Introduction to Geopolitics

Fourth Edition

Colin Flint

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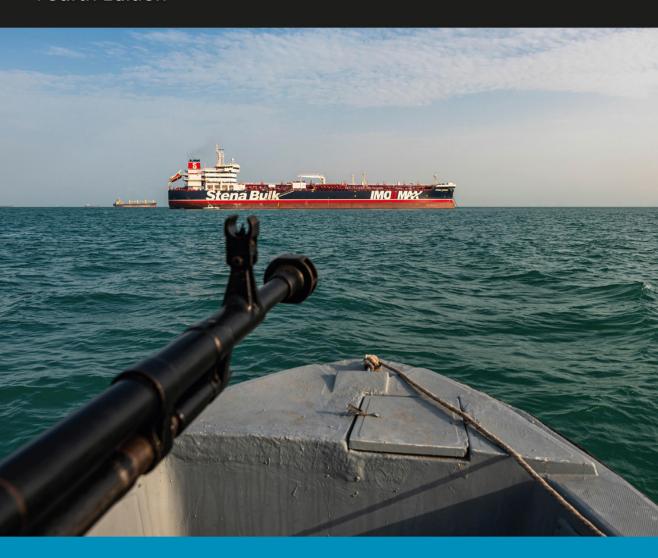
This new updated edition presents the overarching themes of geopolitical structures and agents in an engaging and accessible manner, which requires no previous knowledge of theory or current affairs. It helps readers understand the geopolitical implications of COVID-19, China's pronounced role in the world, the relative decline of the US, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Using new pertinent case studies and guided exercises, the title explains the contemporary global power of the United States and the challenges it is facing, the changing foreign policy of China and other countries, the persistence of nationalist conflicts, migration, cyberwar and cyberactivism, terrorism, energy geopolitics, and environmental geopolitics. Expanded case studies of the South China Sea disputes and China's Belt and Road Initiative emphasize the multi-faceted nature of conflict. The book raises questions by incorporating international and long-term historical perspectives and introduces readers to different theoretical viewpoints, including feminist contributions. The new edition features fresh discussion of island geopolitics, the Anthropocene age, and geoeconomics.

Introduction to Geopolitics will provide its readers with a set of critical analytical tools for understanding the actions of states as well as non-state actors acting in competition over resources and power. Both students and general readers will find this book an essential stepping-stone to a deeper and critical understanding of contemporary conflicts.

The companion website will enable readers to apply the themes of the book to the constant shifts in current affairs to enable deeper understanding. It will provide access to weekly essays showing how the themes explain current events.

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Abbreviations

ACLJ	American Center for Law and Justice
AI	artificial intelligence
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AQI	al-Qaeda in Iraq
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BSPP	Burmese Socialist Program Party
CENTCOM	Central Command (US military)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
COSCO	China Ocean Shipping Company
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
DDOS	distributed denial of service
DOS	denial of service
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GRU	Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces
HUM	Hizbul Mujahideen
ICBM	Inter-continental ballistic missile
IGO	inter-governmental organization
IIGCC	Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change
IMET	International Military Education and Training Program
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISI	Inter-services Intelligence
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
ISIS/ISIL	Islamic State
ISL	Islamic Students League
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JEI	Jamaat-e-Islami
JKJEI	Jammu and Kashmir Jamaat-e-Islami
JKLF	Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front
JKPC	Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference
KDP	Korean Democratic Party

KNPP	Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU	Karen National Union
LORCS	Law and Order Restoration Councils
MAD	mutually assured destruction
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
NLD	National League for Democracy
NPT	Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty
NSC	National Security Council
NSS	National Security Strategy
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPT	occupied Palestinian territory
PKK	Kongra Gel
PLAN	China People's Liberation Army Navy
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PMC	private military contractor
POTB	Prevention of Terrorism Bill
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
RDJTF	Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force
RFID	radio frequency identification
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SSA	Shan State Army
SSA-S	Shan State Army – South
START	The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Conference on Law of the Sea
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
USGS	United States Geological Survey
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Metereological Organization
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

1 Introduction to geopolitics

So what brings you to geopolitics? Do you see it as a way to explain the world? That would seem reasonable, yet for most of the past 60 years or so, scholars, geographers in particular, distanced themselves from the topic. The attitude of geographers is in contrast to the desire of governments and the public for geopolitical explanations and knowledge. Why this difference between supply and demand, and how can it be addressed so that the discipline of geography is able to provide an effective framework for students, the public, and governments to understand the dynamics of world politics, or something we can call geopolitics?

What has brought many people to geopolitics, at least since the late 1800s, and continues to do so is its apparent ability to explain in simple terms a complex and, for some, threatening and uncertain world. In offering simple explanations, geopolitics can be reassuring, providing one-dimensional explanations and solutions. Such explanations are reassuring because they create the illusion of being able to know and hence to understand the world, and if we understand something, it implies a relationship of control. The reassuring promises of understanding and control are reinforced by another promise of geopolitics: Prediction. Geopolitical theories have always claimed an ability to tell us how the world is going to be – what and where future threats will be – and hence offers prescriptions, or policy implications (Ó Tuathail, 2006, pp. 1–2).

The primary intention of the book is to offer geopolitics as a framework to understand the world in its complexity, or as a pathway to try and explore and empathize with the diversity of political contexts and actors across the world. The emphasis is upon investigation and continual learning, knowing that we can only partially understand the situation and goals of others, rather than defining a simplified geopolitical model that is used as a tool by the powerful to proclaim what is right. The book will also shatter the illusions offered by government spokespersons and political commentators of global understanding, prediction, control, and actionable implications by showing them to be false, dangerous, and politically motivated.

Beginning with the question "What brought you to geopolitics?" implies a new and purposeful engagement with an academic topic, probably as part of a university class that you have chosen, with varying degrees of freedom, to take. By the end of the book, you will have learned that you have been surrounded by geopolitics continually and are always participating in it, one way or the other. The hope is that you will have learned to be critical of simple geopolitical explanations that are provided by governments, politically motivated commentators, the media, and popular culture. Also, the hope is that you will have a toolkit of your own to explore the fascinating and important topic of geopolitics. In other words, the book aims to provide you with the ability to think critically and develop your own understanding of geopolitics.

So what is geopolitics? To tease you: It is about the exercise of power. It is about geography. It is about actions. It is about how we portray, or represent, those actions. It

is about how the powerful have created worlds. It is about how the weaker have resisted such efforts and, in some contexts, partially constructed their own worlds. It is about a multitude of connected actions and actors and the geographies they make, change, destroy, and maintain.

The book will explain these component parts of geopolitics and connect them. To start, the connection between geopolitics and geography will be explained, and a brief history of geopolitics offered to give you a framework for understanding the troubled history of geopolitics and the recent changes that have allowed it to reappear as an essential topic of study, but one that tries to move forward while avoiding past pitfalls. By then, we will be ready to offer our own definition of geopolitics to guide you through the rest of the book. The chapter ends with an outline of the purpose and framework for the book.

Geopolitics: A component of human geography

Geopolitics is a component of human geography. To understand geopolitics we must first understand what human geography is. This is easier said than done, precisely because geography is a diverse and contested discipline – in fact, the easiest, and increasingly accurate, definition is that human geography is what human geographers do: Accurate, but not very helpful.

Geography is a peculiar discipline in that it does not lay intellectual claim to any particular subject matter. Political scientists study politics, sociologists study society, etc. However, a university geography department is likely to house an eclectic bunch of academics studying anything from glaciers and global climate change to globalization, urbanization, or identity politics. The shared trait is the *perspective* used to analyze the topic, and not the topic itself. Geographers examine the world through a geographic or spatial perspective, offering new insight to "sister" disciplines. Human geography is divided into sub-disciplines – for example, economic geographers look at economic issues, political geographers at political issues, etc. A political geographer may study elections or wars (as would a political scientist or scholar of international relations) but argue that full understanding is only available from a geographic perspective.

So what is a geographic perspective? In the modern history of the discipline, dominant views of what the particular perspective should be have come and gone. In the middle of the twentieth century there was an emphasis upon geography as a description and synthesis of the physical and social aspects of a region. Later, many geographers adopted a mathematical understanding of spatial relationships, such as the geographic location of cities and their interaction. Today, human geography is not dominated by one particular vision but by many theoretical perspectives, from neo-classical economics through Marxism, feminism, and into post-colonialism and different forms of post-modernism. Furthermore, it would also be hard to think of a social or physical issue that is *not* being addressed by contemporary geography (see Hubbard et al., 2002 and Johnston and Sidaway, 2004 to understand the history of geography and the variety of its current content; and Cox et al., 2008 for a survey of contemporary political geography).

The common theme of the geographic perspective is that geography and society are *mutually constructed*. For political geographers, this means that politics makes geographies, and that the geographies that are made are not politically neutral. For example, if demonstrators want to make a point, they often take over a public space, such as a prominent square in the capital city. By their occupation, the demonstrators politicize a particular geographical entity (the square) – the demonstration is given meaning and is empowered by the use of the square. The way the Black Lives Matter movement and

pro-democracy protestors in countries such as Belarus and Thailand have used public spaces is a good example of how those involved in politics need and use geography. Politics also makes geographies. For example, nationalist movements want to change the boundaries on the world political map by making a new geographic entity – a new nation-state. If the movement for Scottish national independence is successful, there will be a new international border between a new country (Scotland) and a geographically diminished Great Britain. In both of these examples, making politics requires changing existing geographic understandings and making new ones – that is what we mean by mutual construction.

If geopolitics is the mutual construction of politics, geography, and geographic entities, what do we mean by "geographies" and "geographic entity"? In this book I emphasize key concepts that are different geographic expressions that can be approached by different theoretical frameworks. The concepts of place, space, scale, region, territory, and network will be used to explore geopolitics and, as appropriate, to connect the insights made by different theories. All of these concepts are used, to some degree, by each of the theoretical perspectives within human geography. The concepts provide insights into the interaction between power relations and geography. It is this interaction that underlies different approaches to geopolitics.

So is political geography different from geopolitics? Good question, and one for which there is no easy or clear answer. Geopolitics is a form of political geography – they both consider the mutual construction of geography and politics. In what we refer to as "classical geopolitics," the type of politics was, and often still is, limited to international relations, or interactions between countries. Political geography was originally about domestic politics – such as elections or strikes. Geopolitics was about competition and conflict between states and could be seen as a sub-set of political geography. Contemporary approaches have made the picture much more complicated as geopolitics is recognized to involve more actors than just states. For example, in this book we see social movements and terrorist groups as performing geopolitics. The classic definition of geopolitics restricted the types of geographies being made to those involving states – such as wars between states, border conflicts, and the construction of empires. Now, we can talk of the geopolitics of making neighbourhoods. For example, certain factions control certain parts of cities in Syria, while various groups in the United States under the umbrella of "defund the police" aim to increase the role of community organizations in making their streets safe. Another example is the geopolitics of cyberspace as governments and hacker groups see national space as irrelevant as they spy on and cause damage to government and private computer servers. It would be silly not to include terrorism and cyberattacks in our contemporary understanding of geopolitics.

But are we in a situation that if everything is "political," and if neighbourhoods and computer networks as well as states are arenas for politics, then all forms of political geography are geopolitics? That may be the case. We could try and limit the definition of geopolitics to those interactions of geography and politics that have an international or global dimension. Let's try that. Though with so many political, economic, and cultural ties across the globe it is hard to think of an act of politics anywhere in the world that does not have some linkage to another part of the world.

Is this too confusing? Remember how we started: Geopolitics had an appeal because it simplified a complex world. Such simplifications were part of limited political agendas. They were acts of politics rather than ways to understand the world. So, in contrast, a definition of geopolitics that recognizes the complexity of the world is one that does not promote one political actor and their agenda over another – it is an attempt to be more objective and find a way to understand why there are so many diverse geopolitical actors and how and why they either cooperate or are in conflict.

A diversity of geopolitical approaches

A simplified three-fold classification of geopolitical approaches is used to help the reader through the history of geopolitics, the diversity of contemporary geopolitics, and the notion that what "is" geopolitics is continually contested, now more than ever. Geopolitical approaches can be classified as *classical*, *critical*, and *feminist*.

Classical geopolitics should not be interpreted as historic, past, and hence redundant. It is alive and well. The foundations for classical geopolitics were established in the era of European exploration and the related desire and need to see the world as an inter-connected whole, made up of parts that were given labels (such as "barbaric" or "empty") in relation to the West, which was assumed to be "civilized" and "developed." It viewed the arena of politics as one of competition for supremacy between states. Hence, it believed that the world could be explained and understood, and as a result controlled (see Agnew, 2003 for a rich discussion of these component parts of what he calls the modern geopolitical imagination). Such understanding was the foundation for the politics of empire and colonialism; it labelled parts of the world as "barbaric" or "savage" and therefore in need of colonial control to "develop" or "civilize" their populations. Such cultural politics went hand-in-hand with a mapping of the world that catalogued the world in terms of exploitable resources: Gold, timber, ivory, arable land, coffee, rubber, and, not to be forgotten, cheap indigenous labour – or people.

At the end of the nineteenth century, colonial competition came to a head. The supremacy of the British Empire was challenged, and other countries (notably Germany, Japan, and the United States) sought to expand their colonial presence across the globe. It was in this period that the "classical" theories of people such as Sir Halford Mackinder, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and General Karl Haushofer were developed. These are discussed in more detail shortly. However, the approach of classical geopolitics lived on in the global calculations of the Cold War. Furthermore, they are prevalent today. The very act of labelling the United States' response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 the "War on Terror" was an act of classical geopolitics in that it identified a nebulous target that required a global military response. The focus of the rhetoric changed during the Trump administration towards China as a "threat" and a country operating outside the norms of a "rule-based system." Labelling enemies and parts of the world justifies action against them, such as military invasion or bombing attacks in the "War on Terror" and sanctions, trade wars, and military exercises aimed towards China.

In sum, classical geopolitics is a way of thinking that claims to take an objective and global perspective, but in reality has been the endeavour of elite white males in predominantly, but not exclusively, Western countries with an eye to promoting a particular political agenda. Classical geopolitics has put the ideas of geographers in the service of the state, usually willingly (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 *Features of classical geopolitics*

Privileged position of author	White, male, elite, and Western situated knowledge
Masculine perspective	"All seeing" and "all knowing"
Labelling/classification	Territories are described as "dangerous and threatening" or "friendly and safe"
A call to "objective" theory or history	Universal "truths" used to justify foreign policy
Simplification	A catchphrase to foster public support
State-centric	Politics of territorial state sovereignty

In the 1990s, critical geopolitics grew out of the body of thought known as post-modernism and a specific reaction by geographers to reclaim geopolitics from the state. As discussed below, in the wake of World War II, geopolitics became tainted by a constructed association with the Nazi party. Geopolitics was largely practised by government strategists rather than academics. Critical geopolitics used the tools of post-modernism to reclaim the study of geopolitics. Post-modernism is motivated by the desire to challenge statements of authority, especially those based upon science and government policy. Critical geopolitics critically engages the choice of words and the focus of policy statements, maps, essays, movies, or pretty much any media to identify what is known as the underlying discourse. Discourse is the fusion of power and authority into the content of language. For example, the common usage of "liberation" and "freedom" by US politicians and commentators during the Cold War, through the War on Terror, and in contrast to China paints pictures of moral authority and non-material gain as the basis for US foreign policy.

Critical geopolitics used the tools of discourse analysis to re-engage the work of past classical geopoliticians and expose their biases and political agendas. In this way it allowed for a new generation of scholars to call themselves geopoliticians – albeit critical ones who defined themselves in opposition to the classical school. Critical geopoliticians engaged current political thinkers to highlight the role of language in creating taken-for-granted assumptions about terrorism, Islam, the Middle East, etc. and expose unquestioned narratives about parts of the world, and the people that populate them, that justify military action and other foreign policy agendas. The way these understandings exist in popular culture, such as "Captain America" cartoon strips (Dittmer, 2010) or James Bond movies (Dodds, 2003), illustrate a point from the beginning of this chapter: That we cannot escape geopolitics; we are exposed to it on the TV and at the cinema as well as during politicians' speeches. By consuming popular media, we develop a "taken-for-granted" view of the world that, largely, allows us to see the actions of states, especially our own, as necessary and reasonable.

Though critical geopolitics was highly successful in bringing back the academic study of geopolitics and forcing us to think critically about what we are told about the way the world is, it too became the subject of critique. Building upon the increasing visibility and relevance of feminist thought, some pioneering scholars developed feminist geopolitics (Gilmartin and Kofman, 2004; Hyndman, 2004; Dowler and Sharp, 2001). Feminism is not simply a call to make sure that the conditions, roles, and contributions of women are given the attention they deserve, though many studies do focus on the conditions and acts of women in different geographic settings. Rather, feminism is a way of thinking that aims to counter the simple classifications that are the underpinnings of classical geopolitics. Rather than using simple, and often binary, categories, feminist geopoliticians identify the complexity of people's positions and the connectivity between people and places, instead of claiming clear boundaries and differences between political spaces. The other key contribution that feminist geopoliticians make is the claim that we cannot understand the world in the top-down manner of classical geopoliticians or by simply critiquing such views, as done by critical geopolitics. What is required, feminist geopoliticians claim, is an embodied perspective; it is essential to understand what it means to be a particular individual in a particular context (e.g. a woman refugee trying to enter Europe or a soldier on patrol in Afghanistan) to understand the way politics operates. Hence, reading and critiquing policy statements or interpreting movies is not enough; speaking to real people in real places is an empirical imperative of feminist geopolitics.

BOX 1.1 GEOECONOMICS

In the early twentieth century, the Bolshevik revolutionary Lenin claimed that imperialism was an inevitable form of geopolitics given the nature of capitalism. Also, in the 1800s, contrarian geopoliticians such as Kropotkin and Reclus were linking geopolitics to capitalism and suggesting alternative forms of political organization. These were the first examples of what has become known as geoeconomics (Mercille, 2008).

Geoeconomics is not one approach but a number of different ideas that share the Marxist belief that economic conditions cause political events – for example, the invasion of one country by another or a series of terrorist attacks. This idea is tied up in a critical view of capitalism, such as Lenin's view that war was caused by capitalists creating empires. An important part of Marxist approaches is that governments help business owners and bankers to make money, and that businesses need governments to help them. Governments create the laws (such as tax collection and distribution of benefits and concessions, labour laws, and protecting private property) that make businesses happen. But national governments are also competing against each other – for access to resources, for example – and that may result in conflict. Another view is that capitalism creates winners and losers, or the more powerful countries exploit the weaker. Hence, the weaker may react, which would be a geoeconomics explanation for terrorism.

Geoeconomics is connected to the term *mercantilism*, which has been used since the sixteenth century to describe how governments have intervened in their economies as a way to increase the power of the country. The basic idea was that what is good for a "national business" is good for the government and would increase the power of a country with regards to other states. This led to protectionist policies, excluding imports from other countries to reduce competition for national businesses. It also led to imperialism, using military power to ensure national merchants had access to trade from other parts of the world. For example, in the 1700s, the British, Dutch, Portuguese, and others had numerous conflicts over who had the greatest economic involvement in India, East Asia, and the Caribbean.

Though the idea of mercantilism may seem a historic relic of the age of empire, it can also be seen as existing in contemporary forms. For example, the battle over the app TikTok is framed as one of national security but is also about the relative importance of China and the United States in the social media economic sector. Mercantilism, past and present, shows that geoeconomics, or economic competition between states, is a driving force behind the rise and fall of great powers. The "America First" policies of President Trump led to the rise of "trade wars" between the United States and China, Canada, and the European Union. Trade wars are a form of mercantilism as they are based on the idea that the government can promote domestic or national companies at the expense of foreign companies, and the result will be greater power for the country. Mercantilism, or the geoeconomics of national competition, is based on the idea of "national economies" and "national companies." But does the idea of a "national company" make sense in a globalized world? Or will a "new mercantilism" roll back the economic connections of globalization?

The connections between economics and geopolitics require prior theorization, usually from a Marxist perspective, to understand the political processes. The introductory nature of this book means that it is best to stick with geographical concepts to frame our initial exploration of what geopolitics is, though we will come back to the topic of geoeconomics in Chapter 8.

The three approaches of classical, critical, and feminist geopolitics are all alive and well and interacting with each other. The stance I take in this book is to utilize the contributions of critical geopolitics to challenge dominant classical geopolitical understandings and their imperative to categorize and create threats. In this book I also recognize that a geopolitical approach must provide an understanding of the condition and actions of people in actual places, and hence engage the ideas of feminist geopoliticians. However, I take the word "Introduction" in the book's title very seriously, and rather than go deeply into what can be confusing academic arguments, I describe and use some key concepts to understand geopolitical actions (or practice) and the way they are represented. Before describing the organization of the book, the development of geopolitics that was briefly introduced in talking about the three geopolitical approaches will be expanded upon to give you a better sense of how and why we got here, and what the geopolitical approach of the here and now is.

A brief history of geopolitics

Geopolitics, as thought and practice, is linked to establishment of states and nation-states as the dominant political institutions. Especially, geopolitics is connected to the end of the nineteenth century – a period of increasing competition between the most powerful states – and it is the theories generated at this time that we will label *classical* geopolitics. Geopolitics was initially understood as the realm of inter-state conflict, with the quiet assumption that the only states being discussed were the powerful Western countries. In other words, there was a theoretical attempt to separate geopolitics from imperialism – the dominance of powerful countries over weaker states.

Sir Halford Mackinder (1861–1947) is, perhaps, the most well-known and influential of the geopoliticians who emerged at the end of the nineteenth century (Kearns, 2009). The kernel of his idea was used in justifying the nuclear policy of President Reagan, and academics and policymakers continue to discuss the merits of his "Heartland" theory. The political context from which Mackinder wrote was multi-layered. Internationally, he was concerned about the relative decline in Great Britain's power as it faced the challenge of Germany. Within Britain, his conservatism was appalled by the destruction of traditional agricultural and aristocratic lifestyles in the wake of industrialization, especially the rise of an organized working class that made claims for social change. His goal was to maintain both Britain's power and its landed gentry through a strong imperial bloc that could resist challengers while maintaining wealth and the aristocratic social structure.

Influenced by the work of Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914), Mackinder saw global politics as a "closed system" – meaning that the actions of different countries were necessarily inter-connected, and that the major axis of conflict was between land and sea powers. He examined the geography and history of land power by defining, in 1904, the core of Eurasia as the "Pivot Area," which in 1919 he renamed the "Heartland" (Figure 1.1). This area was called the Pivot Area because, in his Eurocentric gaze, the history of the world pivoted around the sequence of invasions out of this region into the surrounding areas that were more oriented to the sea. In the past, Mackinder believed, sea powers had maintained an advantage, but with the introduction of railways, he reasoned, the advantage had switched to land powers, especially if one country could dominate and organize the inaccessible Heartland zone. Hence Mackinder's famous dictum, or, in contemporary language, "tweet":

> Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland
> Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island
> Who rules the World-Island commands the World.

Figure 1.1 Sir Halford Mackinder's "Heartland" theory.

The "World-Island" was Mackinder's term for the combined Eurasian and African land masses.

Mackinder had two separate but related goals: (1) To maintain British global pre-eminence in the face of challenge from Germany, the country most likely to "rule" eastern Europe; and (2) in the process, resist changes to British society. After initially discounting the role of the United States, in 1943 he proposed a Midland Ocean Alliance with the United States to counter a possible alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union (USSR, or Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). Mackinder was the intellectual basis for Cold War strategists and proponents of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. His identification of the Heartland, roughly representing the territorial core of the Soviet Union, plus his emphasis on alliances, provided useful theoretical discussion for the Cold War policies of Western countries.

Mackinder's contribution is also a good illustration of two prevalent features of "classic" geopolitics. First, he used a limited and dubious Western-centric "theory" of history to claim an objective, neutral, and informed intellectual basis for what is, in fact, a very biased or "situated" view, with the aim of advocating and justifying the policy of one particular country; plus, he disseminated a catchy phrase to influence policy. Second, Mackinder's career is one of many examples of the crossover between academic or "formal" geopolitics and state policy or "practical" geopolitics: He was a successful academic, founding the Oxford School of Geography in 1899 and serving as director of the London School of Economics between 1903 and 1908, as well as being a Member of Parliament.

Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914) also walked in academic and policy circles. He rose to the rank of admiral in the US navy and was president, at different times, of both the Newport War College and the Naval War College. His two books *Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890) and *The Interest of America in Seapower* (1897) were important influences upon Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, as well as the German Kaiser Wilhelm II. Mahan made a historical distinction between land and sea powers that was to influence geopolitical thinkers throughout the Cold War. He believed that great powers were those countries whose insularity, coupled with an easily defensible coastline, provided a secure base from which, with the aid of a network of land bases, sea power could be developed and national and global power attained and enhanced. In addition, Mahan advocated an alliance with Britain to counterbalance Eurasian land powers. His influence upon Mackinder is clear, but Mahan's goal was to increase US global influence and projection of power, while avoiding conflict with the dominant British navy. Today, many Chinese scholars refer to Mahan to argue for the expansion of the Chinese navy.

The United States was not the only country which was eyeing Great Britain's supremacy. In Germany, politicians and intellectuals viewed Britain as an arrogant nation that had no "divine right" to its global power. In the words of Chancellor Bismarck, Germany deserved its "place in the sun." "German" geopolitics was defined by the work of two key individuals: Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) and Rudolf Kjellen (1864–1922). Similar to his English counterpart Mackinder, Ratzel was instrumental in establishing geography as an academic discipline. Furthermore, his *Politische Geographie* (1897) and his paper "Laws of the Spatial Growth of States" laid the foundations for *geopolitik*. However, it was the Swedish academic and parliamentarian Kjellen who developed Ratzel's idea and refined an organic view of the state. Following Ratzel's zoological notions, Kjellen propagated the idea that states were dynamic entities that "naturally" grew with greater strength. The

engine for growth was "culture." The more vigorous and "advanced" the culture, the more right it had to expand its "domain" or control more territory. Just as a strong pack of wolves could claim the hunting grounds of a neighbouring but weaker pack, the organic theory of the state asserted that it was more efficient and "natural" for advanced cultures to expand into the territory of lesser cultures. Of course, given the existing idea that cultures were contained within countries or states, this meant that borders were moveable or expandable. The catchphrase for these ideas was Ratzel's *Lebensraum*, or living space, meaning that "superior" (in the eye of the beholder) cultures deserved more territory as they would use the land in a better way. In practice, the ideas of Ratzel and Kjellen were aimed at increasing the size of the German state eastwards to create a large state that the "advanced" German culture warranted, in their minds, at the expense of the Slavs, who were deemed culturally inferior.

The German example illustrates a key feature of classic geopolitics: The classification of the earth and its peoples into a hierarchy that then justifies political actions such as empire, war, alliance, or neglect. This process of social classification operates in parallel with a regionalization of the world into good/bad, safe/dangerous, valuable/unimportant, peaceful/conflictual zones. Dubious "theories" of the history of the world and how it changes are used to "seeing" the dynamics of geopolitics as if from an objective position "above" the fray: Haraway's (1998) "God's-eye view." Of course, we should note the influential positions of these geopoliticians. Geopolitical theorists are far from being neutral, objective, and uninterested.

Before we move on to the Cold War period, we should briefly return to the German school of geopolitics to make a couple more points about classic geopolitics in general. As Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party began to rise to power in the 1920s, General Karl Haushofer (1869–1946) began to disseminate geopolitical ideas to the German public through the means of a magazine/journal titled *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (Journal of Geopolitics) and a weekly radio show. Haushofer was skilful in creating a geopolitical vision that unified two competing political camps in inter-war Germany: The landed aristocrats, who wanted to expand the borders of Germany eastwards towards Russia; and the owners of new industries such as chemicals and engineering, who desired the establishment of German colonies outside of Europe to gain access to raw materials and markets. This idea came together in his definition of pan-regions (large multi-latitude regions that were dominated by a particular "core" power). In this scenario, the United States dominated the Americas and Germany dominated Eurasia, while Britain controlled Africa. Haushofer's vision allowed for both territorial growth and colonial acquisition by Germany, without initiating conflict with Britain.

Haushofer blended a policy, and made the German public aware of foreign policy debates, that ran parallel with Hitler's surge in popularity and his vision of a "strong" Germany. However, Haushofer was not Hitler's "philosopher of Nazism," as *Life* magazine famously declared in 1939 (Ó Tuathail, 1996, p. 115). In fact, there was a significant difference between the views of Haushofer – with his emphasis on geographic or spatial relationships – and Hitler, whose racist view of the world shaped his geopolitical strategy. But the point is that Haushofer did use Hitler's surge to power as a means of advancing his own career. Haushofer's tragic tale (he ultimately committed suicide following questioning by the United States after the war regarding his role as a war criminal) has resonated throughout the community of political geographers ever since. Equating "geopolitics" with the Nazis tainted the sub-discipline of political geography, and it practically disappeared as a field of academic inquiry immediately after World War II.

BOX 1.2 GEODETERMINISM

> Geopolitics is the science of the conditioning of political processes by the earth. It is based on the broad foundation of geography, especially political geography, as the science of political space organisms and their structure. The essence of regions as comprehended from the geographical point of view provides the framework for geopolitics within which the course of political processes must proceed if they are to succeed in the long term. Though political leadership will occasionally reach beyond this frame, the earth dependency will always eventually exert its determining influence.
>
> (Haushofer et al., 1928, p. 27, quoted in O'Loughlin, 1994, pp. 112–113)

The quote from General Haushofer offers an example of the "geodeterminism" of classic geopolitics, or the way in which political actions are determined, as if inevitably, by geographic location or the environment. Such an approach can be used to justify foreign policy as it removes blame from decision-makers and places the onus on the geographic situation. In other words, if states are organisms, then Germany's twentieth-century conflicts with its neighbours are represented as the outcome of "the laws of nature," as Ratzel argued, and not decisions made by its rulers. In other words, geodeterminism allows for an argument that the aggressive policies of Nazi Germany were a "natural" process of territorial conflict rather than the outcome of Hitler's radical policies. A contemporary example is to explain Russia's behaviour towards its neighbours through its geodetermined role as a "continental power" rather than pointing the finger at the foreign policy choices of President Vladimir Putin.

However, there is another lesson to take from Nazi geopolitics too – and that is how it continues to be portrayed by academics. Many recent studies have contextualized and examined the content of Nazi geopolitics in depth, not to apologize for their connection to Hitler but to place the development of their theories within the contexts of global politics and the development of academic thought. The research shows there were indeed differences between their theories and Hitler's vision. Also, another outcome of this work is to show that Mackinder shared some of the academic baggage of the German geopoliticians. The predominance of biological analogies in social science at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries meant that Mackinder and the German school were influenced by ideas that equated society with a dynamic organism. The key difference was that Mackinder was writing from, and for, a position of British naval strength, while the Germans were trying to challenge that power through continental alliances and conflicts with a wary and envious eye on British sea power.

Post-World War II there existed an interesting irony: The vilification of "geopolitics" as a Nazi enterprise resulted in its virtual disappearance from the academic scene. On the other hand, as the United States began to develop its role as post-war world power it generated geopolitical strategic views that guided and justified its actions. Prior to World War II, Isaiah Bowman (1878–1956), onetime president of the Association of American Geographers, offered a pragmatic approach to the United States' global role, and was a key consultant to the government, most notably at the Treaty of Versailles negotiations at the end of World War I. Nicholas Spykman (1893–1943), a professor of International Relations at Yale University, noted the United States' rise to power and argued that it now needed to practice balance of power diplomacy, as the European

powers had traditionally done. Similar to previous geopoliticians, Spykman offered a grandiose division of the world: The Old World consisting of the Eurasian continent, Africa, and Australia; and the New World of the Americas. The United States dominated the latter sphere, while the Old World, traditionally fragmented between powers, could, if united, challenge the United States. Spykman proposed an active, non-isolationist US foreign policy to construct and maintain a balance of power in the "Old World" in order to prevent a challenge to the United States. Spykman identified the "Rimland," following Mackinder's "inner crescent," as the key geopolitical arena. In contrast to the calls for greater global intervention, Major Alexander P. de Seversky (1894–1974) proposed a more isolationist and defensive stance. His theory is notable for its emphasis upon the polar regions as a new zone of conflict, using maps with a polar projection to show the geographical proximity of the United States and Soviet Union, and the importance of air power.

Increasingly, US geopolitical views took the form of government policy statements that, in the absence of academic endeavours, assumed the status of "theories," and hence gained an authority as if they were objective "truths." First came George Kennan's (1904–2005) call for containment, then NSC-68's call for a global conflict against communism, supported by the dubious "domino theory." These geostrategic policy statements will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3. In the relative absence of academic engagement with the topic, geopolitical theories were constructed within policy circles, and, despite the global role of the United States, a limited perspective remained. George Kennan, for example, is identified as a "man of the North [of the globe]" who identified the Third World as "a foreign space, wholly lacking in allure and best left to its own, no doubt, tragic fate." Kennan, in the tradition of his academic predecessors, was also eager to classify the world into regions with political meaning, defining a maritime trading world (the West) and a despotic xenophobic East.

Perhaps, in hindsight, the lack of policy-oriented geopolitical work in the academic world provided room for the critical understandings of geopolitics that now dominate the field. With the exception of Saul Cohen's (1963) attempt to provide an informed regionalization of the world to counter the blanket and ageographical claims of NSC-68, geographers were largely silent about the grand strategy of inter-state politics. However, with the publication of György Konrád's *Antipolitics* (1984), in accordance with other theoretical developments in social science thinking and public dissent over the nuclear policies of Ronald Reagan, geographers found a voice that produced the field of "critical geopolitics" as well as broader systemic theories about international politics (see Chapter 8). Both of these approaches, though very different in their content and theoretical frameworks, offered critical analysis of policy, rather than being a support for government policy.

BOX 1.3 WESTERN-CENTRISM AND "GEOPOLITICAL TRADITIONS"

Critical engagement with the history of geopolitics has focused on the scholars and practitioners in European countries and the United States. This is unsurprising and, to some extent, justifiable given the role of Mackinder, Ratzel, and Haushofer in creating and promoting modern geopolitics. However, the form of geopolitics these writers created, along with Mahan, was deemed not only applicable but a strategic necessity in many other countries. Notably, Japan, as part of the construction of an Asian empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, created its own

geopolitical framework. Specifically, Japanese geopoliticians theorized Manchuria as a geopolitical region to justify Japanese imperial expansion (Narangoa, 2004).

The key features of classical geopolitics framed the content of theories created in non-Western contexts, but the particular circumstances of those contexts produced nuances and different emphases. The idea of "geopolitical traditions" (Dodds and Atkinson, 2000) is a useful way to explore the combination of consistent dominant themes and specifics of a historical-geographical context in geopolitical thinking. A collection of essays by Dodds and Atkinson (2000) was a significant contribution in forcing recognition of non-Western forms of geopolitics. The second edition of the *Geopolitical Reader* highlighted a more diverse range of statements made from within the Soviet Union. The particular forms of Brazilian and South African geopolitics have also been noted.

Increasingly, researchers are investigating non-Western geopolitics, both contemporary and historic. Though the "founding fathers" of modern geopolitics may always give a Western-centric bias to the study of the history of geopolitics, this bias is being diluted to some degree. Furthermore, the importance of ongoing geopolitics in South and East Asia, the Middle East, and Africa will mean that contemporary analysis will, to some degree, ensure a more global coverage.

Though it is hard to summarize the diversity of these approaches, there is one important commonality: The study of geopolitics is no longer state-centric. Geopolitical knowledge is now understood and critiqued as being "situated knowledge." Though this observation has been used to claim the relevance of the perspectives and actions of contemporary marginalized groups, it may still be used to consider the thoughts of the theoreticians we have just discussed, whose concern was geopolitical states*man*ship. In other words, geopolitical theoreticians constructed their frameworks within particular political contexts and within particular academic debates that were influential at the time, the latter sometimes called *paradigms*.

This brief history is intended to introduce you to the role and content of "classic" geopolitics and the growth of alternative geopolitical frameworks. A word of caution: As noted in Box 1.3, this history is Eurocentric. I urge the reader to use the *Dictionary of Geopolitics* (O'Loughlin, 1994) to see how thought in countries such as Japan and Brazil reflect and differ from those discussed above. Japan, for example, had its own debate about the merits of the German school of geopolitics, with the ideas of Ratzel and Kjellen being popular amongst Tokyo journalists but less so within academic circles.

Current geographical analysis aims to contextualize the actions of particular countries or states within their historical and geographical settings. For example, the decisions made by a particular government are understood through the current situation in the world as a whole. It is this approach that guides most of the content of this book. Critical geopolitics "unpacked" the state by illustrating that it is impossible to separate "domestic" and "foreign" spheres, that non-state actors – such as multinational companies and non-governmental organizations (and a variety of protest groups and movements for the rights of indigenous peoples, minorities, women, and calling for fair trade, the protection of the environment, etc.) – play a key role in global politics.

The bottom line: *Academic* geopolitics is no longer exclusively the preserve of a privileged male elite who used the authority of their academic position to frame policy for a particular country. Though these publications still exist, most academics who say they study geopolitics are describing the situation of those who are marginalized and

advocating a change in their situation. Study of the state is often essential, but is just one component of a complicated world – rather than a political unit with the freedom to act as the theory suggests it should in a simplified and understandable world. Having said that, most people don't learn about academic geopolitics. The geopolitics they do come across is, most likely, of the classical variety. The War on Terror led to a resurgence of classical geopolitics. Tensions between China and the United States and its allies mean that it has become impossible to avoid.

The return of classic geopolitics

There is a constant stream of books defining China as a threat, for example Graham Allison's (2018) *Destined for War* and Rory Medcalf's (2020) *Indo-Pacific Empire.* These books are an echo of publications about 30 years ago foreseeing *The Coming War with Japan* (Friedman and Lebard, 1991) – note that there is no question mark in the title, which is evidence of the certainty in classic geopolitical claims. Doesn't the idea of an imminent war with Japan sound silly now? And yet, new threats to the existence of countries are continually identified and simple prescriptions offered. The recent crop of classical geopolitics thinking emerged after the Cold War. For example, Robert Kaplan has been prolific in finding dangers across the world that must be addressed – from *The Coming Anarchy* (Kaplan, 2001) emerging from the "Third World" in general, to the specific threat of China and the existence of a geopolitical risk called *Asia's Cauldron* (Kaplan, 2014). Fears of radical Islam have also been grounds for fear and calls to action, apparently – for example, see *Rise of ISIS: A Threat We Can't Ignore* (Sekulow, 2014).

These contemporary works reflect the features of classic geopolitics identified in Table 1.1. They are written by authors in positions of privilege in terms of race, gender, and membership of the political-cultural elite. They are written from a Western perspective and are driven by particular national and political agendas. They label and simplify the world and provide straightforward policy prescriptions as if they are "common sense." Contemporary classic geopolitics promotes an understanding of a competitive and dangerous world that requires a strong military and a global politics of "us" versus "them." This was the same purpose of the European theorists promoting their own national agendas in the years leading up to World Wars I and II. Hence, it is not surprising that critical geopolitics scholars say we should be critical of contemporary classic geopolitics and find new ways of understanding the world and, hopefully, a more peaceful engagement with humanity.

Do not be fooled by the prevalence of "critical geopolitics" in the academy. Bookshops are continually replenished by volumes purporting to "know" everything about "Islam," "terrorists," and a variety of imminent or "coming wars," especially with China. Some of these volumes are quite academic, and others more popular. They all share the arrogance of claiming to be able to predict the future and, hence, are assured about what policies should be adopted. "Classic" geopolitics lives, but now it must contend with an increasingly vigorous and confident "critical geopolitics." In other words, geopolitics is itself a venue and practice of politics (Mamadouh, 1998).

It's one thing to be critical of classical geopolitics. It's more useful to gain an understanding of geopolitics that helps us make sense of the world outside of narrow national security goals, and provides a guide to act within the world, without being held captive by the ideas of classical geopolitics. That's what this book aims to do: Free you from the dominant language of classical geopolitics and help you understand the world as a mutual construction of geography and politics.

An initial definition of geopolitics

Geopolitics, for the purposes of this book, can be defined as the *struggle over the control of geographical entities with an international and global dimension, and the use of such geographical entities for political advantage*. I offer this definition to keep this book focused on particular forms of geopolitical conflicts and particular geographies. We will focus on the international and global aspects of geopolitics. Though this is necessarily exclusive, I also encourage you to explore other forms of geopolitics. Specifically, we will look at

- the way countries (we will later call them *states*) interact with each other;
- the way countries are made through the politics of nationalism;
- how the geographical extent of countries is defined and contested through boundary politics;
- the geopolitics of actors other than countries (such as social movements and terrorist groups) who operate in the world through a geography of networks;
- how state and non-state geopolitical actors operate through territorial and network strategies;
- how state and non-state actors make decisions in a global context of environmental change;
- how we can interpret the choices of geopolitical actors within an overarching geopolitical structure.

Organization of the book

In Chapter 2 we introduce and define geopolitics as part of human geography. The book ends with a discussion of the complexity, or "messiness," of geopolitical conflicts given the multiplicity of structures and the multiple identities and roles of agents. The text assumes no familiarity with geopolitical terms and no prior knowledge of conflicts, past or present. As you progress through the book, try to make your own understanding of geopolitics more sophisticated by exploring how the different structures and agents introduced in successive chapters interact with one another.

Here are two ways of thinking about how the book is organized to help you develop your understanding step by step.

First, we'll talk about the logic that connects one chapter to the next, simplified in Figure 1.2. We begin with the understanding of human geography as the study of the mutual construction of society and space, and use this understanding to define geopolitics. We also note that geopolitics is both practice (actions such as going to war, enforcing sanctions, forming alliances, constructing peace, etc.) and representation (using words and symbols to justify practices such as describing others as "threats" and describing one's own actions as being for the good of all). We understand the geopolitics as a set of possible actions (agency) within particular structures (or geographic and historic contexts). Agency is one of the concepts I will introduce you to. For right now, just think of it as the decisions and actions you see reported in the news. For example, a country buying military equipment from another country, or a terrorist group committing an attack, are both actions or agency.

That's a lot of work for Chapter 2! But once we have covered these ideas, we progress through the book by looking at different forms of agency within different structures. In Chapters 3 and 4, we start with two related forms of agency: (1) The practice of geopolitical codes, and (2) making and consuming the representations to justify these practices.

| Geopolitics as Agency in Structures (Chapter 2) | → | Geopolitical Codes as Agency (Chapter 3) | → | Representing Geopolitical Codes (Chapter 4) |

| States as Geopolitical Agents (Chapter 5) | → | Territorial and Network Geopolitical Agency (Chapters 6 and 7) | → | The Global Geopolitical Structure (Chapter 8) |

| The Environment as Structure Requiring New Types of Agency (Chapter 9) | → | Many Types of Agency and Structures: Geopolitical "Messiness" (Chapter 10) |

Figure 1.2 The logic connecting one chapter to the next.

Then, in Chapter 5, we go into more detail about the nature of countries, the very important geopolitical agents. We define states, nations, and nation-states and the key geopolitical practice of nationalism, or the creation of the national identity as a taken-for-granted geopolitical representation. But geopolitics is not just about states; it is the interaction of geographies of territory and networks. Chapter 6 discusses these practices of creating borders and Chapter 7 talks of the network geopolitics of transnational social movements, terrorism, and economic connections.

After discussing agency and agents, it's time to turn to structures. In Chapter 8, we look at the big picture of global geopolitical patterns, and how they form the contexts for countries and other agents as they plan what they can and cannot do (or how they limit their agency).

Chapter 9 discusses the environment as a structure which increasingly defines geopolitical agency.

Each chapter in the book focuses on a form of agency (Chapters 3 through 7) or a type of structure (Chapters 8 and 9). But, of course, the real world is very complex, and geopolitics is a "messiness" of many forms of agency operating within different structures all at the same time. Chapter 10 introduces this messiness or complexity, with the belief that you are now capable of first identifying different forms of geopolitical agency and structure, and then seeing how they interact.

Phew, that seems challenging. But don't worry, we'll go through it step by step. First, we will explain human geography and how it helps us come up with a definition of geopolitics. Then we'll introduce different geopolitical practices and representations one by one, before thinking about the structures of the environment and the global geopolitical picture.

The second way to help you through the book is by highlighting what geopolitical practices and representations we concentrate on in each chapter (see Table 1.2). You may

Table 1.2 *Geopolitical practices and representations in each chapter*

	Practice	Representation
Chapter 3	Geopolitical codes	
Chapter 4		Making representations
		Consuming representations
		Orientalism
Chapter 5	Bottom-up nationalism	National "myths"
	Top-down nationalism	Banal nationalism
	Militarism	Gendering nationalism
Chapter 6	Making territories	Insiders/outsiders
	Boundary conflicts	Borderlands
	Peaceful boundaries	
Chapter 7	Making networks	Flows as threats
	Transnational social movements	Flows as opportunities
	Terrorism	
Chapter 8	Anthropogenic change	Causes of climate change
	Resiliency	Environmental justice
	Migration	
Chapter 9	Practices of world leadership	Creating "threats"
	Practices of followship	Justifying leadership
	Challengers	
	Alliances	

not know all these terms now; that's OK, as I don't expect you to. But you can refer back to this table and Figure 1.2 as you go through the book to see where you are in the grand scheme of things. Chapters 2 and 3 separate out geopolitical practice by talking first of geopolitical codes and then how they are justified. The rest of the chapters ask you to think about both practice and representation.

My goal is to help you understand our complex, wonderful, and sometimes scary world. I want you to be able to follow current affairs and have a framework, or a conceptual toolkit, to help you understand it. To that end, be engaged with quality newspaper and other media reports of current events. Use the text and the current events to (1) identify the separate structures and agents and then (2) see how they are related to each other. In other words, allow yourself to explore the complexity of geopolitics as you work through the book and become familiar with a growing number of structures and agents.

ACTIVITY: USING THE CONCEPTS IN THE BOOK TO MAKE SENSE OF THE NEWS

I run a website called the Aggies Geopolitical Observatory (https://chass.usu.edu/aggiesgo/). The short and accessible essays on this website are written by Utah State University students who learned about geopolitics by reading this book. In other words, they're just like you! The idea behind the website is that by using the concepts in this book, you can get a better understanding of news stories on global politics. Browse through the essays and think about how concepts help you make sense of complicated issues. As you move through the chapters of the book and become familiar with more and more concepts, you can think about how you'd write similar essays.

Having read this chapter you will be able to:

- Define geopolitics;
- Understand the connection between geopolitics and human geography;
- Consider the history of geopolitics;
- Distinguish between classical, critical, and feminist geopolitics;
- Comprehend the logic of the sequence of chapters.

Further reading

Dodds, K. (2019) *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction*, 3rd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
An accessible use of critical geopolitics to explore the history of classical geopolitics and how representations are an important part of how the current world is described to justify foreign policy.

Mamadouh, V. (2005) "Geography and war, geographers and peace," in C. Flint (ed.) *The Geography of War and Peace*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 26–60.
Outlines the uneasy historic relationship between geographers and state governments as the meaning and practice of geopolitics have changed.

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This embraces the idea of the Anthropocene and how global geopolitics intersects with geopolitics of territories and boundaries. It is written by one of the most prominent scholars of environmental geopolitics.

O'Lear, S. (2018) Environmental Geopolitics, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
This short and accessible book provides a pathway to exploring all forms of environmental geopolitics including climate change, resource conflicts, and the geography of human–environment relations.

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This report provides case studies and analysis to illustrate how local and regional power relations intersect with global environmental change to create everyday political realities for women. It illustrates how marginalized people are geopolitical agents, often bearing the brunt of climate change, but with the capacity for action.

Yergin, D. (2020) The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations, New York: Penguin Press.
Written by a leading expert on energy geopolitics, this book considers the emerging geopolitics of global supply and demand for oil, and the growing importance of renewable energy sources.

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A collection of essays that discusses a broad range of resources and environmental issues and makes connections between the actions of people and organizations in specific places across the globe with global

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Messy geopolitics

The reading listed at the end of Chapter 1 as more detailed and sophisticated investigations of geopolitics should be reviewed. It will provide different interpretations and topical concentrations that will be accessible after reading this book.

Lamb, C. (2020) Our Bodies, Their Battlefield, New York: Scribner.

A discussion of the widespread use of rape in warfare, the role of patriarchy, and how women have developed strategies of resilience and resistance.

Adolf, A. (2009) Peace: A World History, Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press.

A thought-provoking definition of peace, linking a variety of scales and processes and a compelling analysis of how peace activism has proven effective across the course of human history.

Bose, S. (2003) Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Provides an understanding of a long-running conflict that has broader regional implications.

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Provides a framework for identifying and interpreting the role of religion in conflict.

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An accessible analysis of the geopolitical contexts that have led to the formation of peace movements across history, and the changing geographic strategies they have adopted.

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