

Igor Okunev, 2021

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

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Who has the exact sovereignty to every particular piece of territory, water or air space on our planet? What is the status and the relationship between the states, political entities, dependent territories, international organizations and supranational unions? What is the true meaning of the term's territorial identity, spatial identity and the political geography? It is with these questions that Igor Okunev opens his passionate plea of why we should care about the geo-politics or Political Geography as he names it. Contrary to popular belief, the author argues, "the spatiality of politics is determined by factors beyond objective ones."

In that sense, Igor Okunev does an excellent job providing a solid introduction to geopolitics theory. He does so in a way that enables the reader to use the spatial analysis techniques for determination of patterns of different political phenomena. In addition, Okunev's analysis is sprinkled with many practical and real cases in the history of international relations and the modern world. His examples range from so called quasi states, failed states, or divides states to international and internationalized entities.

One might claim that this book, to a small extent, suffers from Eastern-centrism. While this may be true, it might actually be considered a positive element, since most of the literature on this topic is from the west and is clearly western-centric in its approach. So Okunev's book can be beneficial for a western nation's students, benefiting them with a different perspective on the subject. One of the shortcomings of the book to be considered is the fact that it does not contain any footnotes. However, overall this does not reduce the general quality of the body of this book.

Political Geography by Igor Okunev is a lengthy book published in 2021 by the Peter Lang publisher based in Belgium. The book is composed by 12 chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the subject of political geography, its levels, principals, elements, research methods and sub disciplines. The second chapter deals with the different global geopolitical systems, attempting to define terms such as heartland, great and regional powers, different civilizations, and macro and meso regions. A portion of Okunev's effort centers the term "globalization" or as the author puts it "global Westernization". In chapter three, different integration groups are presented starting from purely theoretical and moving to the practical. Chapter four deals

with the states, while chapters five and six explore the concept of state territory and its composition. In chapter seven, the book explores the questions and dilemmas connected with different international entities, while chapter eight takes on the concept of dependent territories, or as the author puts it “[t]he extension of states beyond the confines of the territory where their peoples live gives rise to dependent territories.” In chapter nine, the author interestingly takes up questions of the capitals and political centers from a geopolitical perspective. Questions concerning borders and cleavages are dealt with in chapter 10, regions and municipalities in chapter 11 and spatial identity in chapter 12. Finally lists of political and geographical names and abbreviations are presented as well as a list of figures and tables.

This book provides students a useful point of departure concerning geo-politics and international relations as well as International public law. It also offers some useful answers to the current political and military crises in Eurasia, not just for students but also advanced researchers.

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