



Figure 12.2 These flags, symbols of separate member states, grace the front of the United Nations building in New York City. Although central to political geographic interest, states are only one level of the political organization of space.

begin with states (countries) and end with local political systems.

Emphasis here on political entities should not make us lose sight of the reality that states are rooted in the operations of the economy and society they represent, that social and economic disputes are as significant as border confrontations, and that in some regards transnational corporations and other nongovernmental agencies may exert more influence in international affairs than do the separate states in which they are housed or operate. Some of those expanded political considerations are alluded to in the discussions that follow; others were developed more fully in Chapter 9.

National Political Systems

One of the most significant elements in cultural geography is the nearly complete division of the earth's land surface into separate national units, as shown on the Countries of the World map inside this book's cover. Even Antarctica is subject to the rival territorial claims of seven countries, although these claims have not been pressed because of the Antarctic Treaty of 1961 (Figure 12.3). A second element is that this division into country units is relatively recent. Although countries and empires have existed since the days of early Egypt and Mesopotamia, only in the last century has the world been almost completely divided into independent governing entities. Now people everywhere accept the idea of the state and its claim to sovereignty within its borders as normal.

States, Nations, and Nation-States

Before we begin our consideration of political systems, we need to clarify some terminology. Geographers use the

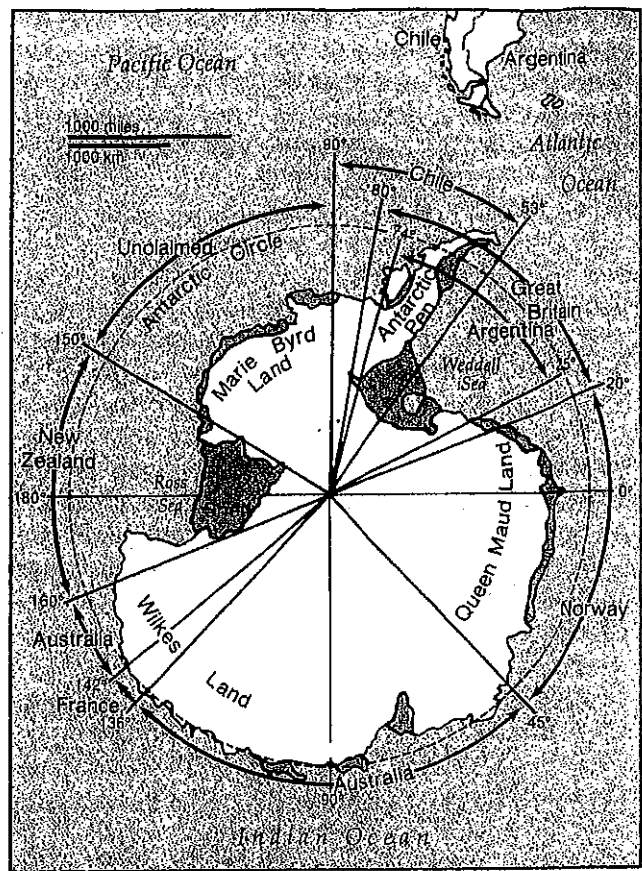


Figure 12.3 Territorial claims in Antarctica. Although seven countries claim sovereignty over portions of Antarctica, and three of the claims overlap, the continent has no permanent inhabitants or established local government.

words *state* and *nation* somewhat differently than the way they are used in everyday speech; sometimes confusion arises because each word has more than one meaning. A state can be defined as either (1) any of the political units forming a federal government (e.g., one of the United States) or as (2) a recognized independent political entity holding sovereignty over a territory (e.g., the United States). In this latter sense, *state* is synonymous with *country* or *nation*. That is, a nation can also be defined as (1) an independent political unit holding sovereignty over a territory (e.g., a member of the United Nations). But it can also be used to describe (2) a community of people with a common ancestry, culture, and territory (e.g., the Kurdish nation). The second definition is *not* synonymous with state or country.

To avoid confusion, we shall define a **state** on the international level as an independent political unit occupying a defined, permanently populated territory and having full sovereign control over its internal and foreign affairs. We will use *country* as a synonym for the territorial and political concept of "state." Not all recognized territorial entities are states. Antarctica, for example, has neither established government nor permanent population, and it

... therefore, not a state. Nor are colonies or protectorates recognized as states. Although they have defined extent, permanent inhabitants, and some degree of separate governmental structure, they lack full control over all of their internal and external affairs. More importantly, they lack recognition as states by the international community, a decisive consideration in the proper use of the term "state."

We use nation in its second sense, as a reference to people, not to political structure. A **nation** is a group of people with a common culture occupying a particular territory, bound together by a strong sense of unity arising from shared beliefs and customs. Language and religion may be unifying elements, but even more important are an emotional conviction of cultural distinctiveness and a sense of ethnocentrism. The Cree nation exists because of its cultural uniqueness, not by virtue of territorial sovereignty.

The composite term **nation-state** properly refers to a state whose territorial extent coincides with that occupied by a distinct nation or people or, at least, whose population shares a general sense of cohesion and adherence to a set

of common values (Figure 12.4). That is, a nation-state is an entity whose members feel a natural connection to each other by virtue of sharing language, religion, or other cultural characteristics strong enough both to bind them together and to give them a sense of distinction from all others outside the community. Although many nations strive for consensus values and loyalty to their nation, they can claim to be ethnic nation-states. Iceland, Denmark, and Poland are often cited as acceptable European examples; Japan is an Asian illustration.

A *binational* or *multinational state* is one that contains more than one nation. Often, no single ethnic group dominates the population. In the constitutional structure of the former Soviet Union before 1988, one division of the legislative branch of the government was termed the Soviet Council of Nationalities. It was composed of representatives from various divisions of the Soviet Union populated by groups of ethnically recognized "nations": Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Tatars, and others. In this instance, the concept of nationality was territorially less than the extent of the s

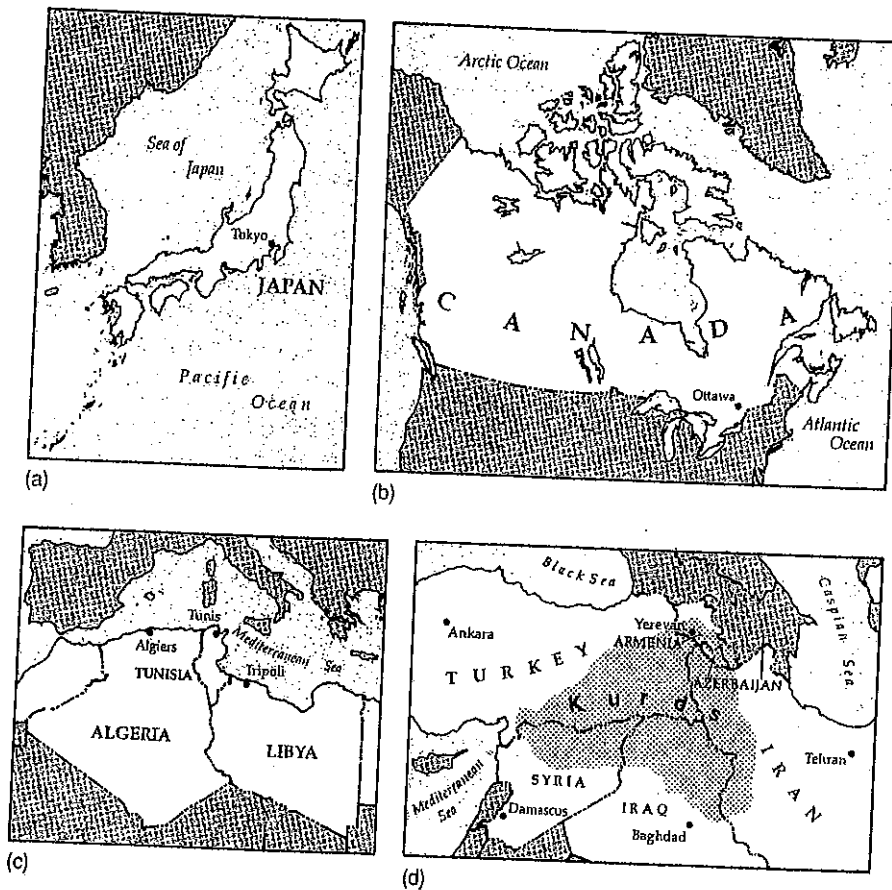


Figure 12.4 Types of relationships between "states" and "nations." (a) A nation-state. Japan is an example of a state occupied by a distinct nation, or people. (b) A multinational state. Canada contains three distinct nations (native Canadians and those of British or French origin) and has two official languages, English and French. (c) A part-nation state. The Arab nation extends across and dominates many states in northern Africa and the Middle East. (d) A stateless nation. An ancient Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

Alternatively, a single nation may be dispersed across and be predominant in two or more states. This is the case with the *part-nation state*. Here, a people's sense of nationality exceeds the areal limits of a single country. An example is the Arab nation, which dominates 7 states.

Finally, there is the special case of the *stateless nation*, a people without a state. The Kurds, for example, are a nation of some 20 million people divided among six states and dominant in none (Figure 12.4d). Kurdish nationalism has survived over the centuries, and many Kurds nurture a vision of an independent Kurdistan. Other stateless nations are Macedonians, Basques, and Palestinians. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) took over administrative control of the Gaza Strip and Jericho from Israel in 1994 and of additional towns and districts within the West Bank region in 1995 and 1996, steps that Palestinians expect to lead to independent statehood.

The Evolution of the Modern State

Whether we think in terms of nation or state, the concept and practice of political organization of space and people arose independently in many parts of the world. Certainly, one of the distinguishing characteristics of very early culture hearths—including those shown on Figure 2.16—was the political organization of their peoples and areas. The larger and more complex the economic structures they developed, the more sophisticated became their mechanisms of political control and territorial administration.

Our Western orientations and biases may incline us to trace ideas of spatial political organization through their Near Eastern, Mediterranean, and Western European expressions. Mesopotamian and classical Greek city states, the Roman Empire, and European colonizing kingdoms and warring principalities were, however, neither unique nor particularly unusual. Southern, southeastern, and eastern Asia had their counterparts, as did sub-Saharan Africa and the Western Hemisphere. It is true that Western European models and colonization strongly influenced the forms and structures of modern states in both hemispheres, but the cultural roots of statehood run deeper and reach further back in many parts of the world than European example alone suggests.

The now universal idea of the modern state was developed by European political philosophers in the 18th century. Their views advanced the concept that people owe allegiance to a state and the people it represents rather than to its leader, such as a king or feudal lord. The new concept coincided in France with the French Revolution and spread over Western Europe, to England, Spain, and Germany.

Many states are the result of European expansion during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, when much of Africa, Asia, and the Americas was divided into colonies. Usually these colonial claims were given fixed and described boundaries where none had earlier been formally defined. Of course, precolonial indigenous populations had relatively established home areas of control within which there was recognized dominance and border defense and from which there were, perhaps, raids of plunder or conquest of neighboring "foreign" districts. Beyond understood tribal territories, great empires arose, again with recognized outer limits of influence or control: Mogul and Chinese; Benin and Zulu; Incan and Aztec. Upon them where they still existed, and upon the less formally organized spatial patterns of effective tribal control, European colonizers imposed their arbitrary new administrative divisions of the land. In fact, tribes that had little in common were often joined in the same colony (Figure 12.5). The new divisions, therefore, were not usually based on meaningful cultural or physical lines. Instead, the boundaries simply represented the limits of the colonizing empire's power.

As these former colonies have gained political independence, they have retained the idea of the state. They have generally accepted—in the case of Africa, by a conscious decision to avoid precolonial territorial or ethnic claims that could lead to war—the borders established by their former European rulers (Figure 12.6). The problem that many of the new countries face is "nation building"—developing feelings of loyalty to the state among their arbitrarily associated citizens. The Democratic Republic of the Congo ("Zaire" from 1971 to 1997), the former Belgian Congo, contains some 270 frequently antagonistic ethnic groups. Only if past tribal animosities can be converted into an overriding spirit of national cohesion will such countries truly be nation-states.

The idea of separate statehood grew slowly at first and, more recently, has accelerated rapidly. At the time of the Declaration of Independence of the United States in 1776, there were only some 35 empires, kingdoms, and countries in the entire world. By the beginning of World War II in 1939, their number had only doubled to about 70. Following that war, the end of the colonial era brought a rapid increase in the number of sovereign states. From the former British Empire and Commonwealth, there have come the independent countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Singapore in Asia, and Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia in Africa. Even this extensive list is not complete. A similar process has occurred in most of the former overseas possessions of the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and France. By 1990, independent states

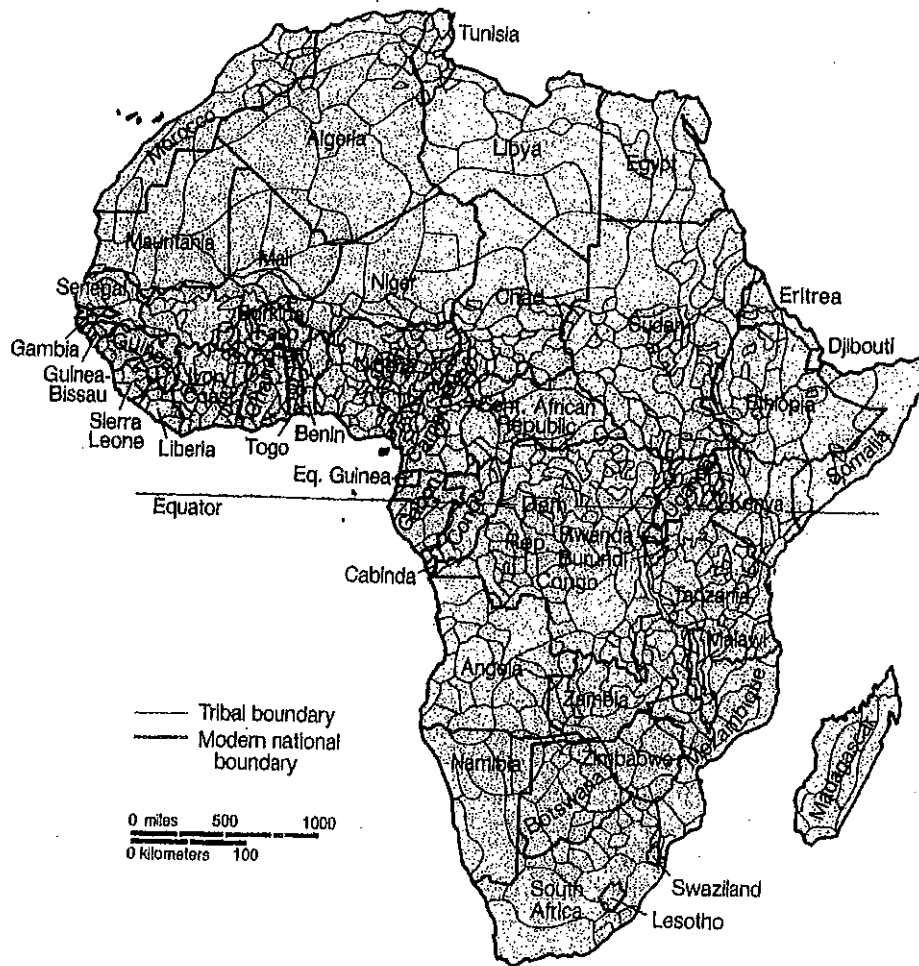


Figure 12.5 The discrepancies between tribal and national boundaries in Africa. Tribal boundaries were ignored by European colonial powers. The result has been significant ethnic diversity in nearly all African countries.

Redrawn from *World Regional Geography: A Question of Place* by Paul Ward English, with James Andrew Miller. Copyright © 1977 Harper & Row. Used by permission of the author.

totaled nearly 200 and their number increased again following—among other political geographic developments—the disintegration of the former USSR and Yugoslavia during the early 1990s (Figure 12.7).

Geographic Characteristics of States

Every state has certain geographic characteristics by which it can be described and that set it apart from all other states. A look at the world political map inside the cover of this book confirms that every state is unique. The size, shape, and location of any one state combine to distinguish it from all others. These characteristics are of more than academic interest, because they also affect the power and stability of states.

Size

The area that a state occupies may be large, as is true of China, or small, as is Liechtenstein. The world's largest country, Russia, occupies over 17 million square kilome-

ters (6.5 million sq mi), some 11% of the earth's land surface—nearly as large as the whole continent of South America and more than one million times as large as Nauru, one of the *ministates* or *microstates* found in all parts of the world (see "The Ministates").

An easy assumption would be that the larger a state's area, the greater is the chance that it will include the ores, energy supplies, and fertile soils from which it can benefit. In general, that assumption is valid, but much depends on accidents of location. Mineral resources are unevenly distributed, and size alone does not guarantee their presence within a state. Australia, Canada, and Russia, though large in territory, have relatively small areas capable of supporting productive agriculture. Great size, in fact, may be a disadvantage. A very large country may have vast areas that are remote, sparsely populated, and hard to integrate into the mainstream of economy and society. Small states are more apt than large ones to have a culturally homogeneous population. They find it easier to



Figure 12.7 By mid-1992, 15 newly independent countries had taken the place of the former USSR.

develop transportation and communication systems to link the sections of the country, and, of course, they have shorter boundaries to defend against invasion. Size alone, then, is not critical in determining a country's stability and strength, but it is a contributing factor.

Shape

Like size, a country's shape can affect its well-being as a state by fostering or hindering effective organization. Assuming no major topographical barriers, the most efficient form would be a circle with the capital located in the center. In such a country, all places could be reached from the center in a minimal amount of time and with the least expenditure for roads, railway lines, and so on. It would also have the shortest possible borders to defend. Uruguay, Zimbabwe, and Poland have roughly circular shapes, forming a **compact state** (Figure 12.8).

Prorupt states are nearly compact but possess one or sometimes two narrow extensions of territory. Prorruption may simply reflect peninsular elongations of land area, as in the case of Myanmar and Thailand. In other instances, the extensions have an economic or strategic significance, recording a past history of international negotiation to secure access to resources or water routes or to establish a buffer zone between states that would otherwise adjoin. The prorptions of Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Namibia fall into this category. The Caprivi Strip of Namibia, for example, which extends eastward from the main part of the country, was designed by the Germans to give what was then their colony of Southwest Africa access to the Zambezi River. Whatever their origin, prorptions tend to isolate a portion of a state.

The least efficient shape administratively is represented by countries like Norway, Vietnam, or Chile, which are long and narrow. In such **elongated states**, the parts of the country far from the capital are likely to be isolated because great expenditures are required to link them to the core. These countries are also likely to encompass more diversity of climate, resources, and peoples than compact states, perhaps to the detriment of national cohesion or, perhaps, to the promotion of economic strength.

A fourth class of **fragmented states** includes countries composed entirely of islands (e.g., the Philippines and Indonesia), countries that are partly on islands and partly on the mainland (Italy and Malaysia), and those that are chiefly on the mainland but whose territory is separated by another state (the United States). Pakistan was a fragmented country until 1971, when the eastern part—1600 kilometers (1000 mi) distant—broke away from the west and declared itself the independent state of Bangladesh. Fragmentation and isolation can weaken centralized control of state territory and increase the regionalism that may lead to separatist movements. That was the case with Bangladesh; it also is a problem in the Philippines and Indonesia, the latter made up of over 13,000 islands stretched out along a 5100-kilometer (3200-mi) arc.

A special case of fragmentation occurs when a territorial outlier of one state is located within another. Before German unification, West Berlin was an outlier of West Germany within the eastern German Democratic Republic. Europe has many such **exclaves**, outlying bits of one country inside another country. Kleinwalsertal, for example, is a patch of Austria accessible only from Germany. Baarle-Hertog is a fragment of Belgium inside Holland;

The Ministates

Totally or partially autonomous political units that are small in area and population pose some intriguing questions. Should size be a criterion for statehood? What is the potential of ministates to cause friction among the major powers? Under what conditions are they entitled to representation in international assemblies like the United Nations?

Almost half the world's independent countries contain fewer than 5 million people. Of these, more than 40 have under 1 million, the population size adopted by the United Nations as the upper limit defining "small states," though not too small to be members of that organization. Nauru has about 10,000 inhabitants on its 21 square kilometers (8.2 sq mi). Other areally small states like Singapore (580 sq km; 224 sq mi) have populations (3.5 million) well above the UN criterion. Many are island territories located in the West Indies and the Pacific Ocean (such as Grenada and Tonga Islands), but Europe (Vatican City and Andorra), Asia (Bahrain), and Africa (Djibouti and Equatorial Guinea) have their share.

Many ministates are vestiges of colonial systems that no longer exist. Some of the small countries of West Africa and on the Arabian peninsula fall into this category. Others, such as Mauritius, served primarily as refueling stops on transoceanic shipping lanes. However, some occupy strategic locations (such as Bahrain, Malta, and Singapore), and others contain valuable minerals (Kuwait, Nauru, and Trinidad). The possibility of claiming 370-kilometer-wide (200 nautical mile) zones of adjacent seas

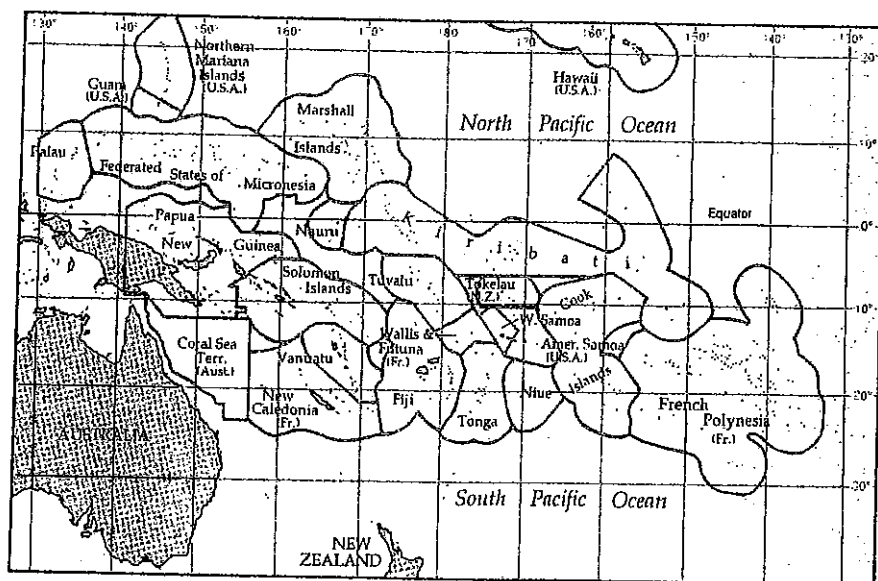
(see "Specks and Spoils," page 471) adds to the attraction of yet others.

Their strategic or economic value can expose small islands and territories to unwanted attention from larger neighbors. The 1982 war between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands (claimed as the *Islas Malvinas* by Argentina) and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 demonstrate the ability of such areas to bring major powers into conflict and to receive world attention that is out of proportion to their size and population.

The proliferation of tiny countries raises the question of their representation and their voting weight in international assemblies. Should there be a minimum size necessary for participation in such bodies? Should countries receive a vote proportional to their population? Within the United Nations, the Small Island

Developing States (SIDS) recently have emerged as a significant power bloc, controlling more than one-fifth of UN General Assembly votes. Since forming themselves into the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in November 1990, they have proved to have unexpected clout and played a key role in placing New Zealand on the Security Council in 1993.

The influence of the United States and other major powers in the United Nations has already been eroded by the small states. Although the United States pays 25% of the UN budget and has about one and one-half times the population of all the small countries combined, its vote can be balanced by that of any of them. The fact that as many as 50 additional territories may gain independence in the next few years underscores the international interest in them.



Pacific Ocean Ministates

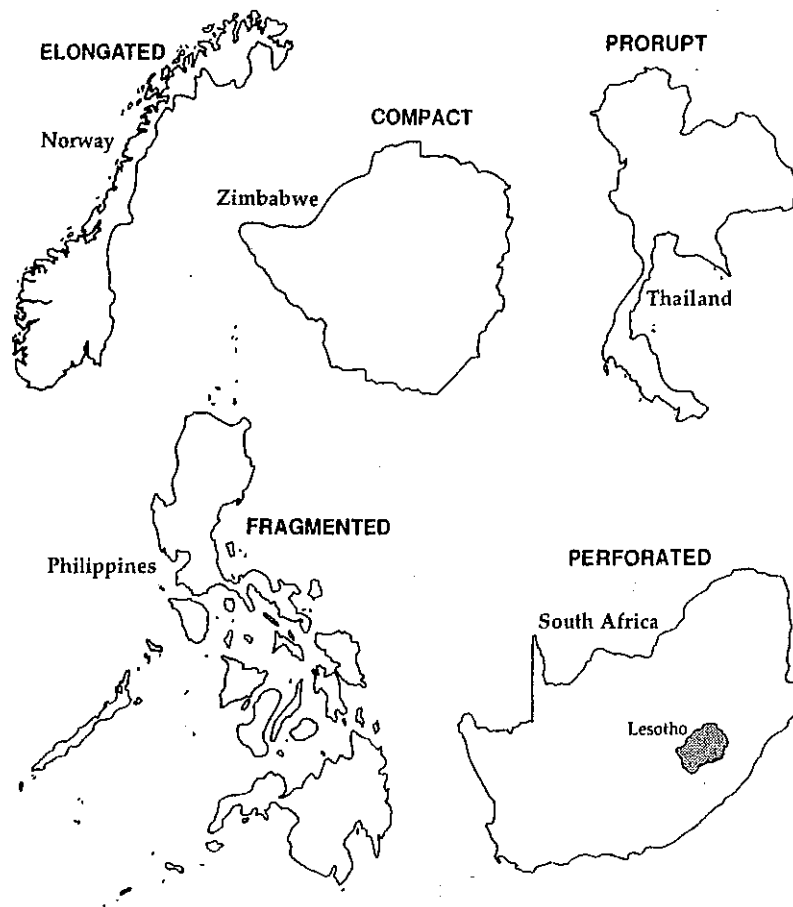


Figure 12.8 Shapes of states. The sizes of the countries should not be compared. Each is drawn on a different scale.

Campione d'Italia is an Italian outlier in Switzerland and Büsingen is a German one; and Llívia is a totally Spanish (Catalan) town of 930 residents 3 miles inside France. Exclaves are not limited to Europe, of course. African examples include Cabinda, an enclave of Angola, and Mililla and Ceuta, two Spanish exclaves in Morocco.

The counterpart of an exclave, an **enclave**, helps to define the fifth class of country shapes, the **perforated state**. A perforated state completely surrounds a territory that it does not rule as, for example, the Republic of South Africa surrounds Lesotho. The enclave, the surrounded territory, may be independent or may be part of another country. Two of Europe's smallest independent states, San Marino and Vatican City, are enclaves that perforate Italy. As an *exclave* of former West Germany, West Berlin perforated the national territory of former East Germany and was an *enclave* in it. The stability of the perforated state can be weakened if the enclave is occupied by people whose value systems differ from those of the surrounding country.

Location

The significance of size and shape as factors in national being can be modified by a state's location, both ab-

solute and relative. Although both Canada and Russia are extremely large, their *absolute* location in upper middle latitudes reduces their size advantages when agricultural potential is considered. To take another example, Iceland has a reasonably compact shape, but its location in the North Atlantic Ocean, just south of the Arctic Circle, means that most of the country is barren, with settlement confined to the rim of the island.

A state's *relative* location, its position compared to that of other countries, is as important as its absolute location. *Landlocked* states, those lacking ocean frontage and surrounded by other states, are at a commercial and strategic disadvantage (Figure 12.9). They lack easy access to both maritime (sea-borne) trade and the resources found in coastal waters and submerged lands. Bolivia gained 480 kilometers (300 mi) of sea frontier along with its independence in 1825, but lost its ocean frontage by conquest to Chile in 1879. Its annual Day of the Sea ceremony reminds Bolivians of their loss and of continuing diplomatic efforts to secure an alternate outlet. The number of landlocked states—about 40—increased greatly with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the creation of new, smaller nation-states out of such former multinational countries as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

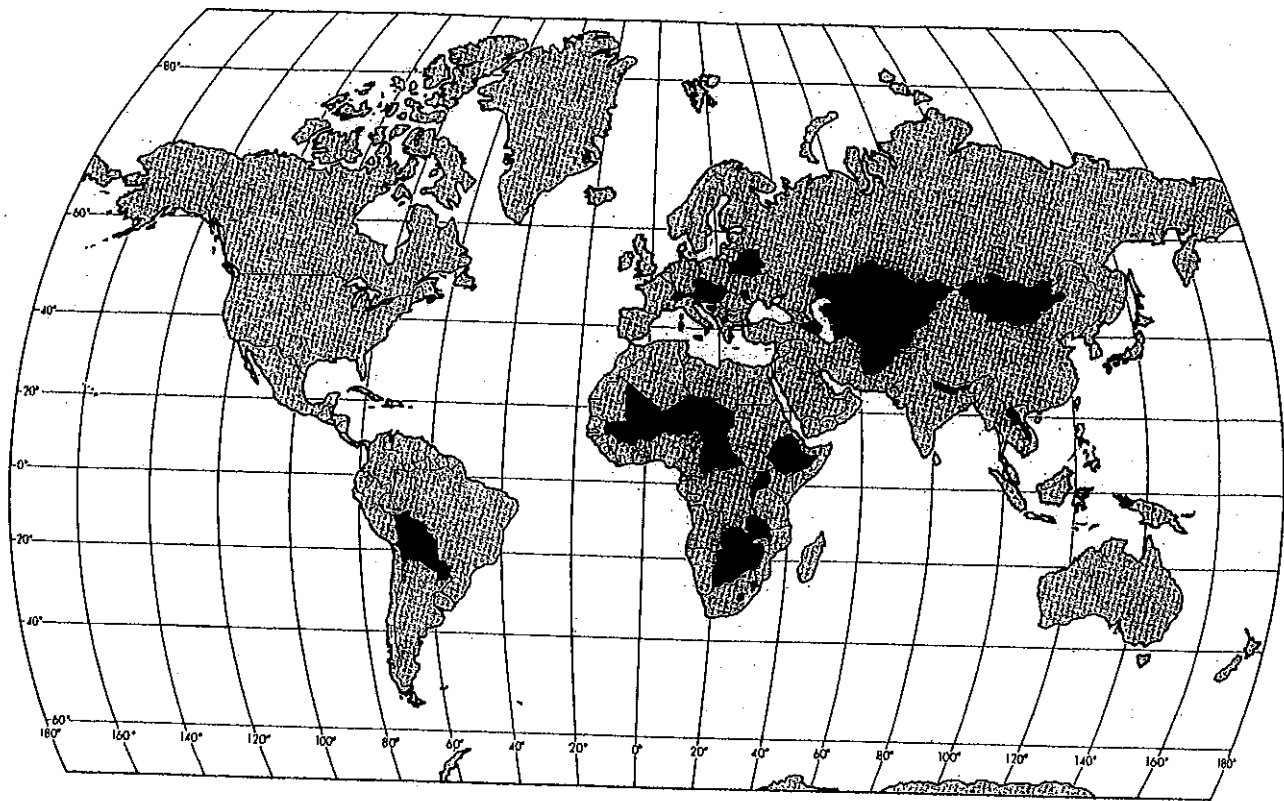


Figure 12.9 Landlocked states.

In a few instances, a favorable relative location constitutes the primary resource of a state. Singapore, a state of only 580 square kilometers (224 sq mi), is located at a crossroads of world shipping and commerce. Based on its port and commercial activities and buttressed by its more recent industrial development, Singapore has become a notable Southeast Asian economic success. In general, history has shown that countries benefit from a location on major trade routes, not only from the economic advantages such a location carries, but also because they are exposed to the diffusion of new ideas and technologies.

Cores and Capitals

Many states have come to assume their present shape, and thus the location they occupy, as a result of growth over centuries. They grew outward from a central region, gradually expanding into surrounding territory. The original nucleus, or **core area**, of a state usually contains its most developed economic base, densest population and largest cities, the best developed transportation systems, and—at least formerly if no longer—the resources which sustained it. All of these elements become less intense away from the national core. Transportation networks thin, urbanization ratios and city sizes decline, and economic development is less concentrated. The outlying resource base may be rich, but generally is of more recent exploitation with product and benefit tending to flow to the established heartlands. The developed cores of states, then, can be contrasted to their subordinate peripheries

just as we saw the *core-periphery* idea applicable in an international developmental context in Chapter 10.

Easily recognized and unmistakably dominant national cores include the Paris Basin of France, London in southeastern England, Moscow and the major cities of European Russia, northeastern United States and southeastern Canada, and the Buenos Aires megalopolis in Argentina. Not all countries have such clearly defined cores—Chad, or Mongolia, or Saudi Arabia, for example—and some may have two or more rival core areas. Ecuador, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Vietnam are examples of multicore states.

The capital city of a state is usually within its core region and frequently is the very focus of it, dominant not only because it is the seat of central authority but because of the concentration of population and economic functions as well. That is, in many countries the capital city is also the largest or *primate* city, dominating the structure of the entire country. Paris in France, London in the United Kingdom, and Mexico City are examples of that kind of political, cultural, and economic primacy (see page 408 and Figure 11.16).

This association of capital with core is common in what have been called the *unitary states*, countries with highly centralized governments, relatively few internal cultural contrasts, a strong sense of national identity, and borders that are clearly cultural as well as political boundaries. Most European cores and capitals are of this type. It is also found in many newly independent countries wh

former colonial occupiers established a primary center of exploitation and administration and developed a functioning core in a region that lacked an urban structure or organized government. With independence, the new states retained the established infrastructure, added new functions to the capital and, through lavish expenditures on governmental, public, and commercial buildings, sought to create prestigious symbols of nationhood.

In *federal states*, associations of more or less equal provinces or states with strong regional governmental responsibilities, the national capital city may have been newly created or selected to serve as the administrative center. Although part of a generalized core region of the country, the designated capital was not its largest city and acquired few of the additional functions to make it so. Ottawa, Canada; Washington, D.C.; and Canberra, Australia, are examples (Figure 12.10).

All other things being equal, a capital located in the center of the country provides equal access to the government, facilitates communication to and from the political hub, and enables the government to exert its authority easily. Many capital cities, such as Washington, D.C., were centrally located when they were designated as seats of government but lost their centrality as the state expanded.

Some capital cities have been relocated outside of peripheral national core regions, at least in part to achieve the presumed advantages of centrality. Two examples of

such relocation are from Karachi inland to Islamabad, Pakistan and from Istanbul to Ankara, in the center of Turkey's territory. A particular type of relocated capital is the *forward-thrust capital city*, one that has been deliberately sited in a state's interior to signal the government's awareness of regions away from an off-center core and interest in encouraging more uniform development. In the late 1950s, Brazil relocated its capital from Rio de Janeiro to the new city of Brasília to demonstrate its intent to develop the vast interior of the country. The West African country, Nigeria, has been building the new capital of Abuja near its geographic center since the late 1970s, with relocation there of government offices and foreign embassies in the early 1990s. The British colonial government relocated Canada's capital six times between 1841 and 1865, in part seeking centrality to the mid-19th-century population pattern and in part seeking a location that bridged that colony's cultural divide (Figure 12.11). Japanese law of 1997 calling for the relocation out of Tokyo of the parliament building, Supreme Court, and other main ministries by 2010 is more related to earthquake fears and a search for seismic safety than to enhance convenience or governmental efficiency.

Boundaries: The Limits of the State

We noted earlier that no portion of the earth's land surface is outside the claimed control of a national unit, the

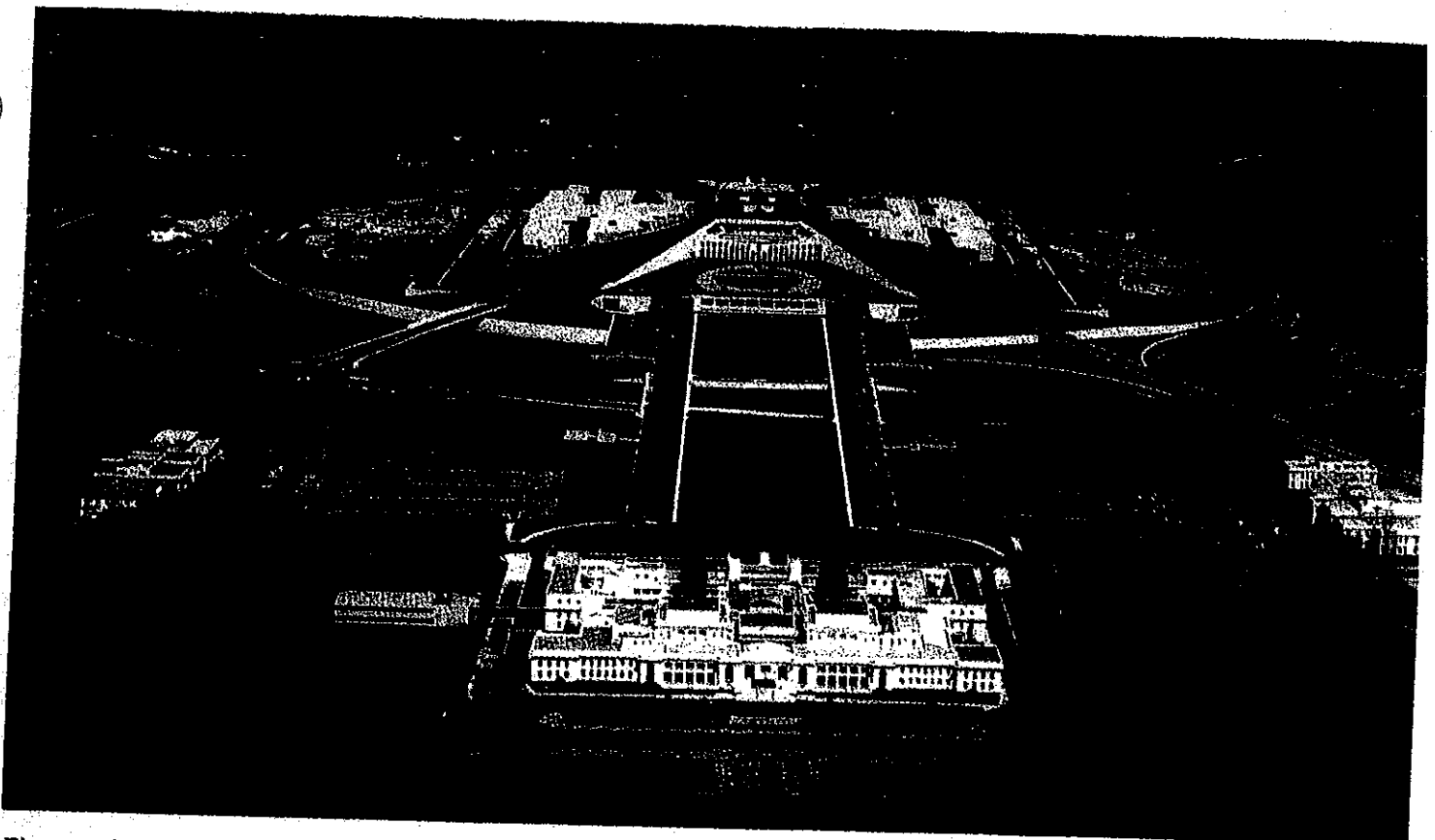


Figure 12.10 Canberra, the planned capital of Australia, was deliberately sited away from the country's largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne. Planned capitals are often architectural showcases, providing a focus for national pride.

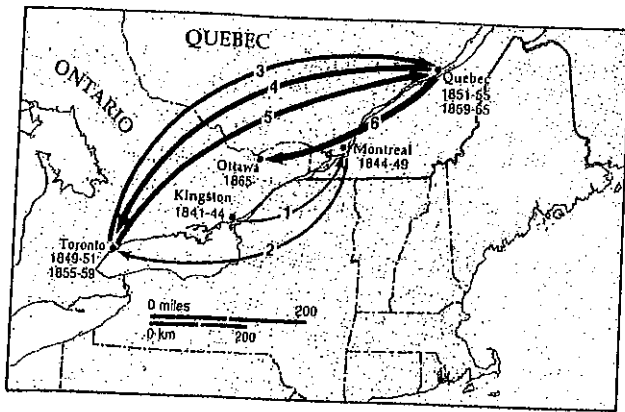


Figure 12.11 Canada's migratory capital. Kingston was chosen as the first capital of the united Province of Canada in preference to either Quebec, capital of Lower Canada, or Toronto, that of Upper Canada. In 1844, governmental functions were relocated to Montreal where they remained until 1849, after which they shifted back and forth—as the map indicates—between Toronto and Quebec. An 1865 session of the provincial legislature was held in Ottawa, the city that became the capital of the Confederation of Canada in 1867.

Redrawn with permission from David B. Knight, *A Capital for Canada* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Geography, Research Paper No. 182, 1977), Figure 1, p. vii.

Even uninhabited Antarctica has had territorial claims imposed upon it (Figure 12.3). Each of the world's states is separated from its neighbors by *international boundaries*, or lines that establish the limit of each state's jurisdiction and authority. Boundaries indicate where the sovereignty of one state ends and that of another begins.

Within its own bounded territory, a state administers laws, collects taxes, provides for defense, and performs other such governmental functions. Thus, the location of the boundary determines the kind of money people in a given area use, the legal code to which they are subject, the army they may be called upon to join, and the language and perhaps the religion children are taught in school. These examples suggest how boundaries serve as powerful reinforcers of cultural variation over the earth's surface.

Territorial claims of sovereignty, it should be noted, are three-dimensional. International boundaries mark not only the outer limits of a state's claim to land (or water) on the surface, but are also projected downward to the center of the earth in accordance with international consensus allocating rights to subsurface resources. States also project their sovereignty upward, but with less certainty because of a lack of agreement on the upper limits of territorial space. Properly viewed, then, an international boundary is a line without breadth; it is a vertical interface between adjacent state sovereignties.

Before boundaries were delimited, nations or empires were likely to be separated by *frontier zones*, ill-defined and fluctuating areas marking the effective end of

a state's authority. Such zones were often uninhabited or only sparsely populated and were liable to change with shifting settlement patterns. Many present-day international boundaries lie in former frontier zones, and in that sense the boundary line has replaced the broader frontier as a marker of a state's authority.

Classification of Boundaries

Geographers have traditionally distinguished between "natural" and "geometric" boundaries. **Natural** (or *physical*) **boundaries** are those based on recognizable physiographic features, such as mountains, rivers, and lakes. Although they might seem to be attractive as borders because they actually exist in the landscape and are visible dividing elements, many natural boundaries have proved to be unsatisfactory. That is, they do not effectively separate states.

Many international boundaries lie along mountain ranges, for example in the Alps, Himalayas, and Andes, but while some have proved to be stable, others have not. Mountains are rarely total barriers to interaction. Although they do not invite movement, they are crossed by passes, roads, and tunnels. High pastures may be used for seasonal grazing, and the mountain region may be the source of water for irrigation or hydroelectric power. Nor is the definition of a boundary along a mountain range a simple matter. Should it follow the crests of the mountains or the *water divide* (the line dividing two drainage areas)? The two are not always the same. Border disputes between China and India are in part the result of the failure of mountain crests and headwaters of major streams to coincide (Figure 12.12).

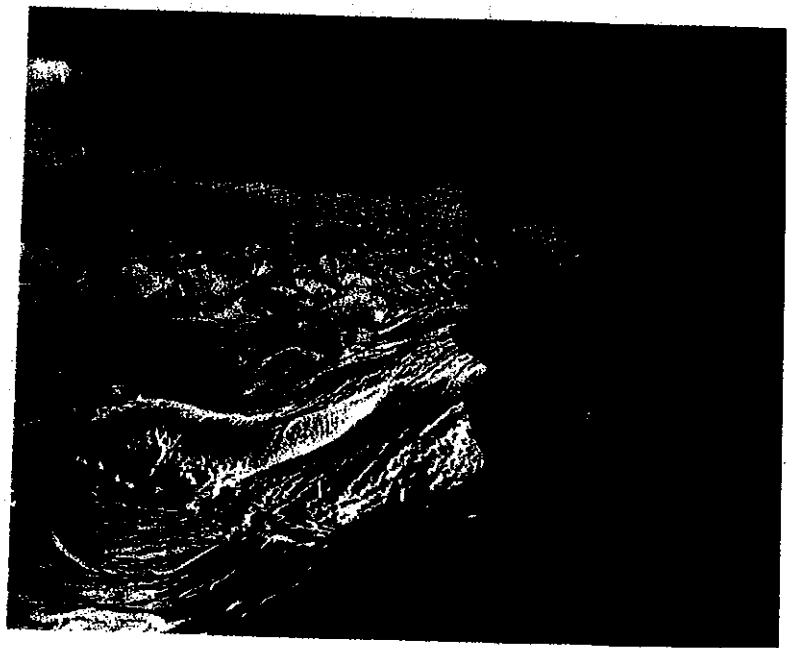


Figure 12.12 Several international borders run through the jumble of the Himalayas. The mountain boundary between India and China has long been in dispute.

Rivers can be even less satisfactory as boundaries. In contrast to mountains, rivers foster interaction. River valleys are likely to be agriculturally or industrially productive, and to be densely populated. For example, for hundreds of miles the Rhine River serves as an international boundary in Western Europe. It is also a primary traffic route lined by chemical plants, factories, blast furnaces, and power stations, and dotted by the castles and cathedrals that make it one of Europe's major tourist attractions (Figure 9.21). It is more a common intensively used resource than a barrier in the lives of the nations it borders. Further, rivers tend to change their path, requiring redefinition of the boundaries they mark. They also invite dispute over whether the boundary should be along one bank or the other, along the main navigation channel, or along the middle of the stream.

The alternative to natural boundaries are **geometric** (or *artificial*) **boundaries**. Frequently delimited as segments of parallels of latitude or meridians of longitude, they are found chiefly in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The western portion of the United States-Canada border, which follows the 49th parallel, is an example of a geometric boundary (Figure 12.13). Many such were established when the areas in question were colonies, the land was only sparsely settled, and detailed geographic knowledge of the frontier region was lacking.

Boundaries can also be classified according to whether they were laid out before or after the principal features of the cultural landscape were developed. An **antecedent boundary** is one drawn across an area before it

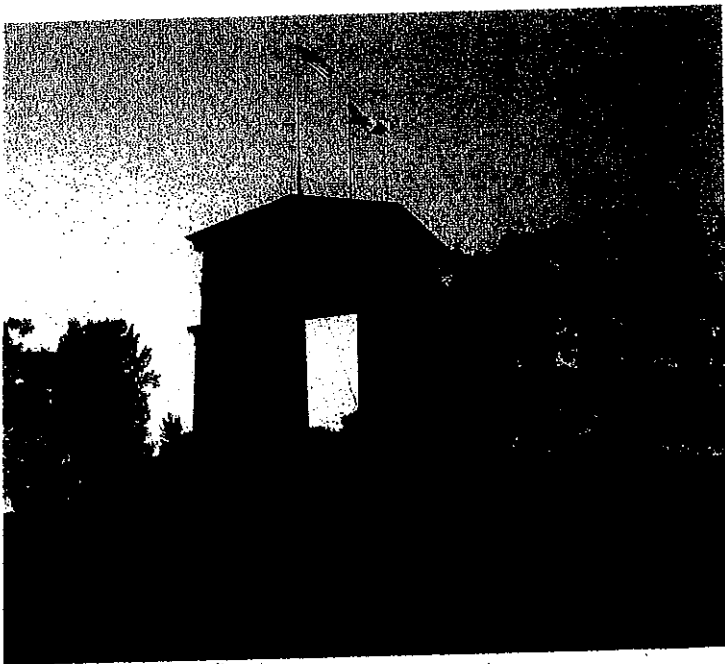


Figure 12.13 The international Peace Arch at Blaine, Washington. Its position is determined by the globe grid rather than by topography or drainage systems. *Geometric boundaries* like that between most of the United States and Canada are unrelated to landscape features.

is well populated, that is, before most of the cultural landscape features were put in place. To continue our earlier example, the western portion of the United States-Canada boundary is such an antecedent line, established by a treaty between the United States and Great Britain in 1846.

Boundaries drawn after the development of the cultural landscape are termed **subsequent**. One type of subsequent boundary is **consequent** (also called *ethnographic*), a border drawn to accommodate existing religious, linguistic, ethnic, or economic differences between countries. An example is the boundary drawn between Northern Ireland and Eire (Ireland). Subsequent **superimposed boundaries** may also be forced on existing cultural landscapes, a country, or a people by a conquering or colonizing power that is unconcerned about preexisting cultural patterns. The colonial powers in 19th-century Africa superimposed boundaries upon established African cultures without regard to the tradition, language, religion, or tribal affiliation of those whom they divided (Figure 12.5).

When Great Britain prepared to leave the Indian subcontinent after World War II, it was decided that two independent states would be established in the region: India and Pakistan. The boundary between the two countries, defined in the partition settlement of 1947, was thus both a *subsequent* and a *superimposed* line. As millions of Hindus migrated from the northwestern portion of the subcontinent to seek homes in India, millions of Muslims left what would become India for Pakistan. In a sense, they were attempting to ensure that the boundary would be *consequent*, that is, that it would coincide with a division based on religion.

If a former boundary line that no longer functions as such is still marked by some landscape features or differences on the two sides, it is termed a **relic boundary** (Figure 12.14). The abandoned castles dotting the former frontier zone between Wales and England are examples of a relic boundary. They are also evidence of the disputes that sometimes attend the process of boundary making.

Boundary Disputes

Boundaries create many possibilities and provocations for conflict. Since World War II, almost half of the world's sovereign states have been involved in border disputes with neighboring countries. Just like householders, states are far more likely to have disputes with their neighbors than with more distant parties. It follows that the more neighbors a state has, the greater the likelihood of conflict. Although the causes of boundary disputes and open conflict are many and varied, they can reasonably be placed into four categories.

1. **Positional disputes** occur when states disagree about the interpretation of documents that define a boundary and/or the way the boundary was delimited. Such disputes typically arise when the boundary is antecedent, preceding effective human settlement in the



Figure 12.14 Like Hadrian's Wall in the north of England or the Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall was a demarcated boundary. Unlike them, it cut across a large city and disrupted established cultural patterns. The Berlin Wall, therefore, was a *subsequent superimposed* boundary. The dismantling of the wall in 1990 marked the reunification of Germany; any of it that remains standing as a historic monument is a *relic* boundary.

border region. Once the area becomes populated and gains value, the exact location of the boundary becomes important.

The boundary between Argentina and Chile, originally defined during Spanish colonial rule, was to follow the highest peaks of the southern Andes and the watershed divides between east- and west-flowing rivers. Because the terrain had not been adequately explored, it was not apparent that the two do not always coincide. In some places, the water divide is many miles east of the highest peaks, leaving a long, narrow area of several hundred square miles in dispute (Figure 12.15). During the late 1970s, Argentina and Chile nearly went to war over the disputed territory, whose significance had been increased by the discovery of oil and natural gas deposits.

2. **Territorial disputes** over the ownership of a region often, though not always, arise when a boundary that has been superimposed on the landscape divides an ethnically homogeneous population. Each of the two states then has some justification for claiming the territory inhabited by the ethnic group in question. We noted previously that a single nation may be dispersed across several states (Figure 12.4d). Conflicts can arise if the people of one state want to annex a territory whose population is ethnically related to that of the state but now subject to a foreign government. This type of expansionism is called **irredentism**. In the 1930s, Hitler used the existence of German minorities in Czechoslovakia and Poland to justify German invasion and occupation. More recently, So-

malia has had many border clashes with Ethiopia over the rights of Somalis living in that country.

3. Closely related to territorial conflicts are **source disputes**. Neighboring states are likely to covet the resources—whether they be valuable mineral deposits, fertile farmland, or rich fishing grounds—lying in border areas and to disagree over their use. In recent years, the United States has been involved in disputes with both its immediate neighbors: with Mexico over the shared resources of the Colorado River and Gulf of Mexico and with Canada over the Georges Bank fishing grounds in the Atlantic Ocean.

One of the causes of the 1990–91 war in the Persian Gulf was the huge oil reservoir known as the Rumaila field, lying mainly under Iraq with a small extension into Kuwait. Because the two countries were unable to agree on percentages of ownership of the rich reserve, or a formula for sharing production costs and revenues, Kuwait pumped oil from Rumaila without any international agreement. Iraq helped justify its invasion of Kuwait by contending that the latter had been stealing Iraqi oil in what amounted to economic warfare.

4. **Functional disputes** arise when neighboring states disagree over policies to be applied along a boundary. Such policies may concern immigration, the movement of traditionally nomadic groups, customs regulations, or land use. U.S. relations with Mexico, for example, have been affected by the increasing number of legal aliens and the flow of drugs entering the United



Figure 12.15 Areas of international dispute in Latin America. Among the countries with long histories of disputed boundaries are Argentina and Chile, Peru and Chile, Peru and Ecuador, Venezuela and Guyana, and Honduras and El Salvador. Guatemala claims all of Belize and in official government documents Bolivia claims that it "has a right to a coast line" at Chile's expense. Early in 1995 the controversy between Peru and Ecuador erupted into a local border war, as it had done periodically since 1942 when international arbitration awarded a large portion of Ecuador's claimed territory to Peru. Some of the long-standing disputes and conflicts have recently been resolved. Argentina and Chile signed a boundary accord in December 1998; Peru and Ecuador ended their border differences by treaty in May 1999.

States from Mexico (Figure 12.16). In Central America, relations between Honduras and El Salvador, two countries that have long disputed their common boundary, worsened in the late 1970s, when Honduras expelled Salvadoran farmers who had illegally occupied available agricultural land in western Honduras.

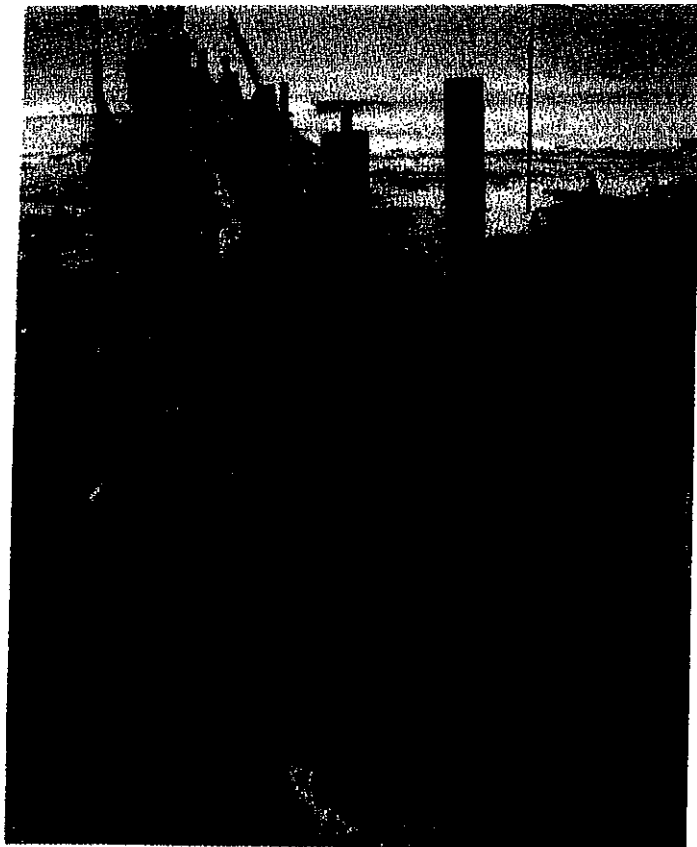
State Cohesiveness

At any moment in time, a state is characterized by forces that promote unity and national stability and by others that disrupt them. Political geographers refer to the former as **centripetal forces**. These are factors that bind together the people of a state, that enable it to function and give it strength. **Centrifugal forces**, on the other hand, destabilize and weaken a state. If centrifugal forces are stronger than those promoting unity, the very existence of the state will be threatened. In the sections that follow we examine four centripetal (uniting) forces: nationalism, unifying institutions, effective organization and administration of government, and systems of transportation and communication.

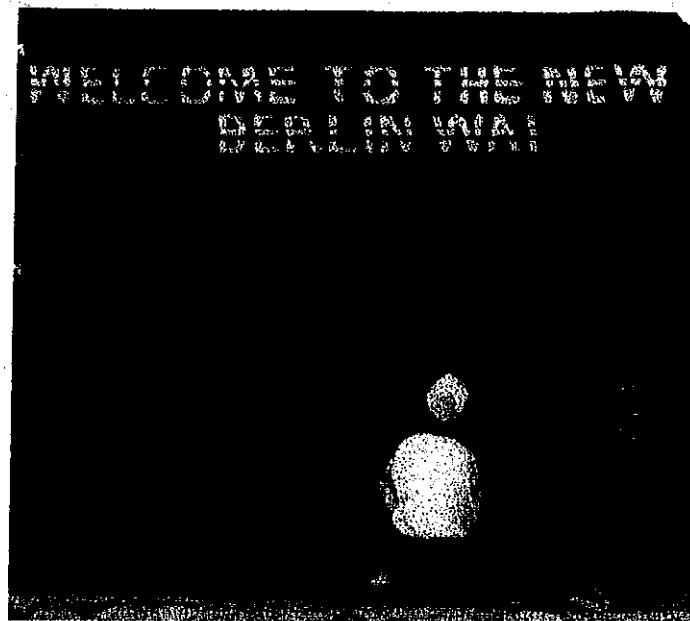
Nationalism

One of the most powerful of the centripetal forces is **nationalism**, an identification with the state and the acceptance of national goals. Nationalism is based on the concept of allegiance to a single country and the ideals and the way of life it represents; it is an emotion that provides a sense of identity and loyalty and of collective distinction from all other peoples and lands.

States purposely try to instill feelings of allegiance in their citizens, for such feelings give the political system strength. People who have such allegiance are likely to accept common rules of action and behavior and to participate in the decision-making process establishing those rules. In light of the divisive forces present in most societies, not everyone, of course, will feel the same degree of commitment or loyalty. The important consideration is that the majority of a state's population accepts its ideologies, adheres to its laws, and participates in its effective operation. For many countries, such acceptance and adherence has come only recently and partially; in some, it is frail and endangered.



a)



(b)

Figure 12.16 (a) To stem the flow of undocumented migrants entering California from Baja California, the United States in 1993 constructed a fence 3 meters (10 ft) high along the border. (b) Protesters on the Mexican side of the border expressed their anger over the new barrier.

We noted earlier that true nation-states are rare; in only a few countries do the territory occupied by the people of a particular nation and the territorial limits of the state coincide. Most countries have more than one culture group that considers itself separate in some important way from other citizens. In a multicultural society, nationalism helps integrate different groups into a unified population. This kind of consensus nationalism has emerged in countries such as the United States and Canada, where different culture groups, few or none with defined North American homelands, have joined together to create political entities commanding the loyalties of all their citizens.

States promote nationalism in a number of ways. *Iconography* is the study of the symbols that help unite people. National anthems and other patriotic songs; flags, national sports teams, and officially designated or easily identified flowers and animals; and rituals and holidays are all developed by states to promote nationalism and attract allegiance (Figure 12.17). By ensuring that all citizens, no matter how diverse the population may be, will have at least these symbols in common, they impart a sense of belonging to a political entity called, for example, Japan or Canada. In some countries, certain documents, such as the Magna Carta in England or the Declaration of Independence in the United States, serve the same pur-

pose. Royalty may fill the need: in Sweden, Japan, and Great Britain, the monarchy functions as the symbolic focus of allegiance. Such symbols are significant, for symbols and beliefs are major components of the ideological subsystem (page 51) of every culture.

Unifying Institutions

Institutions as well as symbols help to develop the sense of commitment and cohesiveness essential to the state. Schools, particularly elementary schools, are among the most important of these. Children learn the history of their own country and relatively little about other countries. Schools are expected to instill the society's goals, values, and traditions, to teach the common language that conveys them, and to guide youngsters to identify with their country.

Other institutions that advance nationalism are the armed forces and, sometimes, a state church. The armed forces are of necessity taught to identify with the state. They see themselves as protecting the state's welfare from what are perceived to be its enemies. In some countries, the religion of the majority of the people may be designated a state church. In such cases the church sometimes becomes a force for cohesion, helping to unify the population. This is true of the Roman Catholic Church in the

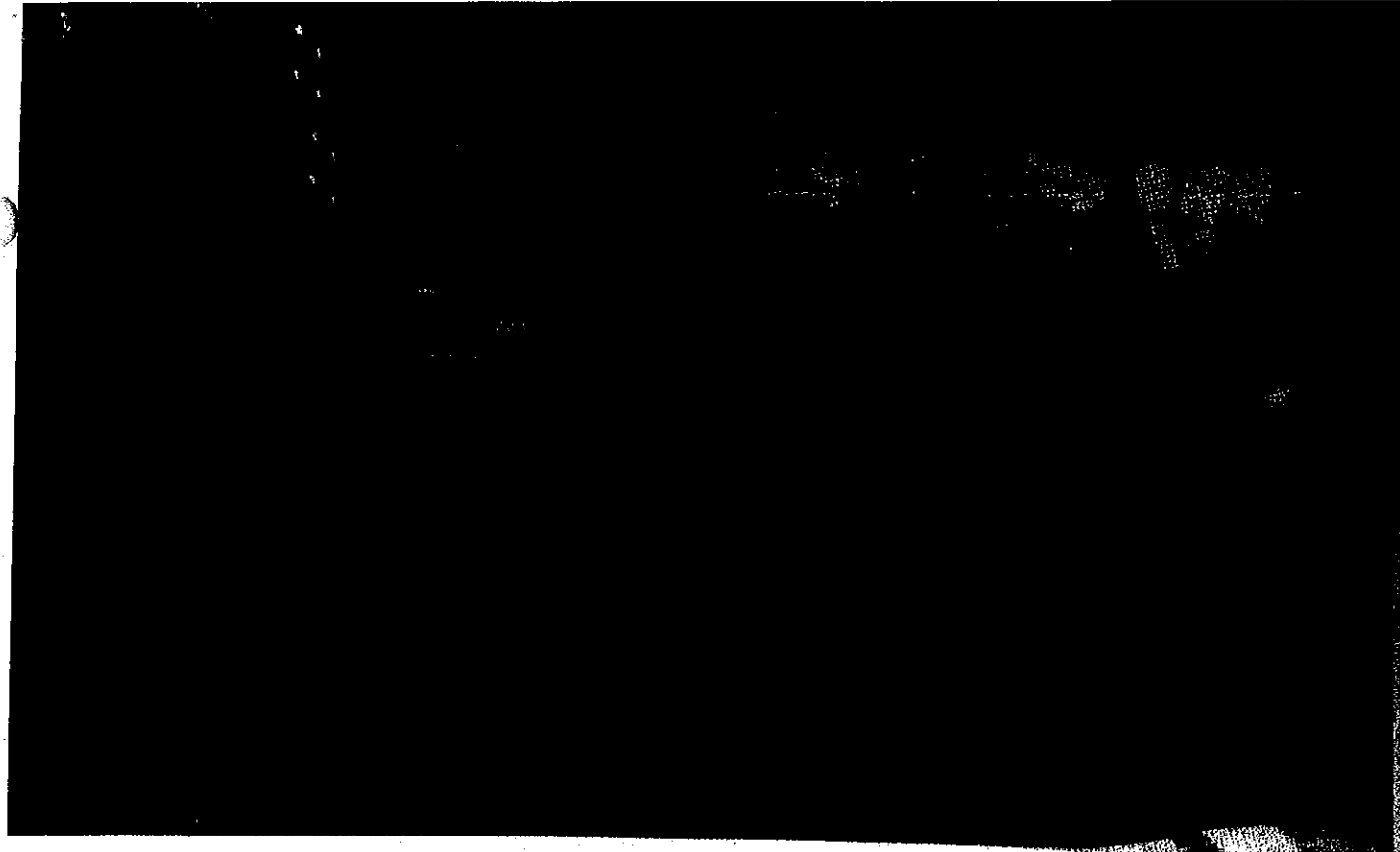


Figure 12.17 The ritual of the pledge of allegiance is just one way in which schools in the United States seek to instill a sense of national identity in students.

Republic of Ireland, Islam in Pakistan, and Judaism in Israel. In countries like these, the religion and the church are so identified with the state that belief in one is transferred to allegiance to the other.

The schools, the armed forces, and the church are just three of the institutions that teach people what it is like to be members of a state. As institutions, they operate primarily on the level of the sociological subsystem of culture, helping to structure the outlooks and behaviors of the society. But by themselves, they are not enough to give cohesion, and thus strength, to a state.

Organization and Administration

A further bonding force is public confidence in the effective organization of the state. Can it provide security from external aggression and internal conflict? Are its resources distributed and allocated in such a way as to be perceived to promote the economic welfare of all its citizens? Are all citizens afforded equal opportunity to participate in governmental affairs (see "Legislative Women")? Do institutions that encourage consultation and the peaceful settlement of disputes exist? How firmly established are the rule of law and the power of the courts? Is the system of decision making responsive to the people's needs? (Figure 12.18.)

The answers to such questions, and the relative importance of the answers, will vary from country to country,

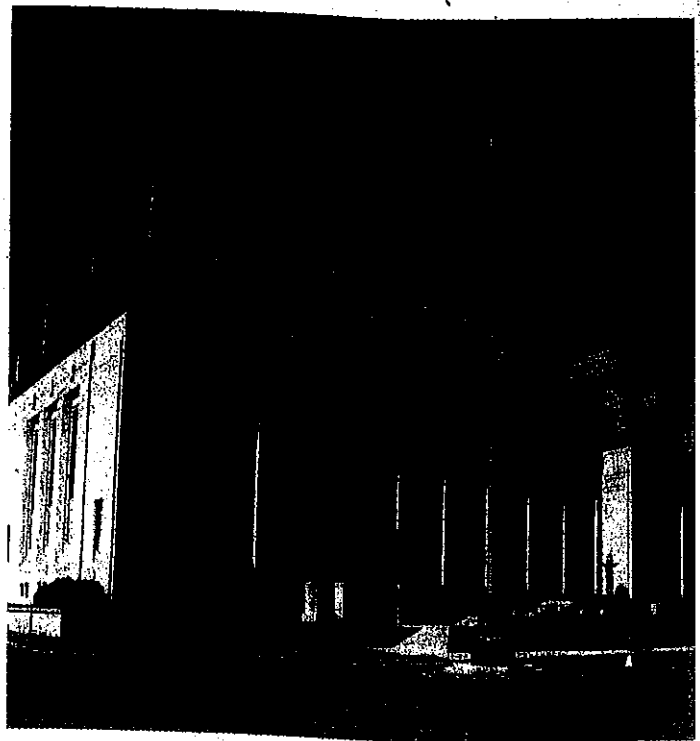


Figure 12.18 The Supreme Court of Canada building, Ottawa. Continuity, impartiality, and efficiency are attributes of government important in securing public confidence and loyalty.

but they and similar ones are implicit in the expectation that the state will, in the words of the Constitution of the United States, "establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, [and] promote the general welfare. . . ." If those expectations are not fulfilled, the loyalties promoted by national symbols and unifying institutions may be weakened or lost.

Transportation and Communication

A state's transportation network fosters political integration by promoting interaction between areas and by joining them economically and socially. The role of a transportation network in uniting a country has been recognized since ancient times. The saying that all roads lead to Rome had its origin in the impressive system of roads that linked Rome to the rest of its empire. Centuries later, a similar network was built in France, joining Paris to the various departments of the country. Often the capital city is better connected to other cities than the outlying cities are to one another. In France, for example, it can take less time to travel from one city to another by way of Paris than by direct route.

Roads and railroads have played a historically significant role in promoting political integration. In the United States and Canada, they not only opened up new areas for settlement but increased interaction between rural and urban districts. Because transportation systems play a major role in a state's economic development, it follows that the more economically advanced a country is, the more extensive its transport network is likely to be (Figure 8.4). At the same time, the higher the level of develop-

ment, the more resources there are to be invested in building transport routes. The two reinforce one another.

Transportation and communication, while encouraged within a state, are frequently curtailed or at least controlled between them as a conscious device for promoting state cohesion through limitation on external interaction (Figure 12.19). The mechanisms of control include restrictions on trade through tariffs or embargoes, legal barriers to immigration and emigration, and limitations on travel through passports and visa requirements.

Nationalism and Centrifugal Forces

State cohesion is not easily achieved or, once gained, invariably retained. Destabilizing *centrifugal forces* are ever-present, sowing internal discord and challenges to the state's authority.

We said previously that nationalism is one of the most powerful of the centripetal forces. Paradoxically, it is also a potentially disruptive centrifugal force. The idea of the nation-state is that states are formed around and coincide with nations. It is a small step from that to the notion that every nation has the right to its own state or territory. Any country that contains one or more important national minorities is susceptible to nationalist challenges from within its borders if the minority group has an explicit territorial identification.

A dissident minority that has total or partial secession from the state as its primary goal is said to be guided by **separatism** or **autonomous nationalism**. In recent years, such nationalism has created currents of unrest within many countries, even long-established ones.

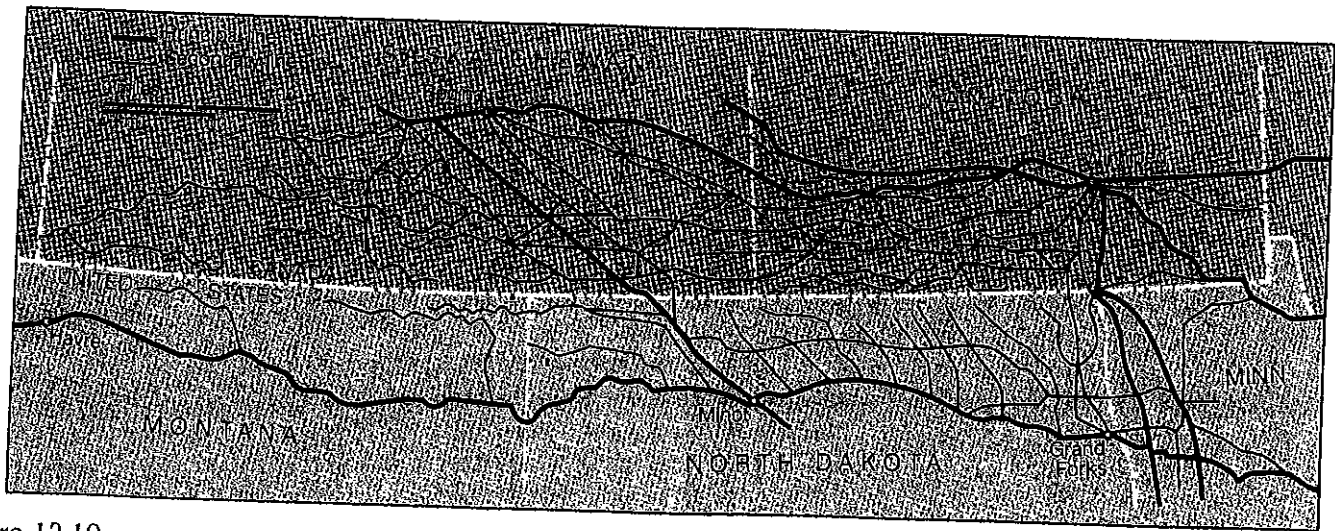


Figure 12.19 Canadian-U.S. railroad discontinuity. Canada and the United States developed independent railway systems connecting their respective prairie regions with their separate national cores. Despite extensive rail construction during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the pattern that emerged even before recent track abandonment was one of discontinuity at the border. Note how the political boundary restricted the ease of spatial interaction between adjacent territories. Many branch lines approached the border, but only eight crossed it. In fact, for over 480 kilometers (300 miles), no railway bridged the boundary there. The international border—and the cultural separation it represents—inhibits other expected degrees of interaction. Telephone calls between Canadian and U.S. cities, for example, are far less frequent than would be expected if distance alone were the controlling factor.

aday for example, houses a powerful secessionist movement in French-speaking Quebec, the country's east province. In October 1995, a referendum to secede from Canada and become a sovereign country failed in Quebec by the scant margin of 49% yes to 51% no. Quebec nationalism is fueled by strong feelings of collective identity and distinctiveness, and by a desire to protect its language and culture.

In Western Europe, five countries (the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain) house separatist movements whose members reject total control by the existing sovereign state and who claim to be the core of a separate national entity (Figure 12.20). Their core demand is for *regional autonomy*, usually in the form of self-government or "home rule" rather than complete independence. Both Welsh and the Scottish nationalists, for example, long sought independence for their regions, but perhaps, commonwealth status within the United Kingdom. Their desires were partially accommodated by narrow majority votes in 1997 for their own parliaments and a degree of regional autonomy.

Separatist movements affect many states outside of Western Europe and indeed are more characteristic of developing countries, especially those formed since the end of World War II and containing disparate groups more motivated by enmity than affinity. The Basques of Spain and the Bretons of France have their counterparts in the Palestinians in Israel, the Sikhs in India, the Moros in the Philippines, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, and many others. Separatist movements are expressions of **regionalism**, minority group self-awareness and identification with a region rather than with the state.

The countries of Eastern Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union have recently seen an explosion of regionally-rooted nationalist feelings. Now that the forces of ethnicity, religion, language, and culture are no longer suppressed by communism, ancient rivalries are more evident than at any time since World War II. The end of the Cold War aroused hopes of decades of peace. Instead, the collapse of communism and the demise of the USSR have spawned dozens of smaller wars. Numerous ethnic groups large and small are asserting their identities and what they

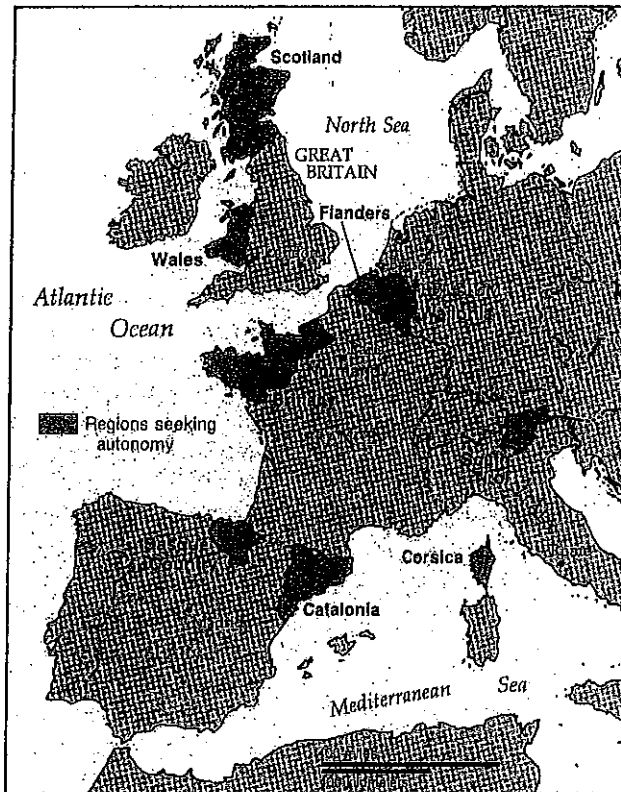


Figure 12.20 Regions in Western Europe seeking autonomy. Each was once an independent entity, incorporated within a larger state. Despite long-standing efforts to culturally assimilate them, each of these historic nations contains a political movement that has recently sought or is currently seeking a degree of separatism that recognizes its individual identity. In an attempt to accommodate these and other separatist movements, several European states have begun to permit *devolution*—the process of delegating some political power from central to more local levels of government, including the creation of regional parliaments with limited law-making authority. Both Scotland and Wales, for example, voted for separate limited-power parliaments in 1997. In most instances, devolution has been popular and has helped hold countries peaceably together rather than lead to secession.

perceive to be their right to *self-determination*, the freedom to control their own political status.

The national independence claimed in the early 1990s by the 15 former Soviet constituent republics did not assure the satisfaction of all separatist movements within them. Many of the new individual countries are themselves subject to strong destabilizing forces that threaten their territorial integrity and survival. The Russian Federation itself, the largest and most powerful remnant of the former USSR, has 89 components, including 21 "ethnic republics" and a number of other nationality regions, many of which are rich in natural resources, have non-Russian majorities, and seek greater autonomy within the federation. Some, indeed, want total independence. One, the predominantly Muslim republic of Chechnya, in 1994 claimed the right of self-determination and attempted to secede from the federation,

provoking a bloody civil war. Under similar separatist pressures, Yugoslavia shattered into five pieces in 1991–1992 (see "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia"); more peacefully, Czechs and Slovaks agreed to split former Czechoslovakia into two ethnically based states in 1993.

Recently, several European governments have moved peacefully in the direction of regional recognition... and **devolution**—the allowance by a central government of a degree of political autonomy to recognized political subunits. In France, 22 regional governments were established in 1986; Spain has a program of devolution for its 17 "autonomous communities," a program that Portugal is beginning to emulate. Italy, Germany, and the Nordic countries have, or are developing, similar recognitions of regional communities with granted powers of local administration and relaxation of central controls.

The Disintegration of Yugoslavia

The history of Yugoslavia in this century demonstrates how difficult it is for a state to be stable, how easy it can be for centrifugal forces to tear it apart. "I was born in one Yugoslavia, grew up in another, and now I'm a citizen of a third, and it is the smallest of the three," a woman complained as she watched the ceremony proclaiming a new Yugoslav state in 1992.

The first Yugoslavia was a kingdom created in 1918 when Serbia was joined by Croatia and Slovenia, both previously part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A combination of distinct groups, the new country was far from homogeneous. Slovenes and Croats were primarily Roman Catholic and wrote in the Roman al-

phabet. Serbs, previously part of the Ottoman Empire, practiced the Eastern Orthodox religion and wrote in Cyrillic. Muslims were the largest ethnic group in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

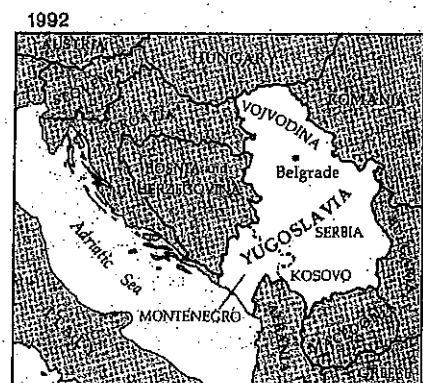
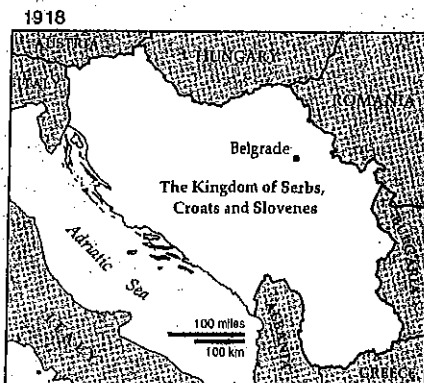
The second Yugoslavia began life in 1946 as a centrally controlled communist state. It was a federation of six republics, but an uneasy federation. The two largest republics, Serbia and Croatia, had been on opposing sides during World War II. Indeed, thousands of Serbs had died in concentration camps run by the Nazi puppet government in Croatia.

In large part, this Yugoslavia was held together by the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, who had led the partisan army opposing the Nazis. He

played down ethnic rivalries, brought a measure of economic prosperity to the country, and kept open ties to the West.

The federation began unraveling after Tito's death in 1980 and the decline of communism. As Yugoslavia's new political leaders appealed to nationalist feelings, ethnic, religious, and cultural differences came to the fore. Fearing domination by the Serbs (the largest ethnic group), four of the six republics seceded from the federation in 1991.

In its third incarnation, Yugoslavia consisted only of Serbia and Montenegro, a status further altered by civil conflict and NATO intervention in Kosovo province in 1999 and declarations of separation by Montenegro.



The two preconditions common to all regional autonomist movements are *territory* and *nationality*. First, the group must be concentrated in a core region that it claims as a national homeland. It seeks to regain control of land and power that it believes were unjustly taken from it. Second, certain cultural characteristics must provide a basis for the group's perception of separateness, identity, and unity. These might be language, religion, or distinctive group customs and institutions which promote feelings of group identity at the same time that they foster exclusivity. Normally, these cultural differences have persisted over several generations and have survived despite strong pressures toward assimilation.

Other characteristics common to many separatist movements are a *peripheral location* and *social and economic inequality*. Troubled regions tend to be peripheral, often isolated in rural pockets, and their location away from the seat of central government engenders feelings of alienation and exclusion. They perhaps sense what has been called the *law of peripheral neglect*, which observes that the concern of the capital for its controlled political space decreases with increasing distance from it. Second, the dominant culture group is often seen as an exploiting class that has suppressed the local language, controlled access to the civil service, and taken more than its share of wealth and power. Poorer regions complain that they have lower incomes and greater unemployment than prevail in the rest of the state, and that "outsiders" control key resources and industry. Separatists in relatively rich regions believe that they could exploit their resources for themselves and do better economically without the constraints imposed by the central state.

The Projection of Power

Territorial and political influence or control by a state need not necessarily halt at its recognized land borders. Throughout history states have projected power beyond their home territories where such power could credibly be applied or asserted. Imperial powers such as Rome, Czarist Russia, and China extended control outward over adjacent peoples and territories through conquest or *uzerainty*—control over vassal states. The former Soviet Union, for example, not only conquered and incorporated such adjacent states as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania but also, claiming to be first among equals, asserted the right to intervene militarily to preserve communist regimes wherever they appeared threatened.

Colonial empires such as those of England, France, Spain, and Portugal exerted home state control over non-contiguous territories and frequently retain influence even after their formal colonial dominion has been lost. The Commonwealth (originally, the British Commonwealth of Nations), for example, is a free association of some 50 countries that recognize the British sovereign as head of the Commonwealth and retain use of the English language and legal system. The French Community comprises autonomous states formerly part of the French colonial

empire that opted to remain affiliated with the Community, that generally retain the French language and legal system, have various contractual cooperative arrangements with the former ruling state, and have in the instance of African members occasionally called on France to intervene militarily to protect established regimes.

Geopolitical Assessments

Geopolitics is a branch of political geography that considers the strategic value of land and sea area in the context of national economic and military power and ambitions. In that light, geopolitical concerns and territorial assessments have always influenced the policies of governments. "Manifest Destiny" rationalized the westward territorial spread of the United States; the Monroe Doctrine declared the Western Hemisphere off-limits to further European colonization; creation of a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" justified Japan's Asian and Pacific aggression before and during World War II.

Modern geopolitics was rooted in the early 20th-century concern of an eminent English geographer, Halford Mackinder (1861–1947), with the world balance of power at a time of British expansion and overseas empire. Believing that the major powers would be those that controlled the land, not the seas, he developed what came to be known as the **heartland theory**. The greatest land power, he argued, would be sited in Eurasia, the "World-Island" containing the world's largest landmass in both area and population. Its interior or heartland, he warned, would provide a base for world conquest, and Eastern Europe was the core of that heartland (Figure 12.21). Mackinder warned, "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland, who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island, who rules the World-Island commands the World."¹

Developed in a century that saw first Germany and then the Soviet Union dominate East Europe, and the decline of Britain as a superpower, Mackinder's theory impressed many. Even earlier, Alfred Mahan (1840–1914) recognized the core position of Russia in the Asian landmass and anticipated conflict between Russian land power and British sea power, though Mahan argued that control of the world's sea lanes to protect commerce and isolate an adversary was the key to national strength. Near the end of World War II, Nicholas Spykman (1893–1943) also agreed that Eurasia was the likely base for potential world domination, but argued that the coastal fringes of the landmass, not its heartland, were the key (Figure 12.21). The continental margins, Spykman reasoned, contained dense populations, abundant resources, and had controlling access both to the seas and to the continental interior. His **rimland theory**, published in 1944, stated "Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia, who rules Eurasia controls the des-

¹Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (London: Constable, 1919), p. 150.

tinies of the world.⁴² The rimland has tended throughout history to be politically fragmented, and Spykman concluded that it would be to the advantage of both the United States and the USSR if it remained that way.

By the end of World War II, the Heartland was equated in American eyes with the USSR. To prevent Soviet domination of the World-Island, U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was based on the notion of **containment**, or confining the USSR within its borders by means of a string of regional alliances in the Rimland: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Western Europe, the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in West Asia, and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Military intervention was deemed necessary where communist expansion, whether Soviet or Chinese, was a threat—in Berlin, the Middle East, and Korea, for example.

A simple spatial model, the **domino theory**, was used as an adjunct to the policy of containment. According to this analogy, adjacent countries are lined up like dominoes; if one topples, the rest will fall. In the early 1960s, the domino theory was invoked to explain and justify U.S. intervention in Vietnam, and in the 1980s the theory was applied to involvement in Central America. The fear that war among the Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians in Bosnia-Herzegovina would lead to the destruction of that state and spread into other parts of the former Yugoslavia led in 1995 to NATO airstrikes against the Serbs, a peace agreement forged with American help in Dayton, Ohio, and stationing of United Nations peacekeeping forces in Bosnia.

These (and other) models aimed at realistic assessments of national power and foreign policy stand in con-

trast to "organic state theory" based on the 19th-century idea of German geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) that the state was an organism conforming to natural laws and forced to grow and expand into new territories (*Lebensraum*) in order to secure the resources needed for survival. Without that growth, the state would wither and die. These ideas, later expanded in the 1920s by the German Karl Haushofer (1869–1946) as *Geopolitik*, were used by the Nazi party as the presumed intellectual basis for wartime Germany's theories of race superiority and need for territorial conquest. Repudiated by events and Germany's defeat, *Geopolitik* for many years gave bad odor to any study of geopolitics, which only recently has again become a serious subfield of political geography.

In a rapidly changing world, many analysts believe the older geopolitical concepts and ideas of geostrategy no longer apply. A number of developments have rendered them obsolete: the dissolution of the USSR and the presumed end of the Cold War; the proliferation of nuclear technology; the declining influence of the United States; and the rise of Japan, China, and Western Europe to world power status. Geopolitical reality is now seen less in terms of military advantage and confrontation—the East–West rivalry of the Cold War era—and more as a reflection of two other forms of competition.

One is economic rivalry within the developed world and between economic core countries and emerging peripheral states—the North–South split introduced in Chapter 10 and expressed in the development of international blocs aligned by economic interests. The other is competition rooted in more fundamental and perhaps enduring conflicts between different "civilizations." It has been suggested that the world will increasingly be shaped by the interactions and conflicts among seven or eight major civilizations: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic, Latin American, and possibly African. The differences between such civilizations, it is thought, are basic and antagonistic, rooted in enduring differences of history, language, culture, tradition, and religion. These differences, the argument runs, are less easily resolved than purely political and economic ones and underlie such recent clashes as Indian rivalries between Hindus and Muslims, those of Sri Lanka between Tamils and Buddhists, conflicts in former Yugoslavia and between Armenians and Azeris in the Caucasus, and between and within other states and areas where "civilizations" come in contact and competition.

Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1944), p. 43.

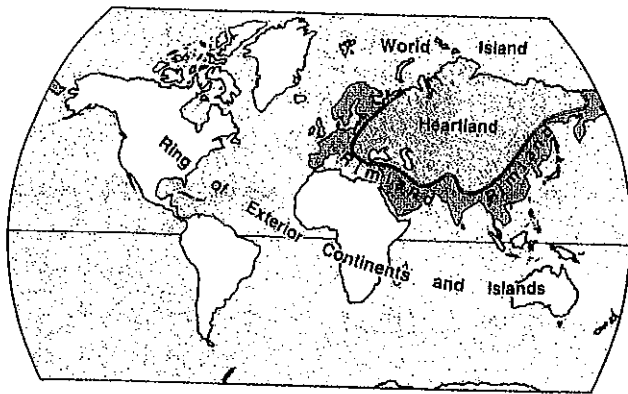


Figure 12.21 Geopolitical viewpoints. Both Mackinder and Spykman believed that Eurasia possessed strategic advantages, but they disagreed on whether its heartland or rimland provided the most likely base for world domination. Spykman recognized sea power as the key to national strength, advocating American occupation of the Hawaiian Islands, control of the Caribbean, and construction of an interoceanic canal through Central America.

International Political Systems

As changing geopolitical theories and outlooks suggest, in many ways individual countries are now weaker than ever before. Many are economically frail, others are politically unstable, and some are both. Strategically, no country is safe from military attack, for technology now