



The Politics of Territory and Space

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Political Geography

- The study of the interaction of geographical area and political process
- It is the formal study of territoriality
 - the persistent attachment of individuals or peoples to a specific place or territory
- Covers forms of government, borders, treaties, trading blocs, conflicts and war



Political Geography

- Examines complex relationships between politics and geography
- The 'where' of politics and the nature of spatial interactions are crucial to understanding relations among people and government
- Two way relationship between politics and geography



Political Geography

- Aristotle – first political geographer
- Model of the state is based upon factors such as climate, terrain, and the ration between population and territory
- Incorporated elements of landscape and the physical environment as well as the population characteristics of regions



Political Geography

- **State**
- A **politically organized** territory
- Administered by a **sovereign government**
- **Recognized** by a significant portion of the international community.

A state must also contain:

- a permanent resident population
- an organized economy



Political Geography

- **State Morphology**
- Compact State
- Fragmented State
- Elongated State
- Perforated State
- Protruded State



- Geopolitics
- State's power to control space or territory and shape the foreign policy of individual States and international political relations
- Art and practice of using political power over a given territory
- Influenced by Friedrich Ratzel
 - Employed biological metaphors adopted from Darwin to describe the growth and development of the State



- 7 Laws of State Growth (Ratzel)
- Space of the State grows with the expansion of the population having the same culture
- Territorial growth follows other aspects of development
- A State grows by absorbing smaller units
- The frontier is the peripheral organ of the State that reflects the strength and growth of the State



- 7 Laws of State Growth (Ratzel)
- States in the course of their growth seek to absorb politically valuable territory
- The impetus for growth comes to a primitive State from a more highly developed civilization
- The trend toward territorial growth is contagious and increases the process of transmission



- State as behaving like a biological organism
- Growth and change are seen to be natural and inevitable
- Geopolitics stems from the interactions of **power** and **territory**



- Fluidity of maps reflects the instability between power and territory and the failure of some States to achieve stability
- Example:
 - Cold War
 - Yugoslavia



- **Boundaries**
- Allow territoriality to be defined and enforced
- Allow conflict and competition to be managed and channeled
- Important element in place making



- **Boundaries**
- Constructed in order to regulate and control specific sets of people and resources
- Can be inclusionary or exclusionary
 - US-Canada boundary vs. US-Mexico boundary
- Control flow of immigrants, imported goods, etc.



Canadian border no longer invisible in Vermont
On this street, the Vermont-Quebec border is now marked on the asphalt. Fences are proposed. (The Washington POST)



- **Boundaries**
- Once established, it tends to reinforce spatial differentiation
- Boundaries restrict contact, development of stereotypes
- **Territory** – delimited area over which a State exercises control and which is recognized by other States



- **Formal Boundaries**
- Established in international law, delimited on maps, demarcated on the ground, fortified, and defended
- **Informal Boundaries**
- Implied boundaries set by markers and symbols but not delineated on maps or set down in legal documents



- **Frontier Regions**
- Occur where boundaries are very weakly developed
- Zones of underdeveloped territoriality
- Distinctive for their marginality than for their belonging
- Australia, American West, Canadian North, sub-Saharan Africa



- **Nation**
- Group of people often sharing common elements of culture or a history or political identity
- **Nation – state**
- Ideal form consisting of a homogenous group of people governed by their own State



- **Examples:**

- Iceland
- Korea
- Japan
- Polynesian countries



- **Sovereignty**

- Exercise of State power over people and territory, recognized by other States and codified by international law

- **Nationalism**

- Feeling of belonging to a nation



- **Centripetal Forces**

- Forces that strengthen and unify the State

- **Centrifugal Forces**

- Forces that divide or tend to pull the State apart



- **Heartland Theory (1904)**

- The Geographical Pivot of History by Halford Mackinder
- Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island controls the world.

