

Intro to Political Geography

Unit IV

What is political geography?

- Political Geography: study of political organizations

-Studied at various scales:

- 1) Global scale looks at how the world is divided into individual countries that geographers call states

What constitutes a state?

- State: an area organized into a political unit and ruled by an established government with control over its internal and foreign affairs
- The 50 states of the USA are seen as regional governments/subdivisions within a single state the USA
- Antarctica is the only large landmass on Earth that is not a part of a state

State continues...

- A state is identified by four specific characteristics:
 - 1) Clearly defined Territory
 - 2) Population
 - 3) Sovereignty (freedom from outside control)
 - 4) Government (different types like democracy, dictatorship, parliamentary, etc.)

Problems defining states?

- Debate occurs over the actual number of sovereign states
- Such areas that test this include Korea, Taiwan with China and Western Sahara (Sahrawi Republic)
- Korea is divided between communist Democratic Republic of Korea at the 38th Parallel with the democratic Republic of Korea

Continue...

- China claims Taiwan as part of the People's Republic of China, however since 1999 Taiwan has disagreed...Taiwan was occupied by Chinese Nationalists fleeing the Chinese Communist Revolution in the 1940s
- Western Sahara is considered independent by most Africans but Morocco claims this territory once controlled by Spain

What are the sizes and shapes of states?

- Countries come in all shapes and sizes (ex. Russia is 6.5 million sq. miles while Monaco is less than 1.5 sq. mile)
- Microstates: states that encompass a very small land area i.e. Andorra, Vatican City, the Seychelles, Singapore, Micronesia, etc.
- City-State: a sovereign state comprising a city and its immediate hinterland; region controlled by a city i.e. Athens during ancient times

What are the shapes of states?

- Territorial morphology :shapes of states
 - 1) Compact: nearly circular i.e. Poland
 - 2) Prorupt: compact type form with narrow extensions of territory i.e. Thailand
 - 3) Elongated: long and narrow i.e Chile

Continue

- 4) Fragmented: state whose territory contains isolated parts, separated and discontinuous, can be associated with an exclave i.e United States, Philippines
 - 5) Perforated: state that completely surrounds another one, usually associated with an enclave i.e. South Africa
- See textbook pages 424 for more examples and pictures

What are exclaves and enclaves?

- Exclaves: fragmented piece of a sovereign territory separated by land from the main part of the state's territory
i.e. Alaska part of US is separated by Canada, Nakhchivan part of Azerbaijan is separated by Armenia
- Enclaves: minority group concentrated inside a state that is dominated by a different group i.e. Quebec in Canada, an ethnic neighborhood etc. or a small bit of foreign territory lying within a state and not under its jurisdiction like Lesotho (South Africa), Vatican City (Italy), San Marino (Italy)

Examples:

Exclave

Controls

Separated By

Alaska

USA

Canada

Musandam

Oman

United Arab Emirates

Kaliningrad

Russia

Lithuania/Belarus

What are some other state characteristics?

- Landlocked State: state that doesn't have a direct outlet to the sea
 - i.e. Bolivia, Botswana, Czech Republic, Luxem.
 - Most common in Africa due to former colonial division
 - Direct access to the ocean allows states international trade, landlocked states can struggle financially due to this lack of connection & must rely to use other state's seaports

Vocabulary:

1) Nation-state: a state whose territory corresponds to that occupied by a particular ethnicity that has been transformed into a nationality

Ex. Poland, Slovenia, Japan, Iceland, Tonga, Ireland, Portugal, Lesotho

2) A Part-nation state: a people's sense of nation that exceeds the areal limits of a single country

Ex. The Arab nation

3) Multinational state: state that contains more than one nation

Ex. Switzerland

4) Stateless nation: a people without a state

Ex. Kurds, Hmong, Basques, Roma, Chechens, etc.

