



Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction

Klaus Dodds

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In places such as Iraq or Lebanon, moving a few feet on either side of a territorial boundary can be a matter of life or death, dramatically highlighting the connections between geography and politics. This Very Short Introduction illuminates the concept of geopolitics, revealing how a country's location and size as well as its sovereignty and resources all affect how its people understand and interact with the wider world. Using wide-ranging examples, from historical maps to James Bond films and the rhetoric of political leaders like Churchill and George W. Bush, Klaus Dodds describes how people and places are inter-connected with each other, and how our geopolitical outlook molds our understanding of the world. He shows why it is vital that we understand how and why we divide the world into zones and territories--and how these divisions depend on your perspective. The book explains how terrorism, globalization, environmental degradation, and new technologies such as the internet are all challenging the geographical basis of global politics, and it sheds light on the history of terms such as "the iron curtain," "the third world," and "the axis of evil."

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Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction Details

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From Reader Review Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction for online ebook

John says

A challenging read (one of the most difficult of the V.S.I.'s that I've read), but richly rewarding. Not only does one achieve a working knowledge of the topic, but I thought the author modeled ways of disciplinary thought in such a way that I can begin to understand how a professional in the field thinks.

AnnaG says

Really not a good Very Short Introduction - Prisoners of Geography is much better, or Gun, Germs and Steel.

Amr Ezzat says

Beautifully written introduction by an expert Professor. Struggling at the beginning because of the various geopolitical events mentioned in their different forms, yet some of them were indispensable for the reader to gain better understanding of the topic.

Glad to know the author has also written about the geopolitical interests in the Antarctic and how the countries' foreign policy could shape the current situation in the pole.

Edgar says

Es un libro muy entretenido e instructivo, de forma cómoda establece como su título lo indica un primer acercamiento al área de estudio de la Geopolítica.

Mis capítulos favoritos son los referentes a la Geopolítica y los objetos que hablan de y para el individuo entre las fronteras y los flujos de ideas, como pueden ser los mapas, los oleoductos, las banderas y más interesante aún la basura y los juguetes de acción.

La Geopolítica popular, está inmersa en mi vida, desde que tengo uso de razón, pedí alguna vez que mi papá me comprara un G.I.Joe, sin saber hoy que hubiese sido más digno que no me lo comprara. Películas como Top Gun, que hablan de una ideología de la era de Reagan, conflictos Pos-Guerra Fría y eventos Pre-11 de Septiembre. Y tantas cosas más que me ha tocado presenciar, aún recuerdo comprar un mapa con la URSS en la papelería de la esquina y mi libro de Historia Universal, que tenía en la portada una foto de unos berlineses rompiendo el muro, entre un ducto de agua que les mojaba una cara llena de júbilo. En mi juguetero tenía un portaaviones y una réplica del APOLO 11 que yo mismo armé y pinté. Es decir, el libro te dice sigilosamente, todo lo que ha sido Geopolítica en tu vida y no sabías que lo era.

¡Una joya!

Bojan Tunguz says

International Relations is one of the topics that I am particularly interested in. So far I have been a citizen of two different countries and a resident of three, and have been directly affected by some of the late twentieth century international crises. I regularly go through the international section of any newspaper or a magazine that I read, and am subscribed to the “Foreign Affairs” which I read cover to cover. (My Amazon review of the Kindle edition of that journal is currently the highest rated review.) When it comes to international relations I consider myself to be very well informed and non-ideological in my views. I read foreign policy articles from people from all sides of the political spectrum, and have over the years supported policies from very heterogeneous assortment of politicians, statesmen and diplomats. This is why I am extremely disappointed with the blatant and oftentimes shrill one-sidedness of “Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction.”

Klaus Dodds quite obviously comes from the Noam Chomsky school of international relations. Chomsky is mentioned very early in the book, and the tone thus set is relentlessly pursued throughout the rest of the book. This is fine if you happen to be a far-left armchair political activist, but for the vast majority of the rest of us this short introduction leaves too much to be desired. It is quite simply the shallowest ideological propaganda, and has nothing to do with serious scholarly work on international relations and related topics. Dodds is oftentimes engaging in the most sophomoric polemics, painting those who support his worldview and policies as unquestioningly righteous, while those on the opposite side are either perfidious or deluded and brainwashed by the “media”. This is the kind of problematization of political topics that one would expect from a student newspaper, and not from a serious scholar. One of the main problems with pushing a particular set of issues in a book like this one is that it makes the book date very, very quickly. Even though this book was first published only four years ago, it already feels very quaint and passé. This is the problem when you write books with a very limited audience in mind, both in terms of ideological inclinations as well as in terms of the time period. Nothing ages faster than books that aim to be fresh and contemporary.

I have never read a purportedly scholarly book that was this froth with tendentiousness, misleading information, and downright bald-faced lies. It baffles the mind that the Oxford University Press, in this collection aimed at the general audience, would publish a book like this one. I would say that I am really surprised by this were it not for the fact that many of their books (especially the more recent ones) have also failed all standards of responsible academic integrity.

There are a few interesting tidbits of information early in the book. The development of the very term “Geopolitics” over the years, and its comings and goings into and out of fashion, are particularly fascinating. However, such worthy sections are not able to redeem this book as a whole. If you want to learn more about Geopolitics from an objective and unbiased perspective you’ll have to look elsewhere.

Leon Skerritt says

Great book for a general overview of geopolitics and the history of the term. The reading list is extensive. Pretty one sided as noted by the author in terms of its reliance on a western perspective but overall a great read.

Andrea says

This is a very short introduction, more like a little bit of everything. This book is perfect for anybody kind of interested in this topic, although we have used this book in college. It's a nice read and very approachable, if you don't know anything about this subject.

Dharma Agastia says

A nice short introduction to geopolitics that tends to weigh towards the Critical approach. Great as a starting point, but don't expect too much depth.

Alex Still says

A good introduction to the subject, particularly if you are already interested in this subject area and want to have a better grounding in it. The author has a clear bias of viewpoint but this does not detract from his knowledge and scholarship - provided, of course, that you allow for this. It is a little dry, so not exactly light bedtime reading. Nonetheless, it covers a wide range of topics, from cultural representations of geopolitics in the media; security studies before, during and after the Cold War; and (my personal favourite) the role of maps and cartographers in foreign policy. I especially enjoyed the chapter on maps and Sir Halford Mackinder's 'heartland' theory which influenced the Nazis.

Sarah Hayes says

A solid intro to the concept of geopolitics and its relevancy in the 21st century; carries with it a very heavy left-wing bias that might throw off some readers. A lot of great examples and even includes a list of further reading material; I only wish the conclusion was a bit more solid and not so sudden, like Dodds had simply ran out of steam.

Mary Anne says

It wasn't a very short introduction. It's a little book with small print - I was tricked! I learned some things. Can't say I understood everything in the book - in fact still not sure what the definition of geopolitics is.

Kathleen O'Neal says

A less than stellar introduction to a topic I was very curious about. This book definitely could have been better.

Rashad Raoufi says

its a good introduction, very balanced but at times it reduced a very interesting topic to just plain boring lists and sometimes tating the obvious. theres even a refrence from wikipedia, which quite frankly is not something you would in a book like this. for an academic to use wikipedia is sloppy to say the least. other than that its well laid out and concise.

Peeet says

"Geopolitics: A very short Introduction", gives you some interesting details about geopolitical issues. However it rather states the obvious changes which geopolitics has undergone during the last century.

Klaus Dodds starts off with a short history of geopolitics. He depicts how the Nazis used the science to evaluate their ideas of a state as an organism and social Darwinism. In addition to that Dodds describes how important the national identity is in connection to geopolitics. This is perhaps the most important information Dodds delivers. In cases like Falkland islands or Palestine we see how important a geographic identity can be and how little politics can change this.

The next big aspect of the book deals with maps and their role for geopolitics. Unfortunately Dodds merely states some general ideas.

The same goes for the internet part of the book. Here we are provided with ideas like: blogging makes international protest easier.

As this giving a general idea about something is obviously the nature of very short introductions it might not cause irritation. Yet this is also why I must say that this one is not necessarily useful. From geography courses in school and a general idea about the history of last century one already has many of the important facts which this book tackles.

Shahnaseeb Babar says

Could've been a lot better.
