

**Book Review/Kitap Tanıtımı**

**Tim Marshall, The Power of Geography: Ten Maps That Reveal The Future of Our World, London: Elliott and Thompson, 2021**

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**Makale Gönderim Tarihi**

25.01.2024

**Makale Kabul Tarihi**

15.04.2024

**Atıf Bilgisi/Reference Information**

**Chicago:** Akyildiz, S., ""Book Review/Kitap Tanıtımı: Tim Marshall, The Power of Geography: Ten Maps That Reveal The Future of Our World, London: Elliott and Thompson, 2021", *Vakanüvis-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 9/ Özel Sayı: Dr. Selma Pehlivan'a Armağan (2024): 2510-2514.

**APA:** Akyildiz, S. (2024). Book Review/Kitap Tanıtımı: Tim Marshall, The Power of Geography: Ten Maps That Reveal The Future of Our World, London: Elliott and Thompson, 2021. *Vakanüvis-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 9 (Özel Sayı: Dr. Selma Pehlivan'a Armağan), 2510-2514.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the bi-polar model of world power consisting, on the one hand, of capitalist-democratic Western nations, headed by the United States, and, on the other hand, the Marxist-Leninist world, defined by the USSR, broke up, giving the U.S. for a while a hegemonic position. Today, once more, the political power model is changing. Two powers are dominant: the neoliberal United States and China's communist-capitalist model. However, a multipolar model is emerging; throughout modern history, middle-ranking states have allied with stronger powers, seeking economic and military advantage to support their agendas. Tim

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Marshall says geopolitics is about alliances, and the big and medium-sized powers need each other (p. xiii).

A book explaining key examples of these middle-ranking countries in a contemporary context would be a helpful tool in explaining how states operate. If analysis considers the factors of geography and political power, the book would need to look at each society and incorporate nation-state building and strategic thinking about territorial defence for each example. One book that attempts this wide-ranging study is *The Power of Geography: Ten Maps That Reveal The Future of Our World* by Marshall (2021). In analysing the near future, he writes that concepts like 'Cold War' and 'Western' might not adequately explain the new realities. He explores how rivers, seas, mountains, and concrete shape and influence geopolitics. The importance of geography and politics, location, natural resources, and neighbours is highlighted. Despite technology, the internet, and globalisation, Marshall argues that geography is still critical.

Marshall is qualified to write about the subject, with more than 25 years of reporting foreign affairs for Sky News, the BBC and LBC; he has reported on all the major war and conflict news stories since his time in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. The concept behind his book *Prisoners of Geography* (2015) is continued in his latest book. Marshall's research methods in *The Power of Geography* include memoirs, academic texts, government documents, and news reports.

The book contains ten chapters, nine devoted to nation-states; for each case study, the structure is the following: geographical information, defence of national territory, a summary of ancient, medieval, and modern history, and current affairs. The countries investigated are Australia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, The United Kingdom, Greece, Türkiye, The Sahel, Ethiopia, and Spain. Chapter Ten ('Space') examines the zone above and surrounding Planet Earth and competing interests in its possibilities and uses from the big and medium-sized nation-states for communication and military purposes.

Chapter One discusses Australia's strategic position in the middle of the Indo-Pacific economy and transport network. The re-emerging superpower of China is situated to its north and expanding its sphere of influence southwards. Australia is important because it is a Western

country, democratic and with significant natural resources. The country's mutually beneficial yet fraught economic and political relationship with China is reviewed. However, its growing population is confined to the coasts, which are habitable zones, and ecological issues, like water shortage and extreme heat and bushfires, afflict the country. In explaining Australia's history, Marshall discusses colonial (settler) acts of ethnic cleansing and genocide targeting the indigenous Aboriginal peoples but does not refer to such acts by these terms.

The chapter on Iran analyses the different socio-political groups and actors that might influence change in that country; Marshall shows he is very aware of the nuances and complexities of Iranian domestic and foreign politics. However, Marshall only briefly mentions the sophisticated culture of Iran – and its positive legacy in Turkiye, the Middle East, India and Europe – and a reader new to the country might not pick up that the Persian (Iranian) peoples successfully resisted the Roman Empire and were one of a few countries not to have been colonised by a Western power. Chapter Three (Saudi Arabia) highlights the country's regions, its Shi'as, human rights, economic and water problems, and the First World War origins of the state. Marshall does not comment on today's British armaments sales to Riyadh. The United Kingdom section (Chapter Four) discusses political and military history (specifically, nation-state and empire-building) and notes the successful and incomplete invasions of Britain and how these affected the identities of the English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish. London's 'special relationship' with the United States is highlighted, as is the post-Brexit quest for Britain's place in the world. Also, the dilemma of Scotland's independence on England's national defence is mentioned. Marshall does not discuss class and income inequality, negative ethnic stereotyping, off-shore tax havens, or settler colonial legacy in Hong Kong or Palestine.

Chapter Five concentrates on Greece's historical attempts to defend it from outsiders, its mountainous terrain, its maritime heritage, the regional offshore gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean and who gets access to them, its strategic position for NATO, and migrants and refugees entering Europe. Chapter Six investigates Turkiye. Marshall comments on the country's geography for defensive and economic

purposes, its ability to connect European and Asian societies, its Ottoman and First World War legacy, and its NATO relations. Marshall argues, *'In the multipolar world, Turkey is a major player among the numerous actors that have undermined the post-Second World War order'* (p. 214). He does not comment on Türkiye's youthful and energetic urban milieu, Türkiye's rich hybrid culture, its popularity among Westerners as a tourist destination, or the success of people with Turkish heritage living across the globe.

Chapter Seven explains how the African Sahel region – stretching from the Atlantic coast to the Red Sea – is experiencing climate change, weak governments and economic problems, interethnic tensions, politically hardline Muslim groups fighting Western special forces, foreign interest in its mines, and its youth migrating to Europe. Chapter Eight is about Ethiopia and looks at its mountainous terrain, fertile lowlands, hydroelectric power production (that threatens Egypt's water supply), periodic droughts and famines, internal ethnic conflicts (among its 110 million population), foreign investment (from China and Türkiye), and whether it can become a regional peacemaker and source of stability. Notably, effective nation-state building and good governance are required. Chapter Nine considers Spain's mountainous and dry terrain and increasing droughts; despite the Catholic Church and Franco's fascist era, it has never been a strong centralised state with several regional identities and languages. Could this lead to regional independence in the future? The section on its history is detailed and includes the 800-year Muslim rule in the south and the Spanish colonisation of South America. Other topics include migration, refugees, renewable energies, and the Spanish economy.

The book's strength is Marshall's analysis of how geography impacts politics and how things might play out. However, the weakness of argumentation is that the reader does not hear voices from non-Western traditions, giving an alternative viewpoint. Notwithstanding, the book is rich in detail, facts, and accounts, and the overall argumentation benefits from his wry observations. Importantly, Marshall considers different outcomes for actions taken by the dominant world powers and how this impacts the middle-ranking powers. The only two new countries studied are Australia and Saudi

Arabia, while all the others are old nations or former empires seeking to reimagine themselves for the twenty-first century. The book is well-crafted, explaining the present world and future challenges and threats. The work is recommended for general readers and first-year university students seeking information and commentary about specific countries and regions.