

# Agriculture, Food Production, and Rural Land Use

## Barrons Chapter 4

### What is Political Geography?

- Political geographers use the spatial perspective to study political systems at all geographic scales from local governments to international political systems
- Can be considered from 2 complementary perspectives: economic, cultural, and physical geography influence politics OR politics influences economic, cultural, and physical geography
- Governments controlled through divine guidance or religious leadership are called **theocracies**
- Modern day uses: political geographers contribute many important insights to study of poverty, war, culture, ethnicity and environmental change
- Stateless nations - nations that exist as communal identities without the benefit of an internationally recognized, cartographically defined states (Palestinians, Kurds, and Quebecois)

### The Geography of Local & Regional Politics

- **Nation state**
  - The primary unit political geographic unit - a geographically defined sovereign state comprising citizens with common heritage, identity, and set of political goals
  - A country, more formally called a **state** - can be composed of one or more **nation** (a group of people with a common political identity, but not every nation has its own state)
  - Nation-states are a relatively new concept that arose during the 18th century; differs from older political ideologies because citizens of a modern state are members of a country composed of people & their institution, not subjects to queen/king/ruler
  - Negative side is that many of the nation states created recently fail to recognize pre-existing ethnic and religious boundaries meaning countries such as Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Rwanda must work very hard to represent themselves as unified nations even though their peoples have vastly different cultures and histories
  - Many groups of people (nations) have fought to increase their sovereignty (Native Americans)
  - **Territorial organization** - division of land into more easily governed units
    - Have basis for efficiently delegating administrative functions

- Can allocate resources via local agencies that actually represent what the people want
- National governments often give local territories some degree of autonomy (enacting laws, policing their lands, taxing local citizens)
  - State's rights in USA - controversial how much power state VS central government should have
  - **Federalism** - government gives local territories much more autonomy instead of centrally controlling the country
  - **Devolution** - process by which central government's delegated statutory powers to lower levels of govt (state and country)
  - **Unitary states** - states that give little or no autonomy to their local territories
- How various federal configurations affect contemporary democratic societies (for example, the electoral college in America, gerrymandering - redrawing district lines to rig the vote)

## Territory, Borders, and the Geography of Nations

- **Microstates** - tiny countries that are located within larger countries (ex - Vatican City and San Marino)
- Unique shapes of states
  - **Fragmented state** - Fiji with many small, unconnected islands
  - **Elongated state** - Chile stretched long and thin along South America Pacific coast
  - **Rectangular state** - what it sounds like (ex - Angola)
  - **Compact state** - countries with relatively round shapes like Poland
  - **Perforated states** - countries like Italy that completely surround other smaller states (Italy surrounds Vatican City and San Marino)
  - **Landlocked states** - Nepal is completely surrounded by other states
  - **Prorupted state** - has long thin arm jutting out from the rest of its land
  - **Exclaves** - detached pieces that lie completely within border of another country (Wester Berlin during Cold War)
- Properties of states
  - The different shapes and locations of states lend themselves to various benefits and disadvantages
    - Large countries need to have an effective administration for the vast land they control
    - prorruption /exclaves → effectively incorporate areas that are physically detached

- Fragmented state → create cohesive nation from many distinct pieces of land
  - Some states have strategic locations (Israel, Korean Peninsula, and Panama) - note that the strategic value of a certain location can also change over time
- Various boundary types
  - **Physical boundaries** - follow important features in the natural landscape like rivers and mountain ridges
  - **Geometric boundaries** - follow straight lines and don't really have relation to natural or cultural landscape
  - **Subsequent boundaries** - drawn after a population has established and respects existing spatial patterns of certain social, cultural, and ethnic groups
  - **Antecedent boundary** - boundary is defined for a region before it is populated
  - **Superimposed boundaries** - drawn after a population has been settled into an area and doesn't take in account the social, cultural, and ethnic compositions of the populations they divide
  - **Relic boundary** - national border that no longer exists but continues to impact on the cultural or environmental geography
- Forces affecting the nation-state
  - **Centrifugal forces** - pull countries apart (regionalism, ethnic strife, territorial disputes, **Balkanization** - the political process in which a state breaks down into smaller countries and can occur when enclaves develop)
  - **Centripetal forces** - bind countries together (strong national institutions, a sense of common history, and a reliance on strong central govt)
    - Sometimes can go to far (ex - Adolf Hitler's hypernationalism leading to WWII)
- **Frontier** - area where borders are shifting and weak where people of different cultures or nationalities meet and lay claim to land (ex - Amazon Basin, Antarctica, **buffer states** - occupy spaces between two larger, potentially oppositional countries, **law of the sea** - determines which nation can harness the economic gains found in the ocean)
- Colonialism/Imperialism
  - **Imperialism** - describes a situation where one country exerts cultural or economic dominance over another without the aid of official government institutions
  - **Self-determination** - right of nation to govern itself autonomously and to determine its own destiny

- Imperialistic countries have self-determination while colonies don't (they are officially controlled by another state)
- Imperialism and colonialism continue to affect various countries around the world (notably Africa, Asia, and South America)

## International Political Geography

- **Friederich Ratzel's organic theory** (later developed into **geopolitics** by **Rudolf Kjéllen**)
  - Believes that nations **MUST** expand to maintain vibrancy
  - **BAD AND OUTDATED** - used to justify Adolf Hitler's military aggression w/ his expansionist theory of lebensraum
- **Heartland theory by Sir Halford Mackinder**
  - Great geographical "pivot" point of all human history was northern and central Asia, whoever rules that area rules the world
  - Rebuttal
    - Oceans are more important than land
    - Not enough evidence to back this theory
    - Nicholas Spykman argued the **rimland** (area surrounding heartland) was actually more important
  - **ALSO OUTDATED**
- **International organizations** - alliance of multiple countries seeking to cooperate whilst not giving up their autonomy/self-determination
  - **United Nations (UN)** → global international organization including most of the world's autonomous states and focused on international peace and security
  - **NAFTA** → trade agreement linking US, Canada, and Mexico to promote trade and open borders
  - **European Union (EU)** → a **supranational organization** (the organizations have to give up some of their sovereignty in favor of group interests) contains over a dozen European states and they have a unified currency + other perks
  - **OPEC** → Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, an IO where all member produce and export oil
  - **NATO** → countries near North Atlantic team up for military purposes and can require member states to allow other members to establish military bases w/in their territory
  - **Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)** → confederacy of independent states previously part of the Soviet Union united because of their common economic and administrative needs

- World divide
  - **east/west divide**
    - During the Cold War (1945-1989)
    - Free-market democratic Western Europe + America VS community/socialist Eastern Europe/Asia
    - **Domino theory** - once communism spreads to one other country, all the other ones will convert as well
  - **north/south divide**
    - Division between wealthy and relatively economically successful countries of Europe and NA VS poorer countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America
    - Historic legacy of colonialism/imperialism
    - Formerly colonized areas (many in the Southern hemisphere) are struggling to fix the crushing poverty and disorder characterizing the postcolonial period
- **Democratization**
  - Central goal of US diplomacy and international organizations like the UN
  - Trying to convert all the countries to a more democratic state where the people have a voice and help control the government
  - Transition to democracy isn't always smooth and in many places peoples are still being repressed by their autocratic govt's and lack the ability to elect leaders

### Spatial Conflict (Summary)

- Large component of political geography involves investigation historical and current conflicts over territory
- Spatial conflicts occur at all geographic scales
  - Locally - San Fernando Valley seeking secession from Los Angeles
  - Globally - debate over the regulation of environmental problems that cross national boundaries (ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, climate change, etc)