) If identification really is engendered by its dependence to the existence of a priori cosmologies and institutions, then deconstruction of these cultural representations and discourses must ultimately be rooted in a critical understanding of the practice of the state and its policy as a function of the values that legitimate their existence and of the power relationships that ultimately sustain them. See: Chun, 2009: 333.

\(^7\) Because identity is a “condition”, it emphasizes categorical modes of existence, self-understanding and commonality instead of relational modes of identification, social location and connectedness, which are intrinsic to its emphasis on identification as a “process”. See: Chun, 2009: 338.
Identity has become truly borderless as the originator of the clash of civilizations thesis has acknowledged as well. This does not mean that identity has lost all territorial footing; it only manifests itself on a scale that is not based on the state. This however is not in the same way true for the geography of power and control that remains focused on a heartland. Boosting or playing on identity turns out to be more destructive than productive for political regimes in a globalizing world. Admittedly there are many cases in which territorial identity seems to be alive and kicking: the new assertiveness of regions within member states of the EU, secessionist movements in post-communist Europe, India and Africa, new forms of authoritarian or popular nationalism against the hegemony of a world power (US) or a global force (neoliberalism), etc. It would be contempt of facts to dispose of such cases as mere remnants of a vanishing world. Yet, one may also observe that where such territorial identities persevere, they seek the umbrella of an inter-governmental bloc (EU, Mercosur) or regional power (Russia) (Dijkink, 2010). The elites and governments usually exploit identities and emotions caused by identities in order to control the population, i.e. to sustain their power or fulfill their goals at the expense of some social groups (very often minorities). This is especially the case in some states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The primary interest of critical geopoliticians is not the construction of identity as a social construction per se; they are mostly interested in studying the influence of identity and territoriality on geopolitical discourse formation and development.

ÓTuathail (1998) underscores how the dimensionality and practices of geopolitics are being transformed by globalization and informationalization. Yet, rather than endorsing any simple transition from the modern to the postmodern, Ó Tuathail complicates matters by raising the question of what Latour (1993) terms the "nonmodern," the actually existing hybridity and impurity of our organizing ontological understandings.

As a socio-cultural product, identity can be a subject of interest for geography, because it becomes a moulding element for territorial structure, and in general it can determine structural, relational and sense transformations in the geographic space. Despite the limitations of a partly tautological definition, Caldo describes geographical identity as an "identity relationship that links a given community to its lived space" (Caldo, 1996, p. 285). Caldo highlights that the geographic connotation of identity cannot make reference to the mere spatial dimension of the identity phenomenon; rather it should be used to represent those belonging ties that create the 'territory' (Pollice, 2003).
The territory is precisely a relational space that grows in time as the product of a process of cultural sedimentation; the engine of this process is the identity relationship between a community and the space occupied by the community. As a matter of fact, the space becomes the territory of an actor as soon as it is involved in a social relationship of communication (Raffestin, 1983).

A territory is a land that functions as a medium of communication, a mean for work, production, exchange, co-operation (Dematteis, 1995). In brief, the territory can be regarded as that portion of geographical space, which reflects a given community and represents the community's individual and collective actions.

The interdependence of territory and identity needs not be specially proven. It is a cumulative relation. Territorial identity leads the processes of territorialization. At the same time, processes of territorialization empower the process of identification between the community and its living space. The significance of identity in the process of territorialization is very high, and identity can be seen both as the consequence and cause of territorialization. The reverse principle is also valid: territorialization can be both the cause and consequence of the identification process.

The most correct meaning that expresses the process of identification between a community and its lived space must be that of territorial identity. This does not mean denying a geographical identity, but claiming its meaning and its interpretative value. Geographical identity is a cognitive product: the result of a process of analysis and representation that allows us to extract a given space from the surroundings. Territorial identity originates from a self-referential process carried out by a community that culturally takes possession of a predefined spatial sphere; instead, geographical identity is an external representation with merely descriptive and/or interpretative scopes (Pollice, 2003).

If the concept of territory is substituted by the concept of milieu, conclusions are still the same. The milieu is a permanent series of socio-cultural features that have sedimented in a given geographical area through the historical evolution of intersubjective relationships, which are in relation to the use of local natural ecosystems (Dematteis, 1994).

Not only does identity represent a support for territorialization stages and development process, but also the specific series of conditions that favour the bonds and possibilities for following actions" (Govena, 1997, p. 34). At the same time, identity can be interpreted as the
effect of territorialization processes, as these tend to increase the "specificity of a place", and as the effect of territorial rooting of webs – an "anchorage" provoked by cultural factors – they determine a consolidation of the sense of belonging to the local community. With regard to the processes of territorialization, identity plays a key role in all stages (Pollice, 2003).

Identity is reflexive, compound, and oriented (Cerutti, 1996). Reflexiveness of identity comes from the process of identification, which originates in the local community, and is expressed through the recognition of difference between the surrounding space and the space occupied by the local community. Identity is also compound, as all identity constructions are necessarily complex and contradictory due to the contrasts that lay at the heart of such constructions. The act of territorialization itself is always the result of a competition between different values and expectations that live in the same social space. Furthermore, identity is also oriented because it produces 'sense' and leads the territorial system in its unceasing evolutionary process (Pollice, 2003).

The building, spreading, and empowerment of the sense of belonging and identification with a territory are the basic goals of every community. The development of the community and integration of various social and ethnical components prerequisites the development of a space whose population has its identity connected with that space.

Identity is often abused by the structures that want to exploit identities for their own goals through the closing of a controlled space (territory) and the production of different kinds of potential enemies (“Others”). The production of the Others, different from ourselves, is one of the main activities conducted by political organisations and institutions. In these cases, identity is defined through differentiation. However, in the postmodern geopolitical imagination, sovereignties and exclusive territorial control are on the retreat (although not nearly complete) from the various new flows that transcend borders. This causes the “bending” of borders, sovereignties and territoriality, as the foundations of the modern geopolitical imagination. It also influences the constructions of the Others as the necessary differentia specifica that provides for the difference of identities. Without the construction of the Others, according to the differentiating construction of identity, there is no definition of ourselves. In the ethnocentristic creation of cultural identities, security concerns and threats are blamed exactly on the mentioned Others, who are creating the political structures of some other political community. Through reexamination of geopolitical representations, which see the poor and the marginalized as threats, critical geopolitics creates a key moment through
reconceptualization of global priorities, expressing a different context of insecurity and at the same time rejecting the traditional perceived causes of contemporary violence. In critical geopolitics, if political structures use identity for their own goals (construction of the Others\textsuperscript{8}), identity is perceived as a problematic and potential cause of self-destruction.

Territorial identity in particular has a strong influence on the development of geopolitical discourses, since the members of a certain community tightly connect it with the construction of belonging to a certain territory. In this sense, territory represents a frame of community founding and development. At the same time, territory is a frame of the society that develops inside the borders that delimit certain space from the outside world.

**Conclusion**

The development of critical geopolitics is impossible and unthinkable without the study of geopolitical discourses. Geopolitical discourses are probably the most intriguing and the most studied objects of research in critical geopolitics. As a micro-level of geopolitical reasoning, geopolitical discourses are the most change-subjected research objects in critical geopolitics. They are also the most exposed to the (geo) politics practitioners’ influence. Most geopolitical discourses are actually produced by the practitioners of geopolitics, and not its theoreticians, although these two groups both comprise “the intellectuals of statecraft.” However, the practitioners are usually under the influence of theoreticians.

Through the study of semantical and linguistic features of certain speeches and writings (“texts”), by using critical discourse analysis (interpretive-explanatory analysis), certain discourses are found and defined. However, discourse is always more than just a text, document or speech. Discourse is a product of social, political, and cultural context of the community (society) and time in which it evolved. Therefore, in critical discourse analysis, as a methodology used in critical geopolitics for identity analysis, which became strongly influenced by post-structuralism, the analysis of the political and social context in which identities are produced and the ways in which these identities are represented is crucial.

The understanding of the discourse of Containment that originated in the first years of the Cold War, and was developed by the famous “Mr. X”, George Kennan, is quite impossible without the profound understanding of the historical and geopolitical context that signified the

\textsuperscript{8} More in: O'Tuathail, Dalby, 1998: 298-308.
first stages of the Cold War. The antagonism from that era is impossible to understand without the antagonism and the sense of threat that was felt at that time in the military and political establishment of the West, which then created the ideological geopolitics of the Cold War.

By recognizing the importance of the context in the analysis of discourse and identity creation and development, poststructuralism moves a step further from the critical discourse analysis, studying the processes and mechanisms of the construction of meaning and their social effects. Discourse is studied through the study of context, which produces the discourse itself. This is the first major contribution of poststructuralism to discourse analysis. The second major contribution of poststructuralism that was studied in this paper is the understanding of identity in poststructuralism, i.e. a move ahead from the structuralist perception of identity as a fixed, non-changing category to the perception of identity as a process whose development is constantly influenced by the social and cultural context in which it evolves. For the reasons expressed in this paper, the poststructuralist analysis represents an appropriate framework for the study of identities and geopolitical discourses.

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