
CHAPTER 4

Political Organizations of Space

Citizens and space are inherently political and the borders between political states and political sub-unit areas (counties, parishes, districts, states, city limits) are finite lines. Political boundaries, as expressions of political control, must be definable and clear. Sometimes the physical geography (such as rivers or other bodies of water), defines boundaries and sometimes border lines are measured surveys based on treaties or other agreements between states. In this chapter we will think about the contemporary political map and where it came from.

The Contemporary Political Map

There are a number of political geography terms such as nation and state that we use in everyday speech as synonyms. However, the technical definitions of terms have specific and important meaning in the geography of politics. Here's how to keep them straight:

Types of Political Entities

- **Nation:** A population with a single culture. It's not a legal boundary.
- **State:** A population under a single government. It *is* a legal boundary.
- **Country:** An identifiable land area. It's not a legal boundary.
- **Nation-state:** A single culture under a single government whose population possesses a substantial degree of cultural homogeneity and unity.

Here are some fresh, hot examples to keep in mind:

Nations	State Name	Country
England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Great Britain or the British Isles
Han, Manchu, Zhuang, Miao, Uyghur, Tibetan, and others	People's Republic of China	China
Anglo-Canadian, Québécois, and First Nations	Canada (former name Dominion of Canada)	Canada
French, German, Italian, and Romansch	<i>Confoederatio Helvetica</i> (in Latin)	Switzerland (French: <i>Suisse</i>) (German: <i>Schweiz</i>)

A nation-state is a single culture under a single government. Think Iceland or Argentina. But don't think Mongolia—the people are part Kazakh.



Ask Yourself...

America or the United States? Which one is a nation? Which one is a state? Which one is a country?

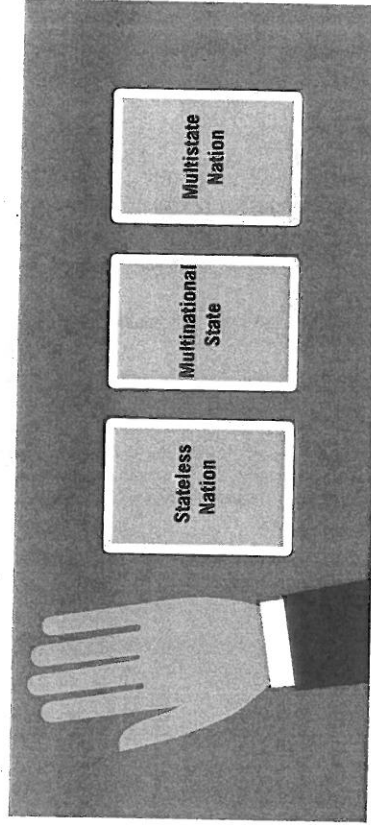
Stateless Nation, Multinational State, or Multistate Nation?

All three of the following definitions use the words "nation" and "state," but they are totally different terms. Pay close attention!

Stateless Nation: A culture group that is not included or allowed to share in the political process. Examples: Kurds (ethnic group spread across northern and western Iraq, eastern Syria, and southeastern Turkey), Gypsies (Roma or Romani), Basques (ethnic group found in northern Spain, southwestern France).

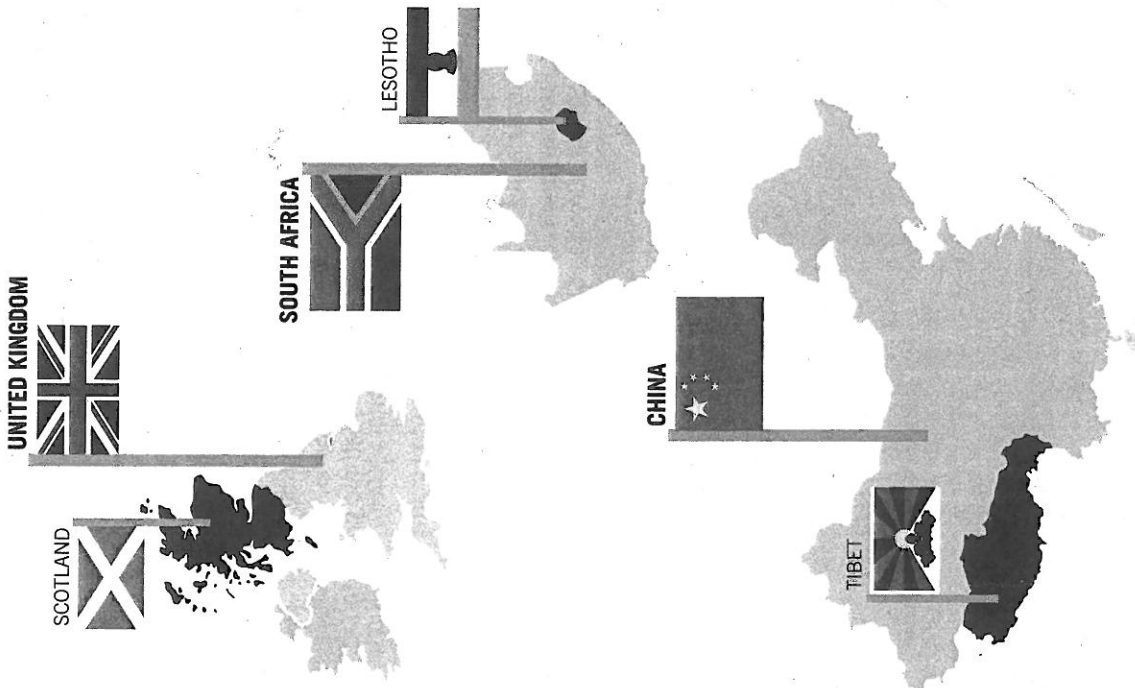
Multinational State: A sovereign state which is viewed as composed of two or more nations. Examples: Czechoslovakia (split into Czech Republic and Slovakia in the 1990s), Yugoslavia (exploded in a fierce civil war during that same era, resulting in six different states—Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, the republic of Macedonia, and Montenegro).

Multistate Nation: A group of people with a shared ethnic or linguistic culture that resides in multiple states. Example: North and South Korea.



It's like a game of Three Card Monte.

Yo Dawg: An **autonomous region** is a subdivision or dependent territory of a country that has a degree of self-governance, or autonomy, from an external authority. In other words, it's almost a country within a country. Check out these examples of autonomous regions:



Just like on *Pimp My Ride* when host Xzibit would hone in on the participant's hobbies so much that it felt like he was saying, "yo dawg, I heard you like to drive so we put a car in your car so you can drive while you drive."



Did You Know?

The world's smallest microstate, the Vatican City, has only 842 residents and measures .17 square miles.

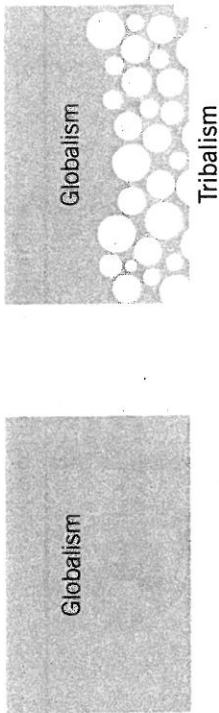
Concept of Modern Nation-State !

A **modern nation-state** is defined as a state in which the political entity is joined to the cultural and ethnic entity. In the past, the two have sometimes been separate. In more recent decades, other characteristics have come to include an effective political apparatus and a dynamic economy.

Example: Brazil. It's a vast country, the fifth-largest in the world in both area and population. It houses an enormous number of different types of cultures—indigenous tribes, descendants of African slaves, Portuguese, Germans, Japanese, and more. Nonetheless, the country has a national history, a national identity, and a national sport. The effectiveness of the Brazilian government varies from administration to administration, but is generally positive, and the Brazilian economy is one of the most powerful in the world.



Proponents of globalization have noted that the modern nation-state may become outmoded, replaced by a world government and a resurgence of ethnic tribalism.



Current Nation State

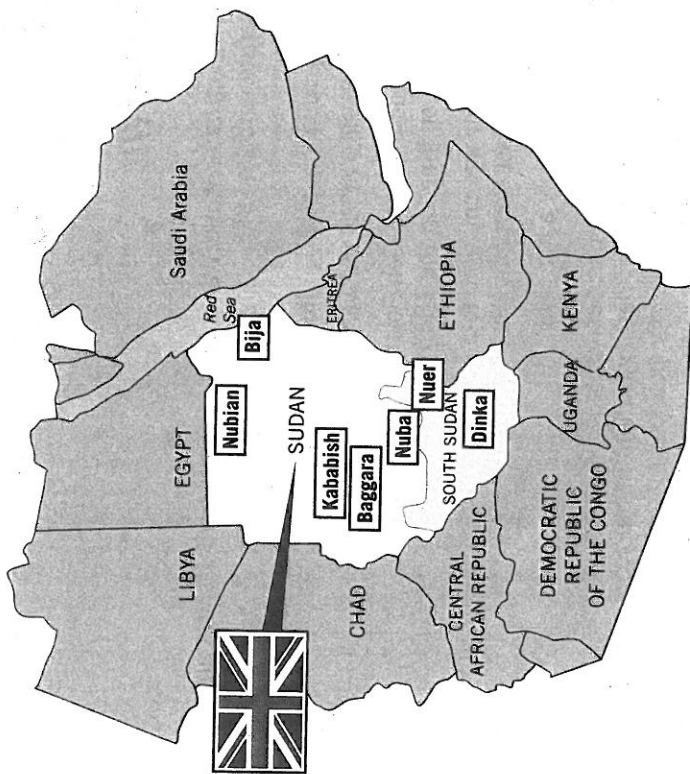
Future Nation State

The Impact of Colonialism

Modern African nations, particularly south of the Sahara, were formed over a century ago at the **Conference of Berlin**. European colonial powers decided, with little input from the natives themselves, how the map of Africa would be drawn. As long as those European countries held power—the Dutch in South Africa, the French in Sierra Leone, the Portuguese in Angola—the boundaries held.

The problem? After World War II, most of those European countries divested themselves of their African colonies. And the native peoples, who remained loyal only to their tribe, found themselves politically grouped together with neighboring tribes, many of which had centuries of conflict. This is the reason for the genocide in Rwanda in the 1990s.

This is what is called **The Tyranny of the Map**.



Sudan was a British colony from 1896–1955. The names of local tribes in Sudan are listed in boxes above.

Geopolitical Influences on Contemporary Political Map

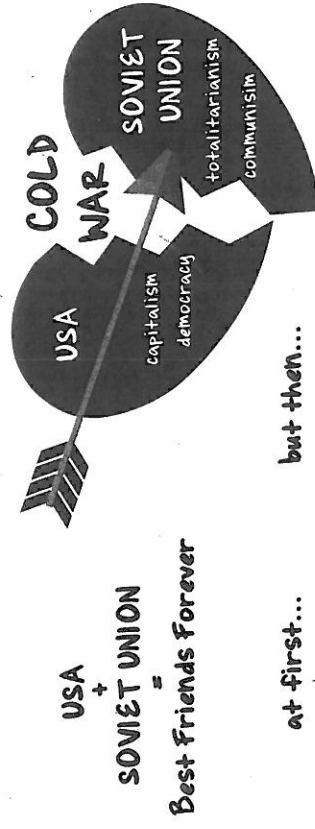
Post-WWII

The fallout after World War II lead to major border shifts and changes in territorial boundaries:

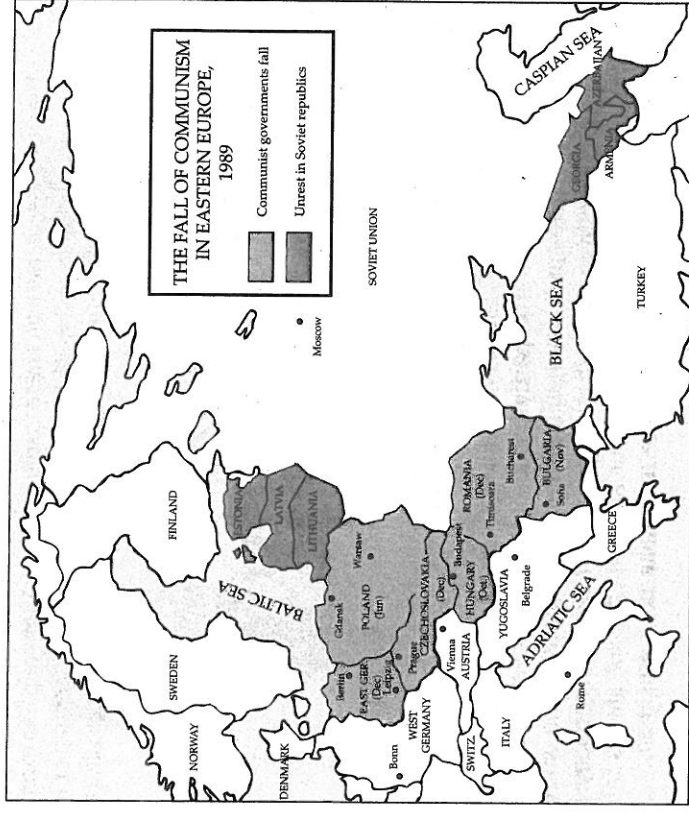
- the boundary between Italy and France was modified
- the borders of Poland were redrawn
- the boundary between Poland and the Soviet Union (the Curzon Line confirmed at the 1945 Yalta Conference) was locked in
- Germany was split into four occupation zones and then was divided in two (East Germany, West Germany)
- and that's only a handful!

In addition, Western European colonial empires in Asia and Africa all collapsed (also known as decolonization) in the years after 1945. This left us with the contemporary political map. However, if there's one constant in this world—other than death and taxes—it's that boundaries will always be changing.

In this era, the United States and the Soviet Union became **superpowers**. They were friendly during WWII when they were unified as the Allies (along with Britain and China, of course), but they had very different worldviews and neither superpower wanted the other to peddle its influence and systems of government out to other nations.



Fall of Communism



The Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe

Communist-led regimes collapsed in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Albania in 1989 and it was the beginning of the end of Communist rule in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union, formerly a communist superpower, ended its rein with that title in 1991 when Mikhail Gorbachev's policies led to the dissolution of the union. Former Soviet Republics regained their independence and every school in the world had to buy a new map. Nations and borders were shifting all over in that era with East and West Germany becoming one, unified Germany in late 1989 (thanks to the Berlin Wall being toppled and after which David Hasselhoff performed ON the wall and no, we are NOT kidding).



Don't Hassle the Hoff and don't doubt the German people's love of the former Baywatch star.



Ask Yourself...

Do you know what the Heartland-Rimland Model is? The Shatterbelt Theory? These items won't necessarily be on the AP Human Geo exam, but you may wish to familiarize yourself with these concepts just in case [or to knock it out of the park and name drop these as cultural context in an essay].

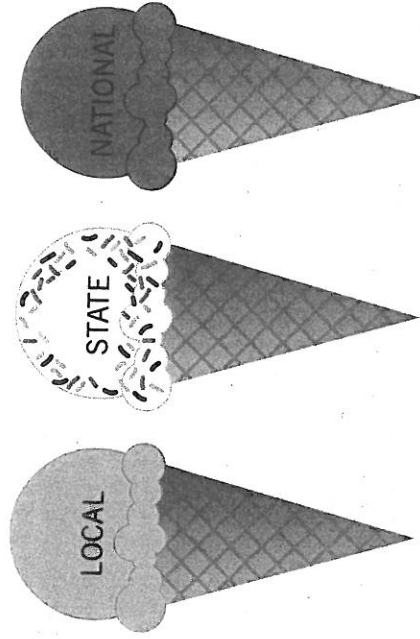
Territorial Dimensions of Politics

Concept of Political Power

Political power isn't as fixed as we'd like to believe. In western-style democracies, actual power is partly based on the *perception* of power. If a leader *appears* to spend too much of that power unwisely, he or she loses all of it. Imagine a bank that steals all your remaining money if you dip below a certain threshold in your account. It's not always fair, but that's the situation described by the term **lame-duck president**.

Furthermore, even in this digital era, political power still congregates in physical places, the same way that religious power is concentrated in the Vatican City or economic power is concentrated in San Francisco. These are called **seats of government**. For example, Austin is the seat of government of the state of Texas; Bogotá is the seat of government of the nation of Colombia.

In the United States, seats of government come in three flavors: **local**, **state**, and **national**.



This explains the three layers of taxes that workers must pay. Most countries in the world have a similar triple layer of power, though sometimes under different names. In England, the local political body is called a **parish**, and in Canada a state is called a **province**.



Did You Know?

In the United States, a *county* is a rural jurisdiction, and a *city* is an urban jurisdiction. However, these two jurisdictions often overlap, which creates confusion. The city of Chicago, for example, resides within Cook County. Think of all the police procedural programs showing the turf wars between the sheriff's deputies and the city cops. (And sometimes even the FBI, too!)

Concept of Territoriality

Territoriality is the effort to control pieces of Earth's surface for personal, political, or social ends. It's a community's sense of property and attachment toward its territory, as expressed by its determination to keep it inviolable and strongly defended.

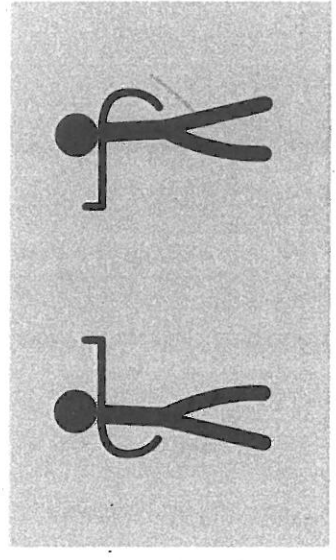
Territoriality is the most basic form of power. The most elemental territoriality is personal space. European personal space is much smaller than American personal space, on average. Owned space is territory we claim because of legal ownership. Political space is territory that we claim to own because of political agreements.

Personal Space	Owned Space	Political Space
• People native to U.S., U.K., Nordic countries have need for great personal space • People native to Mediterranean countries tend to need significantly less	• a person's locker • a person's car • a person's house • a private high school	• a local police station • a public high school • The National Mall • The White House



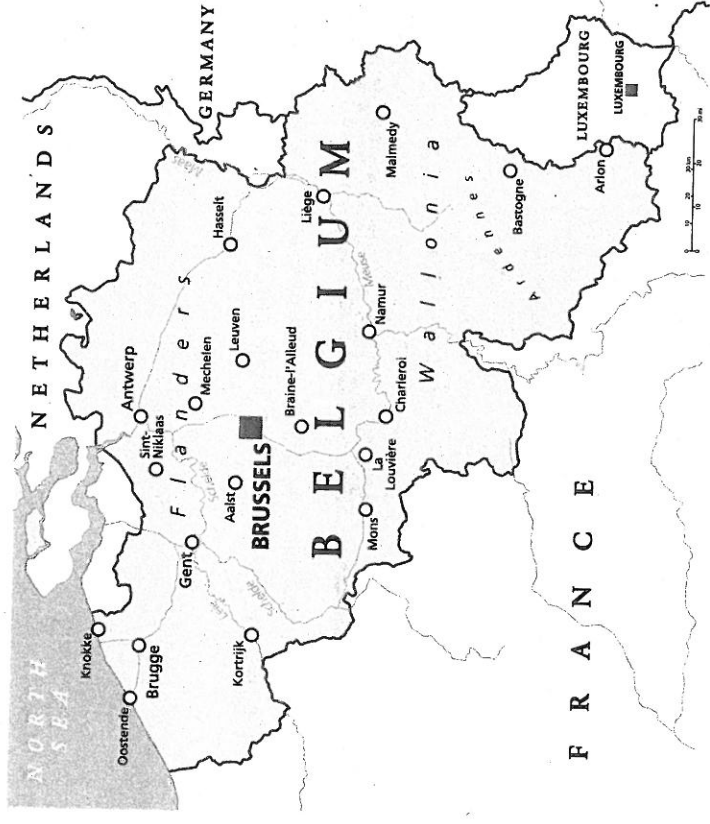
Did You Know?

In Slovenia, strangers keep a distance of almost three meters!



Nature and Function of Boundaries

- **Internal** boundaries are a type of boundary within a state (a nation state, that is), made for administrative purposes or to mark off cultural regions. The border between Los Angeles County and Orange County is a good example of an internal boundary.
- **International** boundaries exist between different nations. The border between North Korea and South Korea, known as the **Korean Demilitarized Zone**, is an example of an international border. Ironically, it's also the most militarized border on the planet!



NICE BOUNDARIES, BELGIUM!

This map displays international boundaries (the barrier between France and Belgium, Belgium and Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands) and also internal boundaries (the barrier that determines the edge of Brussels or Antwerp, for example). Earlier in the chapter we talked about the idea of a nation or a nation state—Belgium is a sovereign state and is officially bilingual (French and Dutch).

Influence of Boundaries

On Identity

Boundaries influence people's identities. Think of the famous old saying that someone is "from the wrong side of the tracks." To an extent, a person's identity is formed largely by where he or she grew up. In some cultures, a person's neighborhood matters much more than others. The United States places less weight upon a person's place of origin than others countries do, since its culture is so individualistic. In European countries such as France, where class ascension is quite difficult, a person's hometown is extremely important in how he or she is perceived by peers.

On Interaction

When boundaries are agreed upon, all is peaceful. However, inevitably there are disputes. Here are four types of **boundary disputes**.

	What is it?	Example
Definitional	border treaties are interpreted two different ways by states	Russian-Japanese Kuril Islands under Soviet control in 1945
Locational	when the border moves, usually through natural events such as a river drying up	India-Bangladesh territory along the Ganges-Brahmaputra River
Operational	when borders are agreed to, but passage across the border is a problem	New passport requirements for entry into the United States as a result of the Trump presidency
Allocational	when a resource lies on both sides of a border	Disagreement between Mexico and the U.S. about the allocation of water from the Colorado River

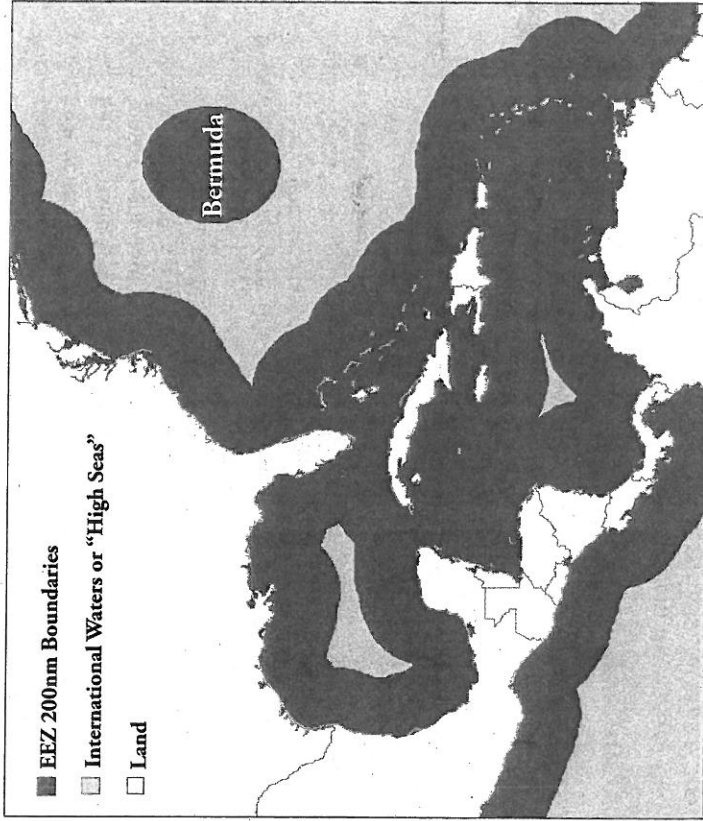
Big Idea

For decades, the developed world has been creating a world with much weaker borders. Free trade has been the agreed-upon policy, with tariffs being mostly nonexistent. Open immigration policies have been in place as well. Currently, however, Europe and America are experiencing an equal but opposite reaction—the right-wing nationalist movement toward stronger borders. This so-called "alt-right" movement champions domestic manufacturing, tariffs on imports, intense nationalism, trade wars, and strict immigration policies. Time will tell if the movement toward a borderless world continues among developed countries.

Law of the Sea

A 1982 United Nations Conference on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) proposed a clearer definition of the borders at sea.

Territorial Sea	First 12 miles out into the sea from the edge of the land is considered sovereign territory. All laws of that country apply.
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)	For 200 miles, the country has exclusive economic rights to all resources, including fish, oil, gas, minerals, and salvage operations.
High Seas	Beyond 200 miles, no law of any country applies. Open fishing, gambling, marriages, divorces. Captains have power of law and can make arrests. If you've ever heard about mayhem erupting on a cruise ship, it was probably on the high seas.



Forms of Governance !

Unitary State Versus Federal State

In a **unitary state**, the power is held by one national (federal) government. Any administrative divisions that exist only have the powers that the central state delegates to them. This style of government effects change quickly but is also vulnerable to abuse. A classic example of a unitary state would be France under Louis XIV, who stripped power from the nobles by luring them to Versailles and turning them into nothing more than glorified courtiers.

In a **federal state**, the power is shared by a national (federal) and local (state) government. Conflict between the two governments is inevitable, and changes come more slowly, but abuse is more easily prevented with such a balance. Example: The United States of America where powers are shared between the federal government and the state government.

Territorial Morphology !

The shape of a country is often what helps to identify it on a map. To some degree, the shape of a country or state also impacts its society and external relations with other countries and states. Here is a run-down of major types of state/country morphology (shape):

Type	Description	Example
Compact	Shape without irregularity	
Fragmented	Broken into pieces; archipelagos	
Elongated	Appears stretched-out, long	
Prorupt	Has a panhandle or peninsula	

Perforated
Has a hole(s)
(country, large lake)



Landlocked

Has no sea or ocean borders



Some of these morphologies have cultural characteristics associated with them. For example, most landlocked states—from Kazakhstan to Kansas—often display suspicion of outsiders. The reason: For millennia, travelers only had one option—the sea. Without any ports, such landlocked areas saw virtually no travelers, and have historically remained less accustomed to outsiders.



Did You Know?

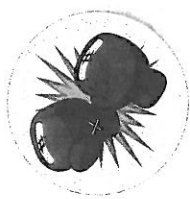
Bhutan, an isolated and landlocked state in the Himalayas, charges travelers \$250 per day to visit!

Challenges to Contemporary Political-Territorial Arrangements !

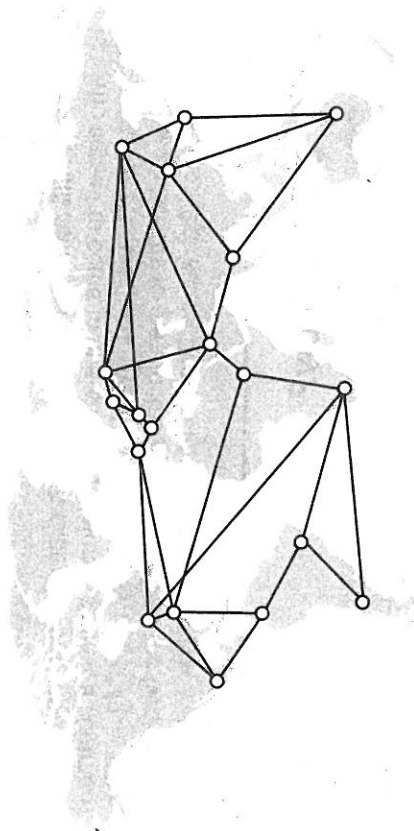
In a purist view of the world, states exist as purely independent entities, arranged shoulder-to-shoulder across the planet. In this vision of human societies, states are like crystals—stable, perfect, and unchanging.



That, however, is not how the world looks. Let's look at two major challenges to this view of the world.



Challenge #1: Supranationalism



Supranationalism is the concept of two or more sovereign states allied together for a common purpose. Most of these agreements are formed for trade alliances, military cooperation, and diplomacy.

Historically, these agreements have been made for three different reasons:

1. **Economies of scale.** When the number of products increases, the cost of each item decreases. For example, producing 50 T-shirts for an improv comedy troupe is cheaper, per shirt, than producing only 5 T-shirts. There are economies of scale that come specifically with supranational agreements. Companies are free to pursue cheaper labor and resources in other countries. An American firm that hires people in India to staff its call center is a good example of an economy of scale aided by supranational agreements.

2. **Trade Agreements.** Most trade agreements are made to keep the flow of products moving smoothly between states. One of the oldest surviving trade agreements in Europe, for example, is the Methuen Treaty, signed in 1703. In it, the English agreed to place a smaller tariff on Portuguese wine than on French wine, and the Portuguese agreed to import English woolen cloth without any tariff at all.

3. **Military Alliances.** History is filled with examples of countries who agreed to come to one another's defense against a common enemy. That's how World War I started. History is also filled with military alliances formed to keep peace, such as the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (which the Nazis broke).

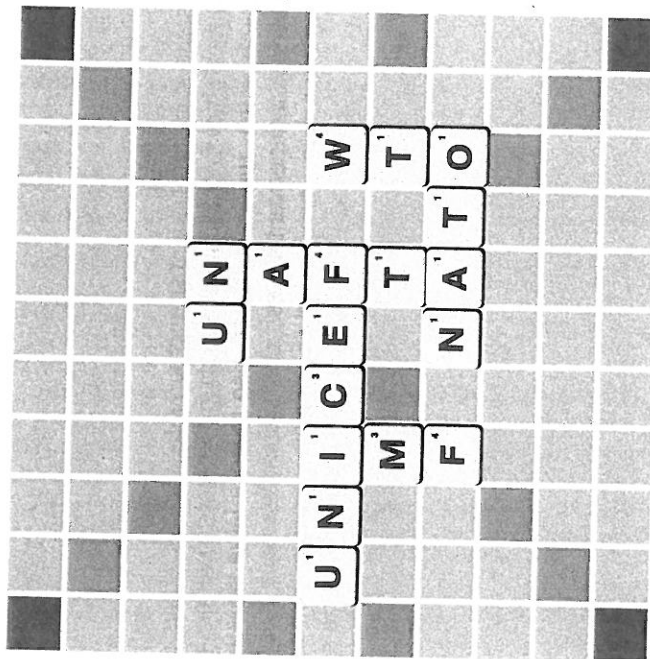


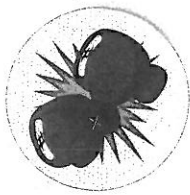
Did You Know?

One supranational agreement, the European Coal and Steel Community, eventually led to the creation of the entire European Union!

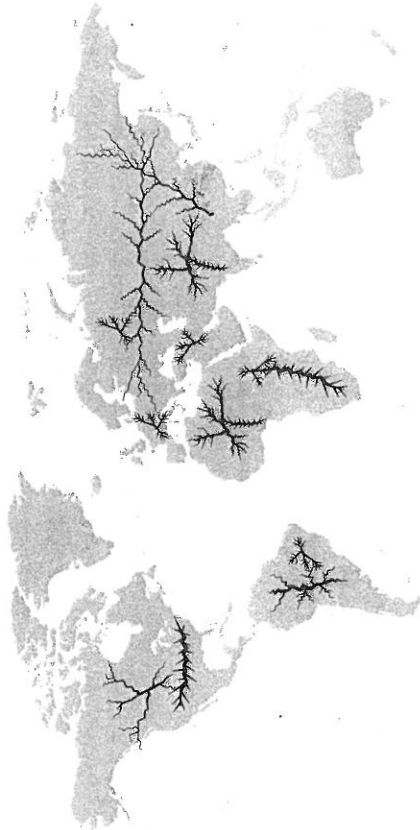
Multinational organizations are international bodies that serve a purpose ranging from economic to political to environmental to social justice. Some are governmental; others, non-governmental. The most famous include the **United Nations** and the **European Union**.

Additional Supranational Organizations	
Other Examples of Supranational Organizations	Purpose
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	Military
Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)	Oil Pricing Cartel
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)	Free-Trade Zone
Organization of African Union (OAU)	Regional Diplomacy
World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Government Loans





Challenge #2: Devolution of States



Just as some states evolve and strengthen relationships, others devolve. This can mean movement from a national government to various regional governments within the state. It can also mean a large state breaking up into various independent states.

There are many forces that contribute to **devolution of states**:

Physical Geography

Regions on remote frontiers, mountainous terrain, isolated villages, and islands tend to demand separation from the central government. See Taiwan's relationship with China.

Ethnic Separation

In Rwanda, the old conflict between the Hutu tribe and the Tutsi tribe led to a genocide that nearly destroyed the society.

Terrorism

Planned violent attacks upon a state can weaken or destroy the state. Some are stateless groups such as Al Qaeda. Sometimes the terrorism is done by the government itself—in Cambodia, the leader of the Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot, killed one-quarter of the population.

Economic and Social Problems

The former Soviet Union was beset by economic problems—it couldn't spend enough to keep up with the U.S. on defense—and multicultural problems. Gorbachev loosened the iron grip, and the entire system fell apart.

Irredentism

An ethnic minority splits off from a larger multiethnic state. Chechnya has tried to break away from the Russian Federation, with mixed results.

In summary, supranationalism and devolution are almost perfect opposites, but they're exactly alike in one key respect—both serve to weaken the state as an independent entity (for better or worse).

Chapter 4 Key Terms

nation
state
country
nation-state
stateless nation
multinational state
multistate nation
autonomous region
modern nation-state
Conference of Berlin
tyranny of the map
superpowers
lame-duck president
seats of government
parish, province
territoriality
internal boundaries

international boundaries
The Demilitarized Zone
boundary disputes—definitional,
locational, operational,
allocational
territorial seas
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
high seas
unitary state
federal state
supranationalism
economics of scale
trade agreements
military alliances
United Nations
European Union
devolution of states

CHAPTER 5

Agricultural and Rural Land Use

Next let's explore the topics of agricultural and rural land use (then later in the book we'll head into the city and explore urban land use). This chapter will cover assorted agricultural revolutions and their resultant negative and positive effects, farming and crops, food production, settlement patterns, and more. Let's head out to the country!