

CHAPTER 9

Political Boundaries and Forms of Governance

Topics 4.4–4.7

Topic 4.4 Defining Political Boundaries

Learning Objective: Define types of political boundaries used by geographers. (IMP-4.A)

Topic 4.5 The Functions of Political Boundaries

Learning Objective: Explain the nature and function of international and internal boundaries. (IMP-4.B)

Topic 4.6 Internal Boundaries

Learning Objective: Explain the nature and function of international and internal boundaries. (IMP-4.B)

Topic 4.7 Forms of Governance

Learning Objectives: Define federal and unitary states. (IMP-4.C)
Explain how federal and unitary states affect spatial organization. (IMP-4.D)

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; Who rules the World-Island commands the world.

—Sir Halford John Mackinder, *British geographer*, 1919



Depicted is the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Despite the name, it is the militarized boundary between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK). (See Topic 4.4 for more about militarized boundaries.)

Defining Political Boundaries

Essential Question: What are the types of political boundaries used by geographers?

The most common type of map used is a reference map, in which physical and cultural features are shown and usually identified. One expects a map, at any scale, to include boundaries that have been clearly delimited. Whether at the local, regional, or national scale, boundaries are an integral part of our lives. Some are invisible to the eye and others are clearly demarcated, yet all serve some political or functional purpose.

In essence, any contemporary political boundary can be categorized in one of two ways, physical or cultural. **Physical geographic boundaries** are natural barriers between areas such as oceans, deserts, and mountains. For example, the Missouri River divides Iowa and Nebraska, and the Himalayan Mountains separate India and China.

By contrast, **cultural boundaries** divide people according to some cultural division, such as language, religion, or ethnicity. A cultural boundary may exist in the midst of a gradual change over space. For example, in China, cuisine was once divided into two regions: wheat-based in the north and rice-based in the south. However, no exact line has ever divided the two regions sharply. A boundary can be classified as possessing both physical and cultural attributes.

Classifications of Boundaries

While classifying political boundaries as physical or cultural enables us to identify what a border is, geographers have developed a more in-depth classification system that provides greater context on how borders develop over time.

Genetic Classification of Boundaries

There are four genetic types (classified as to how they were generated) of political boundaries: antecedent, subsequent, superimposed, and relic.

Antecedent Boundary This type of boundary preceded the development of the cultural landscape. For boundaries, significant physical obstacles—such as oceans or mountains—possess a static aspect in that they feature a relatively unpopulated zone between populated areas. They also possess a kinetic aspect in that they hinder connections and interactions between people in adjacent regions. An example includes the straight-line boundaries for states across the western frontier of the emerging United States. Political boundaries like these

were established before a large population was present and remained in place as people increasingly occupied these regions.

Antecedent boundaries are typically based on physical features. Since humans are terrestrial beings and need to live on land for survival, the unpopulated oceans such as the Atlantic and Pacific make for logical antecedent boundaries. The Andes Mountains form the long-reaching eastern boundary of Chile, naturally separating it from Bolivia and Argentina. However, antecedent boundaries that do not present a significant physical obstacle, such as small hills or rivers, tend to make less effective political boundaries.

While rivers possess a static benefit in that they maintain an unpopulated zone between populated areas, they tend to facilitate more connections and interactions. Transboundary freshwater sources, such as the Jordan River, have resulted in competing claims among Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. Just because an antecedent boundary exists, it does not necessarily mean it is effective.

Subsequent Boundary This boundary is typically created while the cultural landscape is evolving and is subject to change over time. These boundaries are characteristically **ethnographic** in nature, meaning they are usually related to cultural phenomena. They may be drawn to accommodate ethnic, religious, linguistic, or economic differences among groups. Subsequent boundaries are often altered as a result of non-cultural developments such as governmental negotiations or war. Beginning in the mid-16th century, the monarch of Scotland and England encouraged emigration to Ireland, which was then under English rule. Many Scots and English Protestants settled in the northern region of predominantly Roman Catholic Ireland. Over the years, resentment and violence broke out between the groups over internal borders and political influence in the region. In 1921, Northern Ireland officially became part of the United Kingdom, separating from the southern portion of the island—the Republic of Ireland. A commission was formed to draw the new border based on the religious and political cultural landscape.

Superimposed Boundary This type of boundary is drawn by outside powers and may have ignored existing cultural patterns. These boundaries often lack conformity to natural features and, therefore, were superimposed on the landscape. Between 1884 and 1885, the **Berlin Conference** paved the way for colonization of Africa or what Europeans regarded as “effective occupation” of the continent. At the time of the conference, only some coastal areas were colonized by the Europeans and around 80 percent of the continent was under traditional and local control. As a result of the conference, a series of superimposed boundaries were established, initially with little knowledge of the terrain or the cultural borders.

One of the legacies of this “Scramble for Africa” was the creation of around 50 irregularly shaped countries out of the more than 1,000 indigenous cultures that inhabited the continent. Of the 54 current African countries, 17 are **landlocked states**, or without territory connected to an ocean. The increased cost of importing and exporting goods through neighboring countries

North and South Korea were divided along the 38th parallel. Many geometric boundaries are created as internal divisions within a state or territory, such as the political boundaries of Colorado and Wyoming.

A type of subsequent border that takes into account already-existing cultural or physical landscapes is a **consequent boundary**. A border that is drawn taking into account language, ethnicity, religion, or other cultural traits it is a **cultural consequent boundary**. Also, these boundaries are created with the cultural landscape as a primary consideration. Political boundaries of this nature would be consequent upon an already-existing cultural phenomenon, such as the partition of the British colony of India in 1947, creating a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan.

Unlike geometric borders, a division that uses already-existing natural features that divide a territory such as rivers, deserts, or mountains is a **physical consequent boundary**. An example would be the Pyrenees Mountains that run across the northern edge of the Iberian Peninsula, separating Spain from France, and completely surrounding the country of Andorra.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF BOUNDARIES		
Type	Definition	Example
Antecedent	A boundary established before a large population was present	The boundary of the Pyranees Mountains established between Spain and France
Subsequent (Ethnographic)	A boundary drawn to accommodate religious, ethnic, linguistic, or economic differences	The boundary between Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom) and the Republic of Ireland
Superimposed	A boundary drawn by outside powers	The boundary between Mali and Mauritania (common throughout Africa and Southwest Asia)
Relic	A boundary that no longer exists, but is still evident on the landscape	The boundary between East and West Germany (states that are now combined)
Geometric	A straight line or arc drawn by people that does not closely follow any physical feature	The boundary between the United States and Canada along the 49th parallel
Consequent	A type of subsequent boundary that takes into account existing cultural or physical landscapes	The boundary between India and Pakistan created for religious reasons

Protection of Boundaries

Accurately defining and describing political boundaries are important tasks for geographers in understanding the complex structure of states and the interaction between them. There are many ways to define boundaries and, furthermore, a single border can possess the attributes of several types. For instance, most superimposed boundaries are geometric. Additionally, there are

other border terms that deal with the protective nature of borders and can meet some of the previously discussed classifications.

An **open boundary** is unguarded and people can cross it easily, with little or no political intervention. These borders only occur between countries that have maintained friendly relations with each other over long periods of time. Most states within the European Union (EU) fit this category. In 1985, the Schengen Agreement abolished most border checks between member states (of the then European Economic Community)—making most of the continent effectively borderless. With goods and people flowing freely from one country to another, people seemed less willing to turn to violence to settle disputes.

A **militarized boundary** is one that is heavily guarded and discourages crossing. While many of these borders only have a limited military presence, others are fortified, using a constructed barrier to prevent the flow of people. In 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, there were 15 border walls in the entire world. As of 2020, there were five times that number. For example, India has constructed a guarded 1,700-mile barbed wire fence along its border with Bangladesh to curb immigration and smuggling.

One of the most well-known barriers in the world today is the Korean DMZ (demilitarized zone) that separates North and South Korea. The 160-mile long, 2.5-mile wide strip of land serves as a buffer zone between the rival states. It was established in 1953 after the cease-fire that ended the Korean War. In 2020, the United States had more than 28,000 troops stationed in South Korea along the DMZ, a deterrent to any potential aggression by North Korea. The DMZ almost completely blocks the flow of trade and people.

REFLECT ON THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Essential Question: *What are the types of political boundaries used by geographers?*

Type of Boundary	Function of Boundary
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KEY TERMS		
physical geographic boundaries	superimposed boundary	cultural consequent boundary
cultural boundaries	Berlin Conference	physical consequent boundary
antecedent boundary	landlocked states	open boundary
subsequent boundary	relic boundary	militarized boundary
ethnographic	geometric boundary	
	consequent boundary	

The Function of Political Boundaries

Essential Question: What are the nature and function of international boundaries?

When most people think of a boundary, they focus on what is represented on the surface of the earth. However, boundaries are actually vertical planes that cut through the subsoil below, rise into the airspace above, and even extend into outer space.

Political borders serve a vital function as dividing lines between countries, states, provinces, territories, counties, cities, towns, villages, and municipalities. Political borders also exist to separate bodies of water, especially those that possess multiple claims to the same areas. To fully comprehend the complex interactions between political entities, an understanding is needed of boundary formations and functions, as well as why disputes erupt around them.

International and Internal Boundaries

In theory, boundaries of all kinds exist to add clarity. Boundaries signal where one political entity begins and another ends. This helps people know what territory is theirs to administer and what belongs to another country. But when neighbors disagree on where the line that separates them should be, boundaries become the subject of conflict. Throughout history, uncertain boundaries have been a frequent cause of bloodshed and war.

Formation of Boundaries

Boundaries represent changes in the use of space from one political entity to another. Crossing a boundary implies that some rules, expectations, or behaviors change. When moving across a formal political boundary, these rules are called laws. Boundaries can be identified in various ways:

- A **defined boundary** is established by a legal document, such as a treaty, that divides one entity from another (invisible line). The entity could range from a country—in which points of latitude and longitude are specified—to a single plot of real estate—in which points in the landscape are described.
- A **delimited boundary** is drawn on a map by a cartographer to show the limits of a space.
- A **demarcated boundary** is one identified by physical objects placed on the landscape. The demarcation may be as simple as a sign or as complex as a set of fences and walls.

Some very influential boundaries are not set formally. Informal boundaries include ones marking the spheres of influence by powerful countries at the regional scale, such as the Monroe Doctrine. In 1821, President James Monroe warned Europeans that the United States would oppose any attempts they made to expand their influence in the Americas. Informal boundaries also exist at the local level, such as those dividing the neighborhoods controlled by various street gangs.

International Boundary Disputes

As the number of states has increased over the last century, so too have international boundary disputes. There are four main categories of boundary disputes: definitional, locational (territorial), operational (function), and allocational (resource).

A **definitional boundary dispute** occurs when two or more parties disagree over how to interpret the legal documents or maps that identify the boundary. These types of disputes often occur with antecedent boundaries. (See Topic 4.4.) One example is the boundary between Chile and Argentina. The elevated crests of the Andes Mountains serve as the boundary, but since most of the southern lands were neither settled nor accurately mapped, control of this territory lies in dispute.

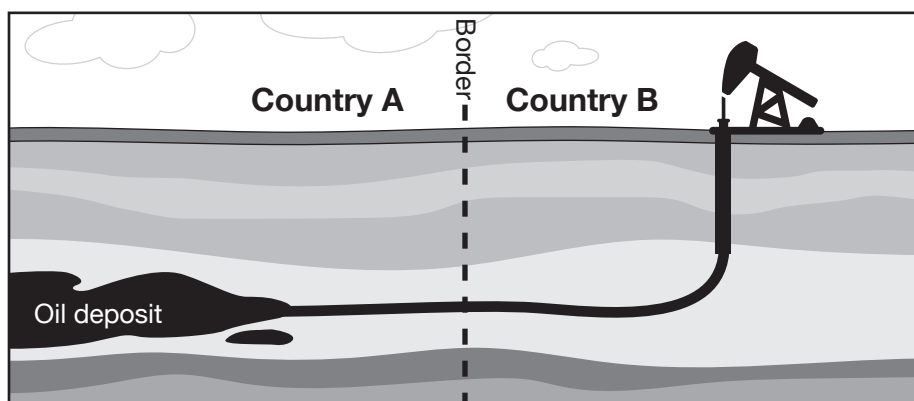
Boundary disputes that center on where a boundary should be, how it is *delimited* (mapped), or *demarcated* are known as **locational boundary disputes**. These disputes are also called **territorial disputes** because of the fundamental question of who possesses the land. An example of a locational dispute was the post-World War I boundary between Germany and Poland. Germans disputed the location because it controlled the land prior to the war, but the border drawn after the war left many ethnically German people on the Polish side. This led to **irredentism**, a type of expansionism when one country seeks to annex territory where it has cultural ties to part of the population or historical claims to the land. Many groups are divided between countries by a border. When this occurs a desire to unify their nation is a common national goal and can lead to irredentist feelings but not always action.

An **operational boundary dispute**, or **functional dispute**, centers not on where a boundary is but how it functions. Disagreements can arise related to trade, transportation, or migration. As refugees fled Syria and attempted to enter Europe during the 2011 civil war, Europeans viewed their national boundaries differently. Refugees began migrating from southern Europe to the interior seeking safe haven. Interior countries of Europe often viewed the countries to the south and east as responsible for stopping migrants, while others felt the boundaries should stay open in order to help the refugees. Additional operational boundaries can occur with rivers and choke points that serve as boundaries. Questions related to who controls the transportation and shipping on a river or choke point can cause disagreements.

When a boundary separates natural resources that may be used by both countries, it is referred to as an **allocational boundary dispute**, or **resource**

dispute. When it comes to natural resources, boundaries serve as vertical planes that extend both up into the sky and down into the earth. The extraction of subterranean resources extending on both sides of the boundary may become complicated and lead to conflict. In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait because it claimed that the Kuwaitis were drilling too many wells using directional drilling, thus breaking the vertical plane and extracting oil on the Iraqi side of the boundary. Other resources that are often at the center of disputes include fresh water, minerals, and fishing rights.

DIRECTIONAL DRILLING



If a country uses directional drilling to access oil or gas and crosses an international border, this can lead to a resource dispute.

Demarcation and Functions of Boundaries

How a border is labeled on the physical landscape such as with a fence, wall, stones or signs is called *demarcation*. This process can indicate the type of relationship that exists between countries and be a clue to how the border functions. Many borders in the world are not demarcated at all because they are in vast wilderness areas with no one living there or the relationships between the two states is cordial, open, and peaceful. Additionally, most boundaries are not demarcated as the process tends to be protracted and expensive.

How a boundary will be maintained, how it will function, and what goods and people will be allowed to cross are important aspects of an **administered boundary**. As relations change between countries, and also between entities within a state, the means by which a boundary is demarcated and administered may change significantly. The Israeli-West Bank barrier separates Israel's claims from those of the Palestinians through a multi-layered fence system. From Israel's standpoint, it is necessary to prevent terrorism, while the Palestinians argue that it promotes racial segregation. Begun in 2000, during a period of increased tension and violence, the militarized border remains an ever-present point of contention.

Recently, because of the Syrian refugee crisis and the COVID pandemic, many of the borders between EU states have become much more restrictive and less open. Boundaries that have checkpoints where a passport or visa are required to enter the country are called **controlled boundary**. These boundaries

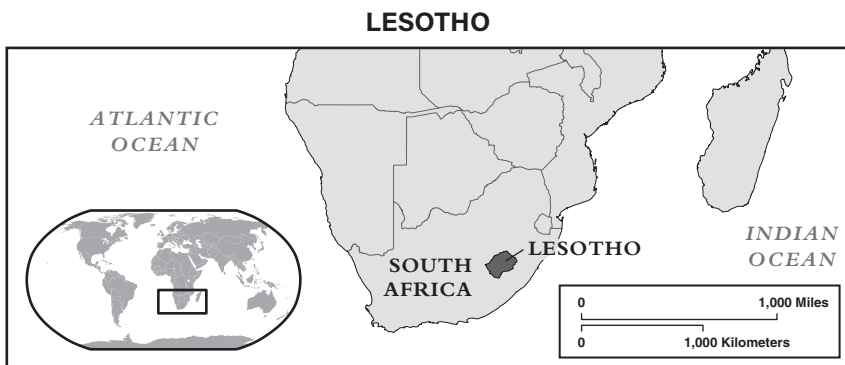
allow some people and goods to traverse the border while denying entry to others. In 2020, the United Kingdom left the EU (Brexit), potentially creating a more controlled border between the island state and mainland Europe.

Unique Boundaries: Exclaves and Enclaves

As a result of migration, trade deals, devolution, conflicts, and other reasons, pockets of isolated national groups sometimes find themselves separated from their homeland. **Exclaves** are territories that are part of a state, yet geographically separated from the main state by one or more countries. For example, Alaska is separated from the lower 48 United States by Canada. Nakhchivan, an autonomous republic of Azerbaijan, is separated from the main territory of Azerbaijan by Armenia.

Exclaves may help to reunite ethnic groups with the main country, but communication and transportation challenges often exist. Kaliningrad Oblast is an exclave of Russia because it is separated from the rest of the country by Lithuania and Belarus. Kaliningrad has a high percentage of Russians (over 85 percent) and is an important port for Russia.

Political enclaves are states, territories or parts of a state or territory that are completely surrounded by the territory of another state. At the national level, the sovereign states of San Marino and the Vatican City are completely engulfed by Italy making them political enclaves. Autonomy, national identity, and self-rule are often a benefit of an enclave. Challenges for enclaves often include maintaining positive relationships with the surrounding country and transportation accessibility.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Lesotho is totally surrounded by South Africa, making it a political enclave and landlocked. Describe the challenges of exclaves and enclaves.

Indian reservations within the United States may be considered enclaves as they possess tribal sovereignty and are recognized as independent nations. At the local level, informal *ethnic enclaves* (see Topic 3.2) exist in a number of cities and municipalities.

The Effects of Boundaries

A boundary is more than a line between two political entities. It has effects that stretch well beyond simple questions of space and into political, cultural, and economic regions that affect various populations in many ways.

Shatterbelts

Political boundaries often do not follow cultural and economic landscapes, which can cause a region to become a political **shatterbelt**, a place located between two very different and contentious regions. These places are under consistent stress and may suffer instability or fragmentation due to external aggression. Sometimes boundaries separate people who speak the same language, practice the same religion, or share other traits. (See Topic 4.9 for more information of Yugoslavia as a shatterbelt.)

Eastern Europe has historically been a shatterbelt between Western Europe and Russia. While Western Europe has historically been Roman Catholic or Protestant, Russia has been Orthodox. For most of the 20th century, Western Europe was generally capitalist and Russia was communist.

Another shatterbelt is the Caucasus, a mountainous region between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea that includes the states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. After the fall of the Soviet Union, many ethnically distinct territories gained autonomy. However, these independence movements were often violent, and territorial claims are still in flux in many places. Nagorno-Karabakh is a semi-autonomous region but is predominantly recognized as part of Azerbaijan. (See Topic 4.8.) Many Orthodox Christian Armenians live in the region but the surrounding land is home to mostly Muslim Azerbaijanis. After a destructive war between the two states from 1988 to 1994, disputes over sovereign territory and national rights persisted, and a new clash erupted again in 2020.

Language and Religion

As people move and boundaries change, language changes also. The language often changes because people separated by boundaries develop distinct dialects. When boundaries are placed in an attempt to unite people who have distinct dialects, the unification process proves to be difficult, as was the case with Italy. Italy did not become a unified state until the 1860s. Before unification, people spoke a variety of languages depending on where they lived. From the Alps in the north to Sicily in the south, no single language united everyone. Even after 160 years as a single state, people in Italy remain only loosely bound together.

Religion and boundaries can make for a volatile mixture. Within the boundaries of India, the majority of the people are Hindus, but a significant minority are Muslims. This division creates tension that sometimes leads to violence. However, countries such as the United States and South Korea demonstrate that people of different faiths can live in harmony.

The division of Ireland demonstrates how complicated religion and boundaries can become. In the mid-20th century, most of Ireland won its

independence from the United Kingdom and formed the Republic of Ireland, which was 95 percent Roman Catholic. However, a small area in the north, known as Northern Ireland, remained part of the United Kingdom. This area was only 35 percent Catholic and mostly Protestant.

The boundary between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland created two problems. On one hand, it divided the Catholics of both places who wanted to be together in one country. On the other hand, the boundary united Catholics and Protestants into one political entity, Northern Ireland. There, Catholic-Protestant tensions—which included economic and political conflicts as well as religious ones—led to three decades of violence starting in 1968. Before peace was restored, about 3,000 people were killed in bombings and shootings.

Ethnicity, Nationality, and Economy

Boundaries that are superimposed, or enforced by a dominant nation or ethnic group, can create conflict for nations occupying the same space. Sri Lanka, a large island off the southern tip of India, is home to two groups that see themselves as ethnically distinct from the other:

- the Sinhalese are the majority, mostly Buddhist, and live in the southern part of the country
- the Tamil are the minority, mostly Hindus, and live in the northern and eastern parts of the island

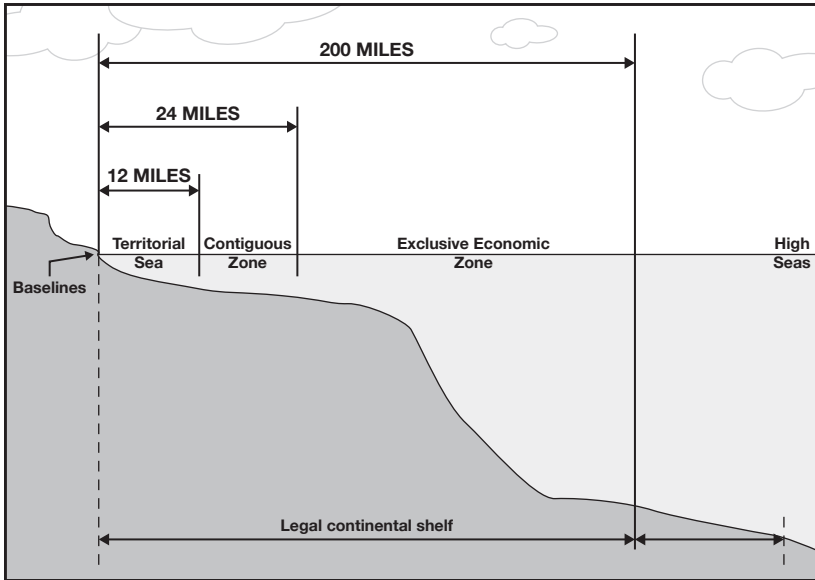
The Tamils long felt they were treated as second-class citizens by the Sinhalese. Hoping to win an independent homeland, Tamil rebels began fighting in the 1980s. They were defeated in 2009, but around 75,000 Sri Lankans had died in the fighting.

The Law of the Sea

Countries generally agree that a vertical plane extends through borders, defining space above and below the land. However, how far horizontally out into the ocean should a country's influence spread? Conflicts over the use of the ocean have been common in modern history. Only in the last half of the 20th century were water boundaries addressed systematically. Between 1973 and 1982, the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea** was signed by more than 150 countries. It defined four zones:

1. **Territorial sea:** This area extends up to 12 nautical miles of sovereignty where commercial vessels may pass, but noncommercial vessels may be challenged. A nautical mile is equal to 1.15 land-measured miles.
2. **Contiguous zone:** Coastal states have limited sovereignty for up to 24 nautical miles where they can enforce laws on customs, immigration, and sanitation.
3. **Exclusive economic zone (EEZ):** Coastal states can explore, extract minerals, and manage natural resources up to 200 nautical miles.
4. **High seas:** Water beyond any country's EEZ that is open to all states.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AND THE LAW OF THE SEA (UNCLOS)



Source: United Nations

UNCLOS is an international treaty that defines the rights and responsibilities of nations related to the sea. The United States abides by the treaty but has not signed it.

If two coastal states share a waterway and are less than 24 nautical miles apart, then the distance between the two coasts is divided by half. For example, if only 20 miles of water separated two countries, then each would be entitled to 10 miles of territorial sea.

The Value of Islands States that have islands have been granted vast areas of space. For example, if a country's farthest island extends several hundred miles from the mainland, then the EEZ of that outward island extends that country's claims by another 200 miles. For example, near Alaska, where islands extend far out in the Bering Sea, the EEZ of the United States is huge. The United States' EEZ covers more area than any other country—3.4 million square miles. That is almost as much as the total land area of the United States (3.8 million square miles).

The 200-mile EEZ is very valuable economically to the many **small island developing states (SIDS)** in the world's oceans. SIDS control nearly 30 percent of all oceans and seas and their EEZs are much larger than their landmass. Tuvalu's EEZ in the South Pacific is 27,000 times the size of its land, but its EEZ contains valuable minerals, natural gas and fishing stocks, and the prospect of tourism. These new economic opportunities based on the ocean for SIDS have been given the term *blue economy*.

Arctic Opportunities The Arctic Ocean is a region where challenges are being made related to land, deep water natural resources, and sea passages for ships. As the ice in the Arctic Ocean melts, countries in the region such as

Russia, Canada, the United States, Norway, and Denmark see new economic opportunities in the region.

South China Sea In 2011, a territorial dispute in the South China Sea emerged related to the Spratly Islands, a series of small islands and coral reefs. The region is a rich fishing ground, important trade route, and a source of potential natural gas and oil reserves. China, Vietnam, and other neighboring countries are in the midst of a tension-filled dispute. China has made claims to large parts of the sea and has built artificial islands on the reef to solidify its territorial claims and expand its 200-mile EEZ.

Challenging a Zone Disputes over territorial control in coastal waters can turn violent. In 1973, Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi extended his 12-mile territorial sea to include the entire Gulf of Sidra. He created a “line of death” that was not to be crossed. U.S. leaders considered the line a violation of the Law of the Sea, and U.S. Navy ships challenged the line by sailing through the gulf. In August 1981, while flying inside the line of death but outside the 12-mile limit, U.S. F-14 fighter jets engaged and shot down two Libyan fighter jets. Similar incidents between the United States and Libya occurred in 1986 and 1989.

REFLECT ON THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Essential Question: *What are the nature and function of international boundaries?*

Type of Boundary	Function of Boundary
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KEY TERMS

defined boundary	controlled borders
delimited boundary	exclaves
demarcated boundary	political enclaves
definitional boundary dispute	shatterbelt
locational boundary disputes	United Nations Convention
(territorial disputes)	on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
irredentism	territorial sea
operational boundary dispute	contiguous zone
(functional dispute)	exclusive economic zone (EEZ)
allocational boundary dispute	high seas
(resource dispute)	small island developing
administered boundary	state (SIDS)

Internal Boundaries

Essential Question: What are the nature and function of internal boundaries?

International boundaries create borders between countries, but **internal boundaries** are used at the subnational scale to divide countries into smaller units. These units, such as states, counties, cities, and local districts, break up territory into more manageable units of governance. Internal boundaries fall within the jurisdiction of the government, and therefore state and local governments can change these boundaries as needed.

Types of Internal Boundary Spaces

Some subdivisions, such as states, serve multiple purposes such as maintaining roads and operating hospitals. Others, such as park districts, are specialized. In the United States, these subdivisions are part of *federalism*, the sharing of power between the national and local governments. That's why some laws and policies apply to just a local area and others apply throughout the country.

Electoral Geography

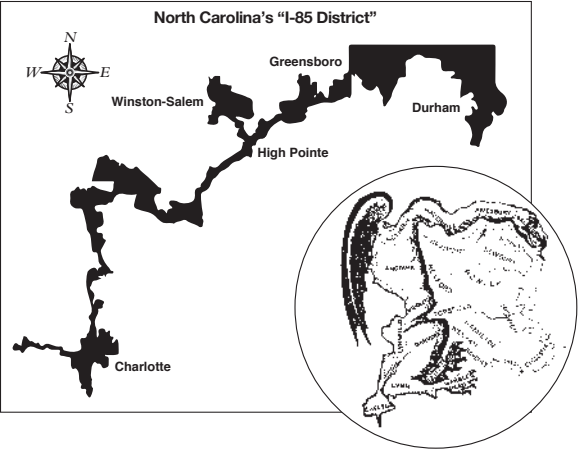
Using spatial thinking techniques and tools to analyze elections and voting patterns is called **electoral geography**. Internal boundaries that divide a country's electorate into subnational regions are called **voting districts** and exist at multiple scales. People of a country who are eligible to vote, known as the **electorate**, vote for leaders in each district to govern on their behalf.

In the United States, the Constitution requires the federal government to take a **census**, a count of the population, every 10 years, to ensure the national congressional districts have approximately the same number of people. After the results of the census have been calculated, the national government determines each state's number of representatives in the House of Representatives through **reapportionment**, changing the number of representatives granted to each state so it reflects the state's population. State legislatures or state committees then redraw district boundaries so that each district contains roughly the same number of people. This process is known as **redistricting**.

The total number of representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives has been fixed at 435 since 1912. Regardless of reapportionment results, each state is guaranteed at least one representative in the House, along with its two members in the Senate. As people in the United States have moved south and west, states in these regions have gained representation and states in the Midwest and Northeast have lost seats in Congress.

Gerrymandering

Some states try to create districts that are contiguous (connected), and compact, and based on existing city and county boundaries. Traditionally, though, political maneuvering shapes redistricting. **Gerrymandering** is the drawing of boundaries for political districts by the party in power to protect or increase its power. The term is derived in part from Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry (1744–1814). He influenced the drawing of districts in Massachusetts to benefit his own political party. A newspaper editor noted that an oddly shaped district resembled a salamander and coined the term *gerrymander*.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

In 2011, North Carolina District 12 was redrawn to follow the I-85 corridor which gave an advantage to the party in power. The redrawn district was compared to the Massachusetts redistricting (shown in the cartoon inset) supported by governor Elbridge Gerry in 1812.

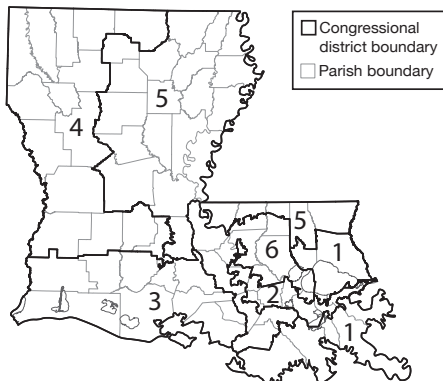
Results of Gerrymandering By carefully drawing district boundaries, politicians can create "safe seats" that are highly likely to elect members of their own party. As a result, most races in legislative districts are not competitive. Further, gerrymandering can enable one party that regularly loses statewide elections for president, senator, and governor to still win a solid majority of the district-wide races for the state legislature and Congress. They can do this using the techniques shown in the chart below.

TYPES OF GERRYMANDERING	
Type	Definition
Cracking	Dispersing a group into several districts to prevent a majority
Packing	Combining like-minded voters into one district to prevent them from affecting elections in other districts
Stacking	Diluting a minority-populated district with majority populations
Hijacking	Redrawing two districts in order to force two elected representatives of the same party to run against each other
Kidnapping	Moving an area where an elected representative has support to an area where he or she does not have support

Discrimination Gerrymandering has often been used to reduce representation of African Americans and other minorities in government. The 1965 Voting Rights Act attempted to end these discriminatory practices. As a result, minority representation in Congress increased. In 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that the law had succeeded in remedying the racial disparity in representation so key provisions of the act were no longer needed.

Alternatives To prevent gerrymandering, some states have adopted procedures to make redistricting less partisan. Some states use bipartisan committees with equal members of each party, plus independents to draw the boundaries. For example, in 1980, Iowa created a nonpartisan agency to redraw congressional and legislative voting districts after each U.S. census.

LOUISIANA CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS, 2018



The map above shows the congressional districts in Louisiana. District 1 is not contiguous and several districts cross parish boundaries. District 2 has a majority of African American and Democratic-leaning residents, while Districts 1 and 6 have a majority of white and Republican-leaning residents. What form of gerrymandering technique would be used to describe this example?

REFLECT ON THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Essential Question: *What are the nature and function of internal boundaries?*

Concepts That Influence Internal Boundaries	Effects of Concepts

KEY TERMS

internal boundaries	reapportionment	packing
electoral geography	redistricting	stacking
voting districts	gerrymandering	hijacking
electorate	cracking	kidnapping
census		

Forms of Governance

Essential Question: What are federal and unitary states, and how do they affect spatial organization?

Governments attempt to unify the people under their jurisdiction by defining the country's boundaries, exerting control over the territory, and blending the nationalities within those boundaries. The structure of the national government and its internal political geography can impact state unity.

Different Forms of Governance

Countries are governed on more than one level. But different forms of governance allocate power in different ways, affecting how much authority is available at both the national and local levels.

Federal and Unitary States

Two main types of political spatial organizations are federal and unitary systems of governance. Both systems administer the day-to-day operations of governance with sovereignty, and the national government is the final authority. A **federal state** unites separate political entities into an overarching system that allows each entity to maintain some degree of sovereignty. This power sharing is vertical with the different functions and responsibilities of government found at the national, provincial/state, and local level. Examples of federal states include Germany, the United States, and Nigeria.

In contrast, in a **unitary state**, most or all of the governing power is held by the national government. All local governments in a unitary system are subject to the authority of the national government. Countries with unitary systems of government include France, Japan, and Kenya. The differences between federal and unitary states are outlined in the chart on the following page.

Local Powers Vary by Government Type

In both federal and unitary states, local divisions of governance have some degree of power. But the amount of that power depends on the level of power exercised by the national government. Large landmass countries—such as the United States, Canada, and Russia—tend to be federal states. In contrast, smaller landmass countries—such as Japan, Egypt, and Spain—tend to be unitary states. These patterns have exceptions. China is a large country with a unitary and very centralized government. Belgium is a small country that is a federal state, which reflects the ethnic divide between its Walloon and Flemish citizens.

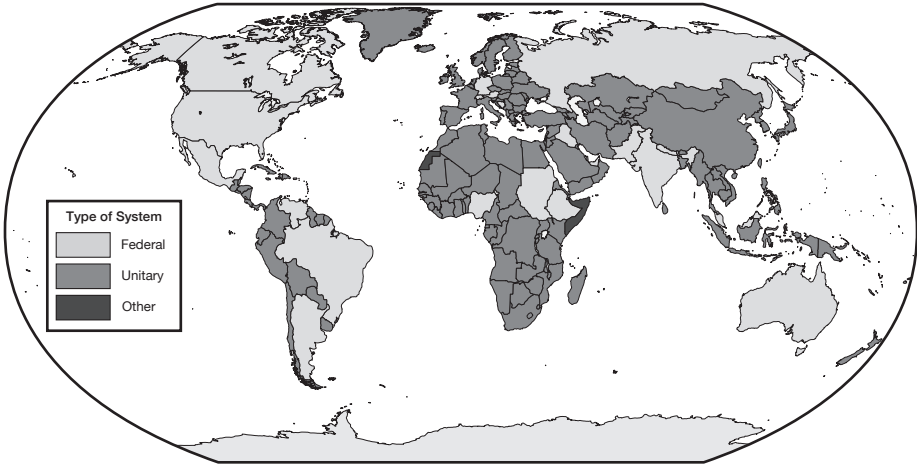
States that use federal governance often do so to placate various cultural groups. Allowing local governments to manage their own affairs, such as education, promotes peace. Nigeria is an example of how this works, depending on the mixture of religious faiths of the people of each province:

- Provinces in northern Nigeria, where Islam is common or dominant, have enacted some or all of sharia, the Islamic legal framework.
- Provinces in the southern Nigeria, where Christianity or traditional religious practices are more common, do not use sharia.

Unitary states have strong centralized governments that control almost all matters of governance. Provincial and local governments, in most cases, are simply extensions of the national government. Unitary states can be either non-democratic—such as China and Saudi Arabia—or fairly democratic—such as France and Indonesia.

FEDERAL VS. UNITARY STATES		
Trait	Federal	Unitary
Authority of the Government	Shared between the central government and provincial, state, and local governments	Held primarily by the central government with very little power given to local governments
Hierarchy of Power	Multiple levels of power diffused throughout federal, state, and local governments	No hierarchy of sovereign powers
Type of Country Where Commonly Used	Multiple ethnic groups with significant minority populations	Few cultural differences and small minority populations
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often represents needs of local and regional areas, not just national issues • Can be quicker to address and more representative of local and regional issues • Power is spread across the country, not consolidated in the core area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One set of laws and policies • Clarity of national policies to other governments and the people • Can be cheaper to run since there is only one level of government
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contradictory laws can exist between levels of government • Often slower and more difficult to gain consensus and respond to national issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws and policies often overlook minority, local, regional, or periphery issues • Power and benefits are often concentrated in core areas of a country

FEDERAL AND UNITARY STATE SYSTEMS

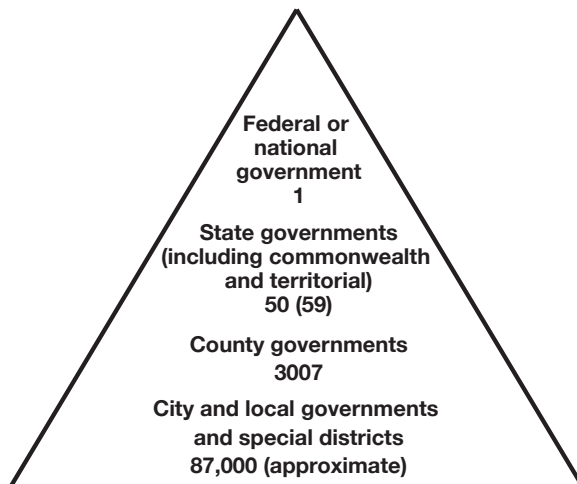


Patterns of Local and Metropolitan Governance

Local and metropolitan forms of governance, such as municipalities and regional planning commissions, are subnational political units that have varying degrees of local control.

Most people in the world are under the rule of overlapping levels of government. The U.S. government is a hierarchy with the federal government at the top and many local and special purpose districts at the bottom. Special purpose districts include transportation, fire, police, library, water, and school districts, to name a few. Each level of government has authority in distinct areas but some of the powers are shared.

LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES



The number of units of government changes from year to year. One way this happens is that a city will add outlying territory to its domain to increase its individual and commercial tax bases. **Annexation** is the process of legally adding territory to a city. However, residents of a new residential development on what had been farmland might prefer to create their own town rather than being annexed by an existing city. This leads to a new city government—and increased competition for services, business, and taxes.

REFLECT ON THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Essential Question: *What are federal and unitary states and how do they affect spatial organization?*

Effects of Federal States on Spatial Organization	Effects of Unitary States on Spatial Organization
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KEY TERMS

federal state	unitary state	annexation
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GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES: UNITS OF GOVERNMENT

Geographers study how political power is distributed across space at different scales:

- At the global scale, power is distributed among countries.
- At the national scale, power is distributed among units such as provinces or states.
- At the local scale, power can be distributed among several types of units: counties, cities, school districts, and others.

Diverse Local Districts

Some local districts have very specialized functions. They might fund fire protection or a public library. Illinois includes several mosquito abatement districts. The Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District includes 77 square miles in the western suburbs of Chicago. It has about five full-time employees and hires another two dozen or so workers seasonally.

Mosquito abatement districts are one reason that Illinois leads all other states in the number of units of local government. In 2017, Illinois had 6,918 units of government. A typical resident lived with six or more layers of local government. In second place was Texas with 5,343 units. However, the population of Texas was more than double that of Illinois.

How to Distribute Power

Mosquito abatement districts highlight the issue of the best way to distribute power spatially. Many problems, such as mosquitoes and the diseases they spread, drug trafficking, and pollution, pay no attention to political boundaries. One response to these types of problems is to create special districts to address them. Another is to build cooperation among existing units of government. A third is to refer the problem to a higher level of government such as a state or national agency. Deciding where to locate the power to respond to these problems is a constant issue for debate.

1. Identify an entity that has power at each scale: global, national and local.
2. Explain why special districts are often used at the local scale.



THINK AS A GEOGRAPHER: DEMARCATION AND FUNCTION OF BORDERS

How a border is demarcated or marked indicates a great deal about the relationships that exist between states or regions. For each image, use clues from the image and background information to answer the following questions:



Top: Utah-Wyoming border, Left: Israel-Palestine border, Right: United States-Canada border

Source: Wikimedia Commons

1. Identify each border as controlled, open, or militarized.
2. Describe what the border's demarcation shows about the relationships between the political entities in each image.
3. Explain the purpose of controlling a country's border.

CHAPTER 9 REVIEW:

Political Boundaries and Forms of Governance

Topics 4.4–4.7

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Question 1 refers to the following photograph.



1. Which type of boundary is most clearly shown in the image above?
 - (A) Defined
 - (B) Delimited
 - (C) Natural
 - (D) Open
 - (E) Demarcated
2. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, it said it wanted to reunite the German minority living in Poland with Germany. This is an example of
 - (A) nationalism
 - (B) irredentism
 - (C) supranationalism
 - (D) an allocational dispute
 - (E) an operational dispute

Question 3 refers to the following map.

THE U.S.-CANADA BOUNDARY



3. The 49th parallel between the United States and Canada is
- (A) a relic boundary
 - (B) a superimposed boundary
 - (C) an antecedent boundary
 - (D) a subsequent/ethnographic boundary
 - (E) an open boundary

Question 4 refers to the map on page 233 and the chart below. The voter index indicates how strongly a district leans toward a party.

PARTY LEANINGS IN LOUISIANA DISTRICTS	
Congressional District	Voter Index
1	Republican, +24
2	Democrat, +25
3	Republican, +20
4	Republican, +13
5	Republican, +15
6	Republican, +19

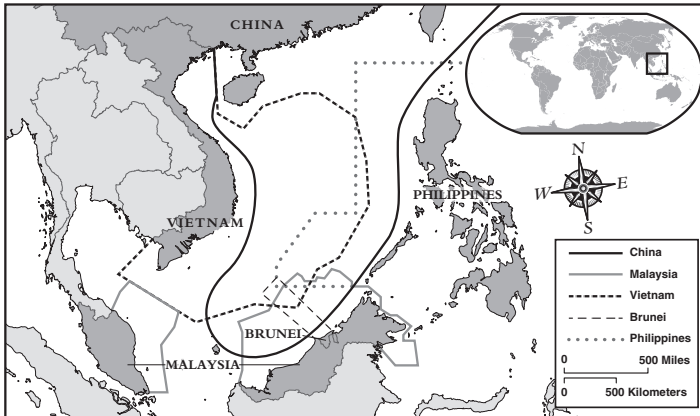
4. Which gerrymandering strategies do Districts 1 and 2 best show?
- (A) Stacking
 - (B) Packing
 - (C) Hijacking
 - (D) Kidnapping
 - (E) Scaling

5. Uruguay's national government sets policies that are administered by local governments. This system of government is best described as
- (A) federal
 - (B) unitary
 - (C) reapportioned
 - (D) communist
 - (E) compact
6. The formation of India and Pakistan in 1947 led to a new boundary between the two states. This boundary is best described as
- (A) an antecedent boundary because the two countries fought over scarce water resources
 - (B) a controlled boundary because the border was placed by a foreign power without negotiation
 - (C) an open boundary because it was unguarded and could be easily traversed
 - (D) a consequent boundary because the border was made along an already-existing cultural division
 - (E) a relic boundary because it no longer exists but was still visible on the landscape
7. The Syrian Civil War erupted in 2011 and forced millions of refugees to flee into Turkey. The Turkish government was sympathetic to the refugees but became concerned about how many Syrians were crossing Turkey's border. Which type of border dispute describes this scenario?
- (A) Definitional
 - (B) Locational
 - (C) Allocational
 - (D) Operational
 - (E) Territorial

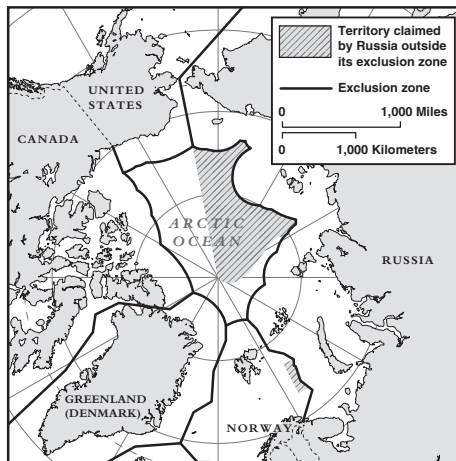
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION

1. Boundaries serve a variety of purposes and exist at the international, national and local scale. Territoriality is the willingness of a person, group, or country to defend their claimed space. Often claims of space can cause disagreements or even conflict. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines the rights and responsibilities of nations. Use the two maps on the next page to answer the questions that follow.

LAND CLAIMS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA



LAND CLAIMS IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN



- Define the concept of Territorial Seas as used in UNCLOS.
- Describe what activities can occur in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as used in UNCLOS.
- Using one of the maps, identify TWO countries that have competing claims in the Arctic or South China Sea.
- Describe TWO economic reasons that explain the importance of the claims in the South China Sea or Arctic Ocean.
- Describe ONE environmental concern affecting the oceans.
- Describe ONE economic or environmental benefit of the Arctic Ocean for any country not shown on the map.
- Briefly explain why choke points are politically or economically important.