



# Unit 4: Political Patterns & Processes

▼ Class

Human Geography

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## 4.1 — Introduction to Political Geography

Global forces, wars, changing ideas, economics & self-governance have changed the landscape since empires & kingdoms.

- **Political Geography:** the study of the ways in which the world is organized as a reflection of the power that different groups hold over territory

Political maps express different representations of the world.

## The Structure of the Contemporary Political Map

**Country:** any political entity that is independent from the control of any other entity

## Independent States as Building Blocks

**State:** the largest political unit

- Formal term for a country

States must ...

- have a defined boundary
- contain a permanent population
- maintain sovereignty over its domestic and international affairs
- be recognized by other states

The United States recognizes **195 states** of those criteria.

## Sovereignty

**Sovereignty:** the power of a political unit (or government) to rule over its own affairs

- States must have sovereignty over their own land

**Territory:** a political entity with defined borders that have been legally-established

Most states are **multinational** (made up of several ethnicities and nationalities).

## Types of Political Entities

**Nation:** a group of people with ...

- a common cultural heritage
- a set of beliefs/values that unify them
- a traditional claim to a particular space as their homeland
- a desire to establish their own state or express self-rule

A nation of people who fulfill qualifications of a state form a **nation-state**.

**Multinational State:** a country that contains more than one nation

- Most countries contain a dominant nation and other smaller ones

**Autonomous Region:** a defined area within a state with a high degree of self-government and freedom from its parent state

- States can grant the authority to specific distinct areas
- **Semi-Autonomous Region:** a state that has a high degree of, but not complete self-rule

**Stateless Nation:** a cultural group with no independent political entity

- More nations than states exist → *stateless nations*

**Multistate Nation** → a nation has a state of its own but stretches across borders of other states

## 4.2 — Political Processes

### Evolution of the Contemporary Political Map

#### The Modern Nation-State Concept

For most of European history, there was **NO RELATION** between the language people and the state they were in.

- The idea of nation-states was introduced in the 1700s

## Forces Unifying & Separating Countries

**Nationalism:** a nation's desire to create and maintain a state on its own

- An example of a *centripetal force*
- **Centrifugal forces** → opposite of centripetal forces
  - Forces that divide people

## Imperialism & Colonialism

**Imperialism** → a variety of ways to influence another country or group of people by direct conquest, economic control, or cultural dominance

- **Colonialism:** a type of *imperialism* in which people move into and settle on the land of another country

Early colonialism was inspired by *God, gold, and glory*.

- Religious influence
- Economic wealth from exploiting land & labor
- Political power

Europeans justified their conquests through the legal concept of *terra nullius* (land belonging to none).

- Allowed them to lawfully seize "*uncivilized*" land

**Berlin Conference** → major European empires made claim to land in Africa

- Shows no regard to cultural differences in Africa

## Geopolitical Forces Affecting Today's Map

### Modern Movements for Colonial Independence

People in colonies can wish for **self-determination**.

- **Self-Determination:** the right to choose their own sovereign government without external influence
- **Decolonization:** the undoing of colonization

### Civil Wars in the Developing World

**Genocide:** organized mass killings

- Rwandan genocide in 1994 (fight between Hutus and Tutsis)

### The Cold War & Devolution

**Cold War:** a period of diplomatic, political & military rivalry between the United Nations and the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

- Started at the end of WWII unless the collapse of the Berlin Wall

Countries were occupied by the Soviet army.

- Became Soviet **satellite states** (states dominated by another politically and economically)

### The Collapse of Communism

Once the Soviet Union collapsed, the 15 republics under it were granted sovereignty.

- **Devolution:** the process in which one or more regions were given increased autonomy by their central political unit

### Newly-Independent States

1990 → 15 new states from the Soviet Union's collapse

- Czechoslovakia → the Czech Republic & Slovakia (*Velvet Divorce*)

There were many *ethnic tensions* as Yugoslavia divided into separate states.

## Changes in the Balance of Power

More countries joined NATO to oppose Soviet military power.

- Balance of power (economic, political & military) shifted to the Western world

Russia set its sight on Crimea (*semiautonomous region* in Ukraine) in 2014.

# 4.3 — Political Power & Territoriality

## Concepts of Power & Territoriality

**Geopolitics:** the study of the effects of geography on politics and relations among states

- Relates to trade, resource management, and the environment on a global scale
- **Territoriality:** a willingness by a person or a group of people to defend the space they claim

## Territoriality Connects Culture & Economy

Many states will disagree on the boundaries.

- *Religious conflicts* → Ex. Shia & Sunni Muslims
- *Economic conflicts* → Ex. Disputes over islands in the South China Sea
  - Petroleum reserves, Fishing grounds, International shipping lanes

## Neocolonialism

Major decolonization occurred after World WarII.

- *Economic independence* → new nations relied on European manufactured goods

**Neocolonialism:** the continued economic and political influence exerted by former colonial powers over former colonies

- *Modern globalization* → supranational organization & NGOs

## Choke Points

**Choke Point:** a place of physical congestion between wider regions of movement and interaction

- The most vital choke points today are predominantly water-based

Crimea is a major economic and political benefit to Russia.

- Russia has claimed Crimea despite protest from Ukraine and most of the international community

## 4.4 — Defining Political Boundaries

The most common type of map used is a **reference map**.

- Physical and cultural features are shown

**Physical Geographic Boundaries:** natural barriers between areas

**Cultural Boundaries:** boundaries that divide people according to linguistic, religious, ethnic, or cultural divisions

## Classifications of Boundaries



## Genetic Classification of Boundaries

- Classification of boundaries based on how they were generated

**Antecedent Boundary** → preceded the development of the cultural landscape

- Typically based on physical features

**Subsequent Boundary** → created while the cultural landscape is evolving

- Subject to change over time
- **Ethnographic** (related to cultural phenomena) in nature

**Superimposed Boundary** → drawn by outside powers and ignores cultural patterns

- Ex. **Berlin Conference** (planned European colonization of Africa)
- **Landlocked States**: states without territory connected to an ocean

**Relic Boundary** → abandoned for political boundaries

- Still evident on the cultural landscape

## Geometric & Consequent Boundaries

**Geometric Boundary** → straight line/arc that doesn't follow physical features

- Mostly fall upon lines of latitude & longitude

**Consequent Boundary**: a type of *subsequent boundary* that takes existing cultural or physical landscapes into account

- **Cultural Consequent Boundary**: a boundary that is drawn taking language, ethnicity, religion, and cultural traits into account
- **Physical Consequent Boundary**: a boundary that uses already-existing natural features to divide a territory

## Protection of Boundaries

**Open Boundary**: an unguarded boundary that people can cross easily

- Little or no political intervention

- Between countries with friendly relations

**Militarized Boundary:** a boundary that is heavily guarded and discourages crossing

## 4.5 — The Function of Political Boundaries

Boundaries are **NOT ONLY ON THE EARTH'S SURFACE**

- Vertical planes to separate spaces

### International & Internal Boundaries

Boundaries → where one political entity begins and another ends

- Helps to distinguish between territories

Disagreements in boundaries create conflict.

### Formation of Boundaries

Crossing a boundary → some rules and expectations change

- **Defined Boundary:** a boundary established by a legal document that divides one entity from another (invisible line)
- **Delimited Boundary:** a boundary drawn on a map by a cartographer to show the limits of a space
- **Demarcated Boundary:** a boundary identified by physical objects placed on the landscape

**Informal Boundaries** → marking spheres of influence of powerful countries

- Exist at multiple scales

## International Boundary Disputes

- **Definitional Boundary Disputes** → when two or more parties disagree over how to interpret the legal documents/maps that identify the boundary
- **Locational / Territorial Boundary Disputes** → when two or more parties disagree on where a boundary should be, is mapped, or demarcated

**Irredentism:** a type of expansionism when one country seeks to annex territory where it has cultural ties to part of the population or historical claims to the land

- **Operational / Functional Boundary Disputes** → when two or more parties disagree on how the boundary functions
- **Allocational / Resource Boundary Disputes** → when two or more parties disagree on how boundaries separate natural resources
  - Boundaries serve as vertical planes for natural resources

## Demarcation and Functions of Boundaries

**Demarcation:** how a border is labeled on the physical landscape (ex. fences, walls, signs)

- Most borders do not need demarcation due to peaceful relations or tough terrain
- Demarcation can be very expensive

**Administered Boundary** → how a boundary will be maintained, how a boundary will function, what goods & people can cross the boundary

**Controlled Boundary:** a boundary with checkpoints where a passport or visa are required to enter the country

- Allows some people & goods to enter the country and denies others

**Antecedent Boundary:** a boundary established before many people settle in an area

**Subsequent Boundary:** a boundary drawn in an area that has been settled by people where cultural landscapes already exist or are in the process of being established

- **Consequent Boundary:** a type of subsequent boundary that takes into account the differences that exist within a cultural landscape

**Superimposed Boundaries:** boundaries drawn over existing accepted borders

**Geometric Boundaries:** perfectly straight boundaries that are mathematical (*usually* follow lines of latitude and longitude)

**Relics:** former boundaries that once existed but no longer have an official function

## **Exclaves & Enclaves**

**Exclaves:** territories that are part of a state, yet geographically-separated from the main state by one or more countries

- May help to reunite ethnic groups with the main country
  - Challenges in communication and transportation

**Political Enclaves:** states, territories, or parts of a state or territory that are completely surrounded by the territory of another state

- Benefits: autonomy, national identity, self-rule
- Challenges: maintaining positive relationships with the surrounding country and transportation accessibility

Indian reservations can be considered enclaves with tribal sovereignty as independent nations.

- Informal ethnic enclaves are at the local level

## The Effects of Boundaries

### Shatterbelts

**Shatterbelt:** a place located between two very different and contentious regions

- Under consistent stress and aggression

### Language & Religion

Language changes as people within different boundaries form dialects.

## The Law of the Sea

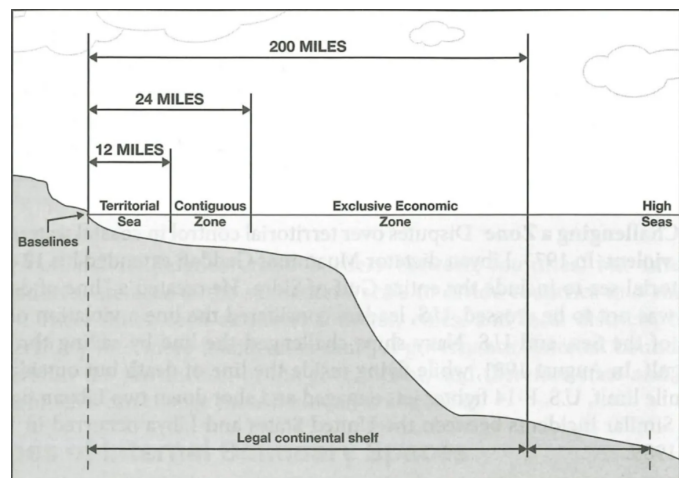
The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** was defined by over 150 countries.

- Conflicts over boundaries of seas

1. **Territorial Sea** → extends up to 12 nautical miles of sovereignty where commercial values may pass
  - Nautical mile = 1.15 miles

2. **Contiguous Zone** → limited sovereignty for up to 24 nautical miles (enforce laws on customs, immigration, and sanitation)

3. **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** → explore, extract minerals, and manage natural resources up to 200 nautical miles



4. **High Seas** → water beyond any country's *EEZ* (open to **ALL** states)

If two coastal states share a waterway less than 24 nautical miles, the distance is divided in half.

Islands increase the *EEZ* of a country..

- **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** → *EEZs* are much larger than their landmass
  - **Blue Economy:** the new economic opportunities based on the ocean for SIDS

## 4.9 — Challenges to Sovereignty

### Devolution & Fragmentation

**Devolution:** the transfer of power from the central government to lower levels of government

- Leads to regional autonomy & desire for independence
- **Fragmentation:** fracturing of a state along regional lines

**Autonomous Regions** → own local & legislative bodies to govern a region with a population that is an ethnic minority within the entire country

- Not fully independent, but handle their own day-to-day governance

**Subnationalism** → people with a primary allegiance to a traditional group or ethnicity

### Balkanization

**Balkanization:** the fragmentation of a state or region into smaller (often hostile) units along ethno-linguistic lines

- *Shatterbelts* → areas that suffer from balkanization

## How Globalization Challenges State Sovereignty

**Globalization:** the integration of markets, states, communication, and trade on a worldwide scale

- Created necessity for alliances for collective benefits

Political borders have become **LESS** significant due to ideas spreading through them quickly.

## Supranationalism

- Countries sacrifice some sovereignty when working with others in organizations

**Supranationalism:** the practice of multiple countries forming an organization for the benefit of all members

- Create military alliances
- Promote trade
- Combat environmental issues

**Economies of Scale:** economies where more goods and services can be produced for less money on average

- Increased trade and bargaining power of countries through *supranationalism*

## SUPRANATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATION	MEMBER STATES	MISSION	HEADQUARTERS
United Nations (UN)	193 - most countries in the world	To promote peace, security, and human rights	New York City
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	30	To provide mutual defense of member states	Brussels, Belgium
European Union (EU)	27	To integrate member states politically and economically	Brussels, Belgium
United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)	3	To stimulate free trade among members	Washington, DC Mexico City Ottawa, Canada
Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN)	10 - countries in Southeast Asia	To advance economic growth, peace, social progress	Jakarta, Indonesia
Arctic Council	8 - Arctic territories	To foster cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic states (participation of Arctic indigenous communities)	Tromsø, Norway
African Union	55 - all countries in Africa	To advocate peace, security, stability on the continent of Africa	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Johannesburg, South Africa

## Economic Supranationalism

The most common reason for multiple states to participate in a collective cause is **economics**.



- Increased trade members and regulations in the interest of all countries involved

**World Trade Organization (WTO):** one of the largest and most influential supranational organizations

- Goal: have countries agree to a set of fair and non-discriminatory guidelines for international trade; ensure trade moves smoothly

**Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):** an organization focusing on the production of oil (or petroleum)

- Mission: coordinate and unify its members' petroleum policies to stabilize oil markets
- Spans three continents in membership

Conflicts can arise within supranational organizations based on **differing views**.

**Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** an organization seeking mutually-beneficial trade agreements in Southeast Asian nations

- Goal: foster economic growth & peace

**European Union:** a political and economic union of 27 democratic European states

- Single-market free-trade zone and movement toward a standardized system of laws

**United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)**

- Countries in North America signed an economic treaty to compete in the new global market
- Originally the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**

## Military & Strategic Supranationalism

- Mutual defense alliances promote countries to engage in **military cooperation**

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):** a military alliance created by the United States and its allies in response to tensions with the Soviet Union

- Largest military alliance in the world

## Supranationalism and the Environment

Most production & development occurs in periphery countries due to economic advantages.

- Creates tension (on people and the environment)

United Nations → Food and Agriculture Organization, UNCLOS, Paris Agreement on climate change

## Transnational Corporations

**Transnational Corporations:** companies that conduct business on a global scale

- No strong connection to one place
- Single countries have less influence

## The Impact of Technology

New technology (ex. Internet, social media, jet travel) has ...

- Promoted globalization by connecting people **ACROSS BOUNDARIES**
- Weakened globalization by helping subnational groups to organize
  - Supported **democratization** (the transition from autocracy to more representative forms of politics) by help reform movements

- Threatened democratization where the government has tried to limit the spread of information
- Created digital divides between countries with and without resources
- Increased **time-space compression** (the social and psychological effects of faster movement of information over space in a shorter period of time)