



# 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.

## 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

## 4.5 — 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

## 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

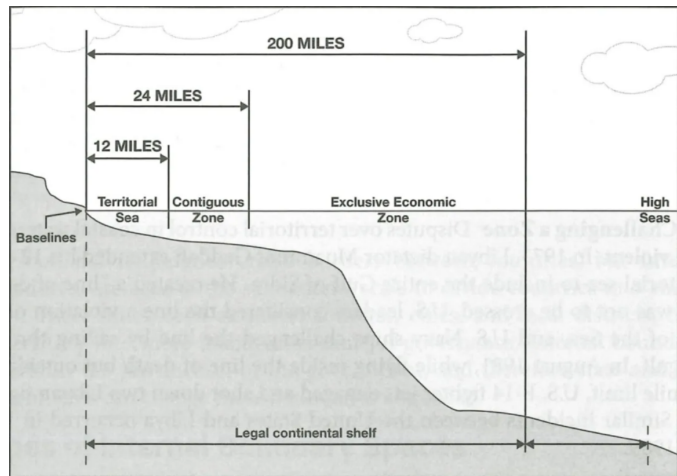
Language changes as people within different boundaries form dialects.

## 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

### **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	Tromsø, Norway

ORGANIZATION	MEMBER STATES	MISSION	HEADQUARTERS
		Arctic indigenous communities)	
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**

- Countries in North America signed an economic treaty to compete in the new global market
- Originally the **North America 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 (the social and psychological effects of faster movement of information over space in a shorter period of time)