



Special Issue – International Quarterly of Geopolitics

Port Power: A New Theoretical Lens on Geopolitical Transitions and Transport Geographies

Guest Editors:

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In the twenty-first century, ports have evolved beyond economic infrastructures into material–discursive nodes of global power — where land and sea, economy and politics, trade and security, as well as geopolitical hopes and fears converge.

The Port Power Theory, developed by Iranian scholars (guest editors of this issue) in collaboration with Prof. Colin Flint (Utah State University, 2022) and Prof. Virginie Mamadouh (University of Amsterdam, 2025), offers a new framework for understanding contemporary geopolitical transitions as embodied in strategic ports from Piraeus and Jebel Ali to Gwadar and Chabahar.

This proposed Geopolitics special issue seeks to explore the material, discursive, and affective dimensions of port power, opening a critical path to rethink the future world order and Iran’s position within it. Scholars are invited to submit original contributions engaging with the following themes.

Thematic Areas

- Theoretical foundations of Port Power: Revisiting Mackinder, Mahan, and Spykman through critical geopolitics
- Port-based corridors and competing transport initiatives (BRI, IMEC, Global Gateway, INSTC)
- Material indicators of Port Power (trade flows, port operators, overseas investments, naval capacities, etc.)
- Ports and the transition to a multipolar order: China, the US, India, and Europe
- Port cities as global metropolises and emerging geopolitical spaces
- Civilizational metaphors in port-building: Silk Road, All Under Heaven, Strings of Pearls and Diamonds

- Environmental politics and spatial justice in ports: green and smart port geopolitics
- Technology, digitalization, and cybersecurity in port systems
- Comparative case studies of key ports (Piraeus, Jebel Ali, Gwadar, Chabahar, Rotterdam, etc.)
- Iran's geopolitical role in the framework of Port Power
- Critical evaluations and theoretical extensions of Port Power
- Critical geopolitics and discourse analysis of popular narratives of regional and global port powers

Submission Deadline

March 28, 2026

About the Port Power Theory

The Port Power Theory posits that ports, in the age of globalization, are not merely logistical infrastructures but mirrors of geopolitical transition — sites where networks of capital, geopolitical imaginations, and collective emotions intersect. This special issue aims to foster dialogue across political geography, international political economy, and transport geography, expanding the theoretical and empirical horizons of global geopolitics.

Key References on Port Power

Scholars wishing to familiarize themselves with the conceptual evolution of Port Power are encouraged to consult the following foundational works:

1. Noorali, H., Flint, C., & Ahmadi, S. A. (2022). Port Power: Toward a New Geopolitical World Order. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 105(3), 103483.

– Introduces the concept of ports as active geopolitical units shaping world order across eight measurable dimensions of port-based power.

2. Noorali, H., & Mamadouh, V. (2025). Port Power 02: Chinese Geoeconomic Hopes and American Geopolitical Fears. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 125, 104207.

– Expands the theory into a comprehensive analytical framework for examining Sino–American geoeconomic and geopolitical competition through port infrastructures.

For further inquiries and guidance regarding the theoretical framework, manuscript preparation, or any stage of the submission process—from the initial idea to final submission—authors are encouraged to contact the guest editor directly at:

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