

# Political Geography: On the Map

Get ready to create a map that will help you understand the development of states and borders across the globe. You will need a pen and several highlighters. Before you begin, divide the backside of your map into four quadrants.

**Political Geography** is the study of the spatial patterns of conflict and cooperation among political actors at all scales. The struggle of states for territory and resources has been a key theme throughout history as states exercise their feelings of \_\_\_\_\_ for the space they occupy. Likewise, the impact of national identities in forming states, and the use of the landscape and territorial symbols, or iconography, provides insights into how geographical phenomena are deployed in struggles for power over earth space, whether terrestrial, oceanic or atmospheric. The study of the landscape is crucial to the study of political geography...think of poetry and songs that use the imagery of the physical geography of regions to inspire patriotic fervor ('America the Beautiful' is an excellent example).

A \_\_\_\_\_ is defined as a bounded political unit with territory, population, and organized government possessing power and \_\_\_\_\_. This last term denotes supreme authority within the territory of the state, and recognition by other states that this authority is legitimate. In political geography, we study how and where states seek to consolidate or expand control over territory, people and natural resources. This is done through diplomacy, and various forms of coercion, including trade embargoes, blockades and other military measures up to and including war. **(PROVIDE A DEFINITION FOR EACH NEW TERM ON THE BACK OF YOUR MAP IN THE TOP LEFT QUADRANT)**

The concept of a state is very old, with many historians and political scientists considering the development of city-states in the region we now call \_\_\_\_\_ and the various Greek, Roman and Chinese empires of more than 2000 years ago as important steps in the process. In its modern form, the state evolved in \_\_\_\_\_ from about 1500, typically in core areas (eg Paris basin) dominated by a focused and determined monarchy. By about 1900, the state system had been spread through colonialism throughout the world, particularly in Latin America, Africa and Asia, regions that had been host to a wide variety of political arrangements. **(HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL ON YOUR MAP THE LOCATIONS OF THESE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE CONCEPT – CREATE A KEY TO KEEP IT NEAT)**

**The State System:** The modern state system is usually dates to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which ended a bloody European religious conflict called the Thirty Years War. From this point forward, the conflicts in Europe were no longer religiously based, but developed through clashes between monarchical governments

over balance of power issues and overseas territories. After the French Revolution (1789), anti-monarchical republican forms of government added another element in the long struggle between Great Powers such as Britain and France. Gradually, over the next century and a half, the Ottoman, Russian and Hapsburg empires gave way to various forms of states. This reflected the social and economic changes due to the industrial revolution, which in turn led to the rise of economic systems of socialism and communism and the sense of \_\_\_\_\_, the ideology that creates national identity over all other forms of human loyalty, that brought the ambitions of the peoples of a state together.

A \_\_\_\_\_ is a group of people with a shared heritage who believe that they belong together, and who almost always develop political aspirations for special recognition, and perhaps a territorially-based state. These identities generally develop over long periods of historical time, typically centuries, though elites play a role in creating a sense of nationalism, which can develop within a generation. The Basque region of Spain and the Kurdish populations of Southwest Asia have often been identified as non-state nations or stateless nations, ie people without their own sovereign territorial unit, some of whom aspire to create such an entity.

**(HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL THEM ON YOUR MAP – CREATE A KEY AND DON'T FORGET TO ADD THE NEW TERMS TO YOUR LIST OF DEFINITIONS)** Many can be identified today, and these phenomena are a major factor in conflicts within states that refuse to recognize their claims. States where the identity of the people and the territory that they occupy are congruent are said to be \_\_\_\_\_. Two of the best examples today are homogeneous states like Japan and Denmark. **(HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL THEM ON YOUR MAP – REMEMBER TO ADD A KEY)**

**Territorial Morphology:** The shapes of states can have an impact on the ability of ruling governments to impose law and policy on state territory. While this is not a 'hard and fast' rule, states with territorial outliers are sometimes vulnerable to separatist political tendencies. We can use a term from physics to think about the state's ability to rule its territory effectively. \_\_\_\_\_ **forces** are those institutions, customs and symbols designed to keep a state together. \_\_\_\_\_ **forces**, such as regional inequalities and ethnic division, are those conditions or forces that tend to tear a state apart. \_\_\_\_\_ states are those with a minimum of variation in distance between the center and peripheral boundaries of the state. An atlas will reveal several good examples: Uruguay in South America, Zimbabwe in Southern Africa, Poland in Europe and Cambodia in Southeast Asia. Generally, these states could be easier to rule, but the principle does not always hold if ethnic conflict and corrupt governance are in evidence. Zimbabwe, for example, is very unstable. Nevertheless, these states tend not to experience separatist movements. \_\_\_\_\_ states simply have a national territory that is long and narrow. Chile and Vietnam are examples. If the state has only one economic and political core region, as in Chile,

then the state institutions will usually be able to impose power over distant regions more easily. If however, two core regions exist, as is the case with Vietnam (in the North around Hanoi, and in the South around Saigon or Ho Chi Minh city), then the state could very well experience political turbulence and division, as actually has occurred in Vietnamese history. \_\_\_\_\_ states are divided into multiple pieces of territory, separated by water bodies or other states. Island states such as Japan and Indonesia are good examples. Here, two states experience very different political outcomes. Japan has become a wealthy core economic state, with a largely homogeneous ethnic population (98-99% Japanese). It has little difficulty in ruling its territory. Indonesia is another matter entirely. This vast archipelago sweeps across the Indian Ocean to the Melanesian portion of the Pacific World, with over 13,000 islands! Inside its territory, many islands include ethnic groups that are hostile to each other, for religious and other reasons. Indonesia recently lost the territory of East Timor, whose population had been fighting for independence since the 1970's. It became the world's newest state in 2002. Indonesia is a relatively poor peripheral country in the global economy, and this no doubt contributes to its political difficulties. \_\_\_\_\_ states can also experience political turbulence. Thailand and Burma (Myanmar) provide examples. These states have a relatively compact core region, with a long territorial extension. In both cases, the regions of extension contain ethnic groups that are not well integrated into the state. In Thailand, a overwhelmingly Buddhist society, the provinces in the southern tip of the country, near Malaysia, are inhabited by Muslim peoples who feel little attachment to the state of which they are a part. This region has recently (as of 2004) experienced civil unrest. If ethnically distinct and economically poor people live in these prorupt regions, or any peripheral region in a state, then conditions are favorable for the development of separatism. \_\_\_\_\_ states are a rarity; two examples will suffice. The state of Lesotho, landlocked and surrounded by South Africa, forms a perforation in that larger country, and is at the mercy of South Africa for its economic well-being, and political survival. In a previous era, up to 1989, the former German Democratic Republic (or East Germany) was perforated by the city formerly known as West Berlin. That city is now united as the capital of the unified Federal Republic of Germany. **(HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL AN EXAMPLE OF EACH ON YOUR MAP – YOU STILL MIGHT WANT TO USE THAT KEY)**

**Boundaries and Frontiers:** The boundaries separating states are known as international boundaries, and they establish the territorial limits of the legal authority of states. These boundaries can be \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. From the standpoint of political geography, all state territories are separated from each other by legally recognized boundaries, though many of these are contested, sometimes leading to military conflict between states.

**Physical or Natural boundaries** typically entail the use of rivers and mountains. At first glance, these might seem to be useful due to their apparent clarity, visibility and distinctiveness on the earth's landscapes. But look more closely and we can see that

mountains can be divided peak to peak or by ridgelines, which separate the headwaters of rivers. These two features do not always coincide. The Himalayas are the largest mountain range and home to several international borders, of which many are contested. As for rivers, some of those used for boundaries can change course! An example is the Rio Grande, which forms the boundary between Mexico and the United States. This boundary had to be renegotiated between the two states, which have a history of antagonism and conflict dating back to the wars of Texas independence (1836) and 1846-48. **(HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL AN EXAMPLE OF EACH ON YOUR MAP – USING A KEY CAN HELP TO KEEP IT NEAT!)**

**Frontiers** are politically weak regions or places between two or more states or political units that are often ecologically marginal, but may be ascribed strategic significance. Boundaries that are weakly developed, poorly delimited can cause conflict when resources or strategic significance are identified. Tibet and Afghanistan provide historical examples. During the nineteenth century these arid, highland regions were sites of conflict between the British and Russian Empires. In what was called “The Great Game,” both empires vied for influence with local rulers and peoples as the British sought to prevent Russian expansion toward India, which was the ‘jewel in the Crown’ of the British Empire. Today, Tibet is ruled by China, another powerful state, and Afghanistan is now struggling to rebuild a sense of nationhood from disparate regions after more than twenty years of civil war and foreign interference. **(HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL EACH EXAMPLE ON YOUR MAP – KEY?)**

**Formation of boundaries.** There are four steps in the growth of boundaries into their final form. First the boundary is \_\_\_\_\_. This is the phase in which the exact location of a boundary is legally described and negotiated. Next is \_\_\_\_\_. This step occurs when the boundary’s definition is drawn on a map. Identifying the location on a map gives the parties that are being divided an opportunity to discuss and agree to the location. The third step, \_\_\_\_\_ is the visible marking of a boundary on the landscape with a fence, line, sign, wall, etc. although the Great Wall of China and the Berlin Wall (both \_\_\_\_\_ boundaries now) are examples of borders being highly visible on the landscape, this is not always the case. The final phase of forming a boundary is to establish its \_\_\_\_\_. This is the enforcement by a government or the people associated with the boundary that has been created. **(CREATE A FLOW CHART FOR THIS PROCESS ON THE BACK OF YOUR MAP IN THE TOP RIGHT QUADRANT)**

**Political boundaries** are delimited or imposed through the recognition of historical custom, by treaty or by the will of a stronger power. \_\_\_\_\_ **boundaries** existed on the cultural landscape prior to the emergence of a formal state system for that area. This is often seen as an ideal situation of border development as the establishment of the border is in place for so long that it is not the focus of debate among the residents. \_\_\_\_\_ **boundaries** develop with the ethno-cultural divisions of a regional landscape. These are then adjusted through conflict and negotiation, changing with the relative strengths of the parties involved. These changes may occur as an area's ethno-cultural characteristics change resulting of migration and population growth or simply as one population is conquered by another. These borders are often subject to controversy as populations develop their sense of territoriality. \_\_\_\_\_ can occur as a state wishes to regain territory that is once controlled and feels entitled to, while \_\_\_\_\_ can also occur as diverse population prefer to divide into smaller subdivisions to maintain their own sovereignty. \_\_\_\_\_ **boundaries** were typically drawn by colonial states. The best examples of these types of boundaries are the geometric lines drawn by European powers in Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The political consequences of these geographies would prove to be very difficult indeed for newly independent African states in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, \_\_\_\_\_ **boundaries** are no longer politically recognized, but reflect previous political conditions. Examples include the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel division of Vietnam into northern and southern states, made relict by the collapse of the southern state in 1975. More recently, Germany's Cold War boundary between eastern and western entities ceased to exist with the collapse of the Communist East German state in 1989-90. **(HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL AN EXAMPLE OF EACH ON YOUR MAP – CREATING A KEY HERE WILL DEFINITELY BE HELPFUL)**

**Offshore or Maritime boundaries** refer to international boundaries over water. The laws and customs of centuries have been encapsulated in the 1982 draft treaty of the \_\_\_\_\_ **(UNCLOS)**. The convention delimits territorial boundaries and rights over resources, using a series of four zones, with each successive zone representing diminishing control by a state. A \_\_\_\_\_ **zone** ranges up to 12 nautical miles (19 km) or 'nm' (a nautical mile is 1.15 statute miles), and within this zone states have sovereign rights, such as exclusive claim to live marine resources. Vessels from other countries do have the right of innocent passage. A \_\_\_\_\_ **zone** exists to 24 nm (38 km), in which coastal states can enforce customs, immigration and environmental laws, and enjoy the right of 'hot pursuit' of hostile aircraft and vessels. An \_\_\_\_\_ **zone** exists up to 200 nm (370 km). Within this EEZ, the state has exclusive rights to explore and exploit all types of natural and marine resources in both waters and on and beneath the seabed. If the continental

shelf continues beyond the coast, countries can exploit this up to 350 nm (560 km). Vessels have all rights of innocent passage. The \_\_\_\_\_ are beyond the EEZ's of states. They are open to all states, and no state has the right to interfere with others sailing, fishing, flying over or engaging in scientific research. Mineral resources are to be managed for the common benefit of humanity. These provisions of the Law of the Sea became a formal part of international law in 1994. **(DRAW A DIAGRAM ON THE BACK OF THE MAP TO EXPLAIN THESE REGULATIONS IN THE BOTTOM LEFT QUADRANT OF THE PAPER)**

**Border Disputes.** As states administer the borders they have created there is often difficulty that arises with their neighbors. Surprisingly, it is not just about where to place the boundary. When the dispute is simply about where the boundary is, it is called a \_\_\_\_\_ or "territorial" boundary disputes. This generally arise from a debate over the legal language of the treaty that established the boundary. One of the countries involved will usually sue another country in the International Court of Justice (World Court) which will try to determine what was intended when the boundaries were initially described. Disputes can also arise over \_\_\_\_\_ or positional boundary disputes. This happens when the definition of the border is not questioned but the interpretation of the definition of the border is. Confused yet? In these cases, the border might have shifted, and the original intention of the boundary is called into question. This is often the case when environmental changes like erosion or meandering of rivers occurs. \_\_\_\_\_ or functional boundary disputes occur when two countries next to each other disagree on the administration of the border. A prime example of this is the US and Mexico border. Both sides agree where the border is but cannot agree on how to monitor the traffic flowing across the border. The final category of boundary or border disputes is \_\_\_\_\_ or resource boundary disputes. This occurs when the parties involved do not question the boundary itself but rather the use of a resource in the area of it (next to it, in the air above it, or underground). For example, when an aquifer extends across a boundary, who has dominant rights to the water? Or who has the right to drill for oil out at sea? **(HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL AN EXAMPLE OF EACH ON YOUR MAP – CREATING A KEY HERE WILL DEFINITELY BE HELPFUL)**

**There is so much more we could add to the map....BUT, IT'S TIME TO WRAP THINGS UP!!!**

1. Make your map a GOOD map! What does it need to have? Verify with your group and check with your teacher!
2. Sum up your understanding of the geopolitical process. In the bottom right quadrant on the back side of your map, write a paragraph describing the current state of geopolitics in the world using at least 6 terms and no more than 10.