Chapter 8
Political Geography
Today human geographers emphasize a thematic approach, concerned with the location of activities in the world, the reasons for particular spatial distributions, and the significance of the arrangements.

Political geographers study:
- How people have organized Earth’s land surface into countries and alliances
- Reasons underlying the observed arrangements.
- The conflicts that result from the organization.
Political Geography

- Key Issues
  1. Where are states located?
  2. Why do boundaries between states cause problems?
  3. Why do states cooperate with each other?
  4. Why has terrorism increased?
With the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, the global political landscape changed fundamentally. Geographic concepts help us to understand this changing political organization of Earth’s surface. We can also use geographic methods to examine the causes of political change. Boundary lines are not painted on Earth, but they might as well be, for these national divisions are very real. To many, national boundaries are more meaningful than natural features.
Key Issue 1: Defining States and Development of the State Concept

- Problems of defining states
  - *Antarctica*: state?
  - *Korea*: one state or two?
  - *China and Taiwan*: one state or two?
  - *Western Sahara*
  - *Varying sizes of states*

- Development of the state concept
  - *Ancient and medieval states*
  - *Colonies*
Antarctica: National Claims

- Antarctica is the only large landmass on Earth’s surface that is not part of a state.
- Several states claim portions of Antarctica.
- The United States, Russia, and a number of other states do not recognize the claims of any country to Antarctica.
- The Treaty of Antarctica, signed in 1959 and renewed in 1991, provides a legal framework for managing Antarctica.

Fig. 8-2: Antarctica is the only large landmass that is not part of a state, but several countries claim portions of it.
Korea: One State or Two?

- A colony of Japan for many years, Korea was divided into two occupation zones by the United States and former Soviet Union after they defeated Japan in World War II.
- Both Korean governments are committed to reuniting the country into one sovereign state.
- Meanwhile, in 1992, North Korea and South Korea were admitted to the United Nations as separate countries.
China and Taiwan: One State or Two?

- According to China’s government officials, Taiwan is not a separate sovereign state but is a part of China.
- Until 1999 the government of Taiwan agreed.
- This confusing situation arose from a civil war.
- After losing, nationalist leaders in 1949 fled to the island of Taiwan and proclaimed that they were still the legitimate rulers of the entire country of China.
- Most other governments in the world consider China and Taiwan as two separate and sovereign states.
- Taiwan’s president announced in 1999 that Taiwan would also regard itself as a sovereign independent state.
Western Sahara (Sahrawi Republic)

- The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is considered by most African countries as a sovereign state.
- Morocco, however, controls the territory, which it calls Western Sahara.
- The United Nations is sponsoring a referendum for the residents of Western Sahara to decide whether they want independence or want to continue to be part of Morocco.
Varying Size of States

- The land area occupied by the states of the world varies considerably.
- The largest state:
  - Russia, which encompasses 17.1 million square kilometers (6.6 million square miles), or 11 percent of the world’s entire land area.
- Still Big:
  - China, Canada, United States, Brazil, and Australia.
  - Each is more than 5 million square kilometers (2 million square miles)
- Microstates:
  - About two dozen
  - Monaco is the smallest - 1.5 square kilometers (0.6 square miles).
  - Most microstates are Islands
The concept of dividing the world into a collection of independent states is recent.

Prior to the 1800s, Earth’s surface was organized in other ways, such as city-states, empires, and tribes.

Much of Earth’s surface consisted of unorganized territory.
Colonialism

- **Colonialism**
  - Attempt by one country to establish settlements and to impose its political, economic and cultural principles in another territory.

- **Imperialism**
  - Control of territory already occupied and organized by an indigenous group.
By the outbreak of World War I, European states held colonies throughout the world, especially throughout Africa and in much of Asia.
European Empires

- The United Kingdom assembled by far the largest colonial empire, (with) colonies on every continent.
- France had the second-largest overseas territory, although its colonies were concentrated in West Africa and Southeast Asia.
- Both the British and the French also took control of a large number of strategic islands.
- Portugal, Spain, Germany, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium all established colonies outside Europe, but they controlled less territory than the British and French.
- Germany tried to compete with Britain and France by obtaining African colonies that would interfere with communications in the rival European holdings.
Colonial Practices

- The colonial practices of European states varied.
- France attempted to assimilate its colonies into French culture.
- The British created different government structures and policies for various territories of their empire.
  - This decentralized approach helped to protect the diverse cultures.
- Most African and Asian colonies became independent after World War II.
Fig. 8-5: Most of the remaining colonies are small islands in the Pacific or Caribbean.
Colonialism in Africa

- European Colonial Rulers
  - Exploited Resources
  - Manipulated ethnic groups to fight against each other.
  - Sent missionaries that changed the culture
  - Set colonial borders based on European claims for territory and not on tribal lands.
  - Video
African National Independence

Featuring the Dates of Independence of Each Nation
Problems after Independence

- Borders were based on European colonies and not on tribal lands.
  - Created many conflicts that still exist today
  - Genocide in Rwanda
- Food shortages
- Health
  - Aids
- Oppressive Governments
- Financing problems with economic development
  - Had to borrow from western governments
  - Quickly went in debt
Key Issue 2: Why do Boundaries Cause Problems?

- Types of boundaries
  - Physical boundaries
  - Cultural boundaries

- Shapes of states
  - Five basic shapes
  - Landlocked states

- Boundaries inside states
  - Unitary and federal states
  - Trend toward federal government
  - Electoral geography
What is a boundary?

- **Boundary**
  - Invisible line that marks the extent of a state’s territory.

- **Borders**
Problems Boundaries

- Lack of knowledge of underground resources when boundaries were created
  - 1990 Kuwait vs. Iraq: Rumaylah oil reserves
  - created International conflict
Who Controls Airspace?

- When boundaries were created there was a lack of knowledge of importance of airspace
  - a. airline traffic
  - b. satellite space?
How are Boundaries Created?

- **Defined**
  - usually legally by someone who is not directly involved (written)

- **Delimitation**
  - mapped

- **Demarcation**
  - marked with posts, walls, fences, etc.
Types of Boundaries: physical

- Important physical features on Earth’s surface can make good boundaries because they are easily seen, both on a map and on the ground.
- Three types of physical elements serve as boundaries between states:
  - mountains
  - deserts
  - water
Mountain Boundaries

- Mountains can be effective boundaries if they are difficult to cross (and) because they are rather permanent and usually are sparsely inhabited.
- Mountains do not always provide for the amicable separation of neighbors.
  - Argentina and Chile agreed to be divided by the crest of the Andes Mountains but could not decide on the precise location of the crest.
Desert Boundaries

- Like mountains, deserts are hard to cross and sparsely inhabited.
- Desert boundaries are common in Africa and Asia.
Water Boundaries

- Rivers, lakes, and oceans
- Water boundaries are especially common in East Africa.
- Boundaries are typically in the middle of the water, although the boundary between Malawi and Tanzania follows the north shore of Lake Malawi (Lake Nyasa).
  - Again, the boundaries result from nineteenth-century colonial practices: Malawi was a British colony, whereas Tanzania was German.
- Water boundaries offer good protection against attack
Coastal Waters

- The use of water as boundaries between states can cause difficulties.
- One problem is that the precise position of the water may change over time.
  - Rivers, in particular, can slowly change their course.
- Ocean boundaries also cause problems because states generally claim that the boundary lies not at the coastline but out at sea.
  - Law of the Sea – 12 miles
- The reasons are for defense and for control of valuable fishing industries.
Frontiers in the Arabian Peninsula

- **Frontier**
  - A zone separating two states in which neither state exercises political control.

- Several states in the Arabian Peninsula are separated by frontiers rather than precise boundaries.
Types of Boundaries: Geometric

- Geometric boundary: straight line boundary totally unrelated to physical features
- e.g. United States border with Canada
- 54 40 or fight
Types of Boundaries: Cultural

- **Antecedent boundary:**
  - some boundaries were defined and delimited before humans settled
  - Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1891 dividing Malaysia & Indonesia

- **Subsequent boundaries:**
  - boundaries which developed according to the cultural landscape
  - e.g. Vietnam/ China
Types of Boundaries: Cultural

- **Superimposed boundaries:**
  - Forcibly drawn boundaries across a culturally unified landscape
  - Papau New Guinea/ Indonesia
  - Africa - Colonialism

- **Relict boundary:**
  - border that has ceased to function imprints still evident in cultural landscape.
  - N-S Vietnam
Language Boundaries

- Language is an important cultural characteristic for drawing boundaries, especially in Europe.
- The French language was a major element in the development of France.
- Italy and Germany also emerged as states that unified the speakers of particular languages.
- The movement to identify nationalities on the basis of language spread throughout Europe in the twentieth century.
Boundary Disputes

- Territorial / Definitional
  - Whose Land is it?
  - Focus on legal language of the agreement
- Cyprus Green Line
- Positional / Locational 1991
  - Focus on delimitation and demarcation of the border
  - The interpretation of the definition is the dispute
  - Saudi Arabia vs. Yemen (oil rich border not covered in the treaty)
Division of Cyprus

Fig. 8-10: Cyprus has been divided into Green and Turkish portions since 1974.
Boundary Disputes

• Functional / Operational Border Dispute
  • way boundary should function
  • how should each side handle cross-border migration
Boundary Disputes

- Allocational Border Dispute
  - Dispute over boundary due to location of resources
  - Water supplies - Colorado River
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIPV-H9iCPA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIPV-H9iCPA)
Territory Size-micro vs macro

- Does Size = Power?
  - No
- Greater land area may equal greater resources
- Could also lead to problems with regulating area (communication and transportation)

Vatican Map Micro State - Vatican Map
Size is not necessarily an indicator for success

Russia
- Land Area: 6,550.7 square miles
- Purchasing Power Parity $9700 (2002)

United States
- Land Area: 3,787.4
- Purchasing Power Parity $36,300 (2002)

CIA Factbook. online
Big Theme

- Territory size & shape can *influence* political stability, but can not *determine* social, political, or economic well being.
Shape of States

- Elongated: Norway
- Compact: Zimbabwe
- Prorupt: Thailand
- Fragmented: Philippines
- Perforated: South Africa, Lesotho

Figure 12.8: Shapes of states. The sizes of the countries should not be compared. Each is drawn on a different scale.
Compact State: (circle shape)

- the distance from any point of the country to its center is about the same.
- supposed to provide the most geographic stability
- e.g. Poland, Iceland, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe
Fragmented State

- consisting of 2 or more pieces
- can make some interactions within the country more difficult
- e.g. Philippines
Elongated

- State with a long narrow shape.
- Can create separatist areas due to distance from center or core
- Vietnam, Chile, Norway
Prorupt States

- An area that extends from a compact area
- Can create room for factions geographically
- Southern Thailand
Fig. 8-6: Southern, central, and eastern Africa include states that are compact, elongated, prorupted, fragmented, and perforated.
Perforated State

- broken by another country
- 1. exclaves: separated from the state by another state
  - e.g. Russia
  - Baarle-Hertog
  - Point Roberts
- 2. enclaves: surrounded by another state
  - e.g. South Africa-Lesotho
**Landlocked States**

- Lesotho is unique in being completely surrounded by only one state, but it shares an important feature with several other states in southern Africa, as well as in other regions: It is landlocked.

- The prevalence of landlocked states in Africa is a remnant of the colonial era, when Britain and France controlled extensive regions.

- Direct access to an ocean is critical to states because it facilitates international trade.

- To send and receive goods by sea, a landlocked state must arrange to use another country’s seaport.
Boundaries inside States

- Within countries, local government boundaries are sometimes drawn to separate different nationalities or ethnicities.
- They are also drawn sometimes to provide advantage to a political party.
US Electoral Geography

- The boundaries separating legislative districts are redrawn periodically to ensure that each district has approximately the same population.
  - European countries entrust the job to independent commissions.
  - In most U.S. states the job is entrusted to the state legislature.

- **Gerrymandering**
  - Process of redrawing legislative boundaries for the purpose of benefiting the party in power.
Types of Gerrymandering

- Gerrymandering takes three forms.
  - “Wasted vote” spreads opposition supporters across many districts but in the minority.
  - “Excess vote” concentrates opposition supporters into a few districts.
  - “Stacked vote” links distant areas of like-minded voters through oddly shaped boundaries.
Unitary and Federal States

- **Unitary state**
  - An internal organization of a state that places most power in the hands of central government officials.
  - France

- **Federal state**
  - An internal organization of a state that allocates most powers to units of local governments.
  - United States, Poland
Key Issue 3: Why do states cooperate with each other?

- Political and Military Cooperation
  - UN
  - Military
- Economic Cooperation
  - EU
  - NAFTA
Heartland Theory

- **Definition** - In 1904, Sir Halford Mackinder published the Heartland theory. The theory proposed that whoever controls Eastern Europe controls the Heartland. It also supported the concept of world dominance.

- **Explanation** –
  - Whoever controls the heartland, controls the world island. Whoever controls the World Island, will soon rule the world. The heartland has primarily been Central Asia, the high seas, and Eurasia.

- **Example** – The Theory was accepted by the The Nazi party during World War II and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.
The Rimland Theory

**Definition** - In 1942, Nicholas Spykman created a theory which countered Mackinder’s Heartland theory.

**Theory** Stated that Eurasia’s rimland, the coastal areas, is the key to controlling the World Island.

**Explanation** - The rimland contains the Heartland. Whoever would control the rimland, would eventually control the World Island. Whoever would control the World Island would soon control the world.

**Example** - His theory was influential mainly during the Cold War. The Soviet Union desired to control the rimland around them. If accomplished, the Soviet Union would control the heartland, rimland, and the World Island.
Fig. 8-1: The UN has increased from 51 members in 1945 to 191 in 2003.
United Nations

- The UN has 192 member states
- Goals and Purposes
  - Maintain international peace and security
  - Develop friendly relations among nations
  - Achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character
Economic Cooperation

- EU – European Union
  - Established in 1958 w/ 6 countries
  - Now has 28 countries
  - Currency – Euro
  - Flag
  - Official Motto “United in Diversity”
Key Issue 4: Why has terrorism increased?

- Terrorism by Individual Organizations
- State Support for Terrorism
Political Geography

Chapter 8

The End