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CHAPTER 8

Political Geography

Field Note Independence is Better Than Servitude

I arrived in Ghana just after an assassination attempt on the country's first president, Kwame Nkrumah. As I drove through the capital city of Accra in 1962, I stopped short when I saw a statue of President Nkrumah in the middle of the street. I have seen plenty of statues of leaders in my travels, but this one was unique. Ghanians had dressed their hospital-ridden president in a hospital gown and bandaged his head!

I stopped the car to take a picture (Fig. 8.1), and I read the proclamations on Nkrumah's statue. Written in English, they said, "To me the liberation of Ghana will be meaningless unless it is linked up with the liberation of Africa" and "We prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquility."

Ghana, the first black African colony to become independent, gained its independence in 1960. A wave of decolonization swept through Africa in the 1960s (Fig. 8.2), with hopes that decolonization would bring political and economic independence. But decolonization did not eliminate political and economic problems for Africa. Former colonies became states, reaching political independence under international law; each new country was now sovereign, legally having the ultimate say over what happened within the borders. New political problems arose within the sovereign countries. Each had to deal with a mixture of peoples, cultures, languages and religions amalgamated during colonialism. Economically, the new countries found

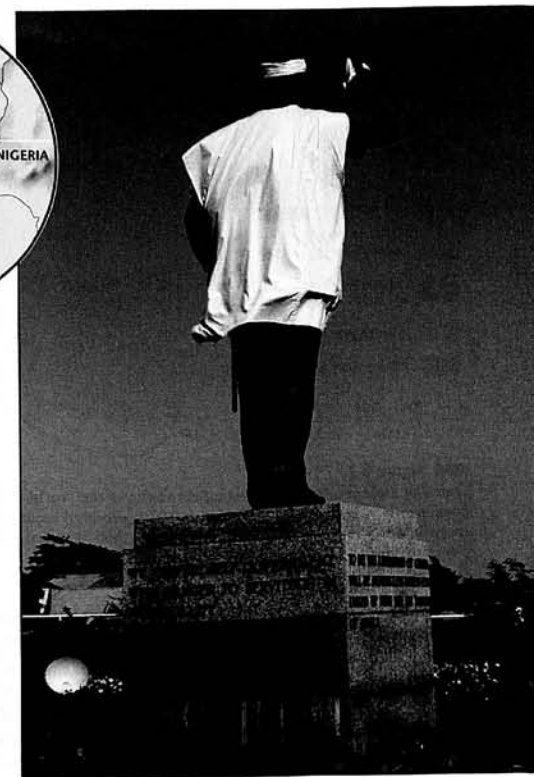
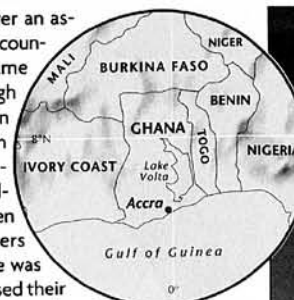


Figure 8.1
Accra, Ghana. Statue of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana. © H. J. de Blij.

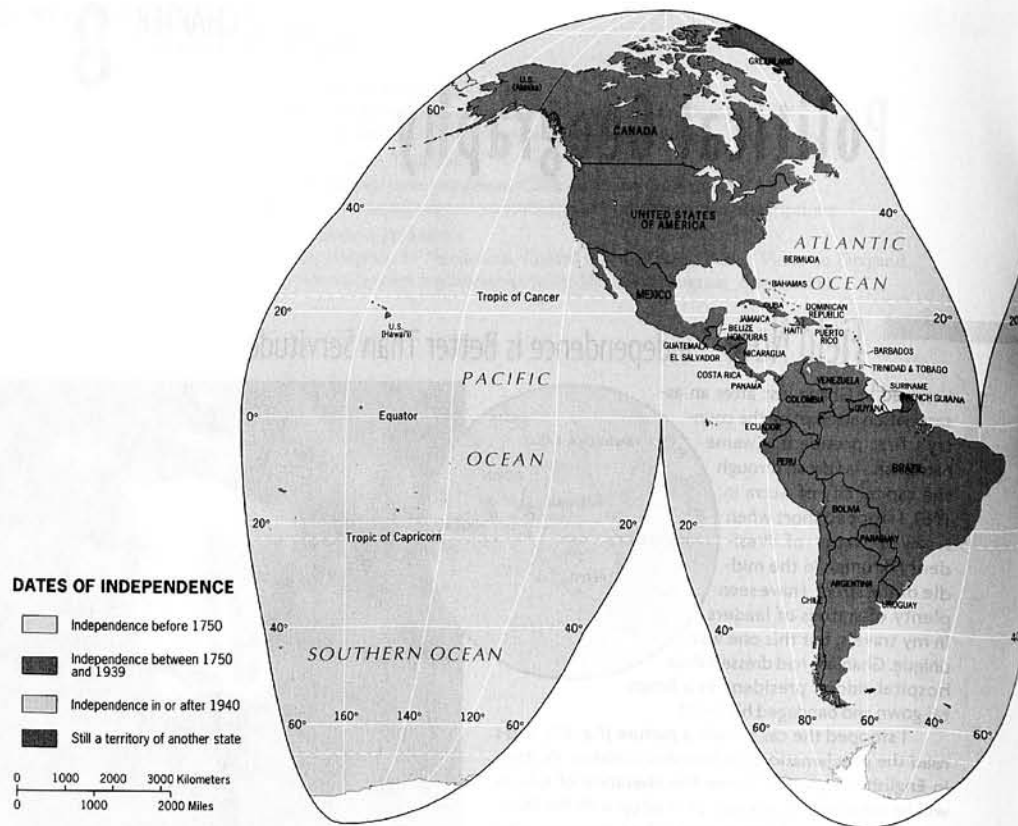


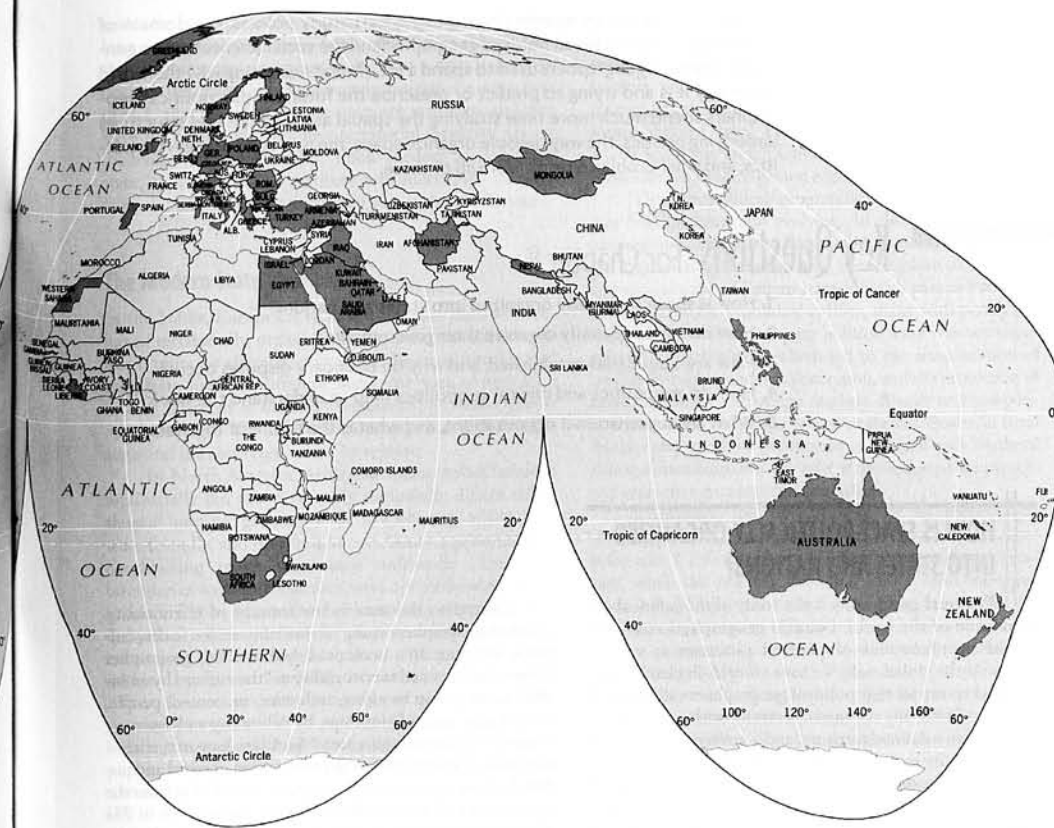
Figure 8.2

Dates of Independence for states, throughout the world. The first major wave of independence movements between 1750 and 1939 occurred mainly in the Americas. The second major wave of independence movements after 1940 occurred mainly in Africa and Asia. Data from: CIA World Factbook, 2005.

themselves fully intertwined in the world economy, unable to control their own economies.

For many of the new African states, Nkrumah's words rang true—independence was better than servitude, even if it meant danger instead of tranquility. Nkrumah, elected in 1960, was overthrown by the military in 1966 and died in exile in 1972.

The story of Ghana and President Nkrumah is a familiar one. After decades of European colonial rule, peoples around the world sought independence; they wanted to have their own country, and they wanted to have a say over what happened in their country. Nkrumah knew the risk was great—danger came with the quick transition and from the inheritance of a political organization that made little sense for Ghana or the people who lived there. European colonialism set the world up as a huge functional



region for Europe—one where Europe benefited the most economically. Colonialism also brought the European way of politically organizing space into independent countries around the world. This system and its lack of fit for most of the world has caused political strife, and yet, peoples still seek to become independent countries because in Nkrumah's words, they know independence is better than servitude.

Political activity is as basic to human culture as language or religion. Political behavior is expressed by individuals, groups, communities, nations, governments, and supranational organizations. Each desires power and influence to achieve personal and public goals. Whether or not we like politics, each of us is caught up in these processes, with effects ranging from the composition of school boards to the conduct of war.

In this chapter, we examine how geographers study politics, the domain of political geography. Like all fields of geography (and the social sciences, more generally), political geographers used to spend a lot of time explaining why the world is the way it is and trying to predict or prescribe the future. Today, political geographers spend much more time studying the spatial assumptions and structures underlying politics, the ways people organize space, the role territory plays in politics, and what problems result from all of these.

Key Questions For Chapter 8

1. How is space politically organized into states and nations?
2. How do states spatially organize their governments?
3. How are boundaries established, and why do boundary disputes occur?
4. How do geopolitics and critical geopolitics help us understand the world?
5. What are supranational organizations, and what is the future of the state?

HOW IS SPACE POLITICALLY ORGANIZED INTO STATES AND NATIONS?

Political geography is the study of the political organization of the world. Political geographers study the spatial manifestations of political processes at various scales. At the global scale, we have a world divided into individual countries that political geographers call states. A **state** is a politically organized territory with a permanent population, a defined territory, and a government. To be a state, an entity must be recognized as such by other states.

The present-day division of the world political map into states is a product of endless accommodations and adjustments within and between human societies. A mosaic of pastel colors shades more than 200 countries and territories, accentuating the separation of these countries by boundaries (Fig. 8.3). The political map of the world is the world map most of us learn first. We look at it, memorize it, and name the countries and perhaps each country's capital. It hangs in the front of our classrooms, is used to organize maps in our textbooks, and becomes so natural-looking to us that *we begin to think it is natural*.

The world map of states is anything but natural. The mosaic of states on the map represents a way of politically organizing space (into states) that is fewer than 400 years old. Just as people create places, imparting character to space and shaping culture, people make states. States and state boundaries are made, shaped, and refined by people, their actions and their history. Even the idea of dividing the world into territorially defined states is one created and exported by people.

Central to the state is the concept of territoriality. Political geographers study territoriality across scales, cultures, and time. In a book published in 1986, geographer Robert Sack defined **territoriality** as "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area." Sack sees human territoriality as a key ingredient in the construction of social and political spaces. His approach to territoriality differs from the approach social anthropologist Robert Ardrey took in *The Territorial Imperative* (1966). Ardrey argued that human territoriality is analogous to the instinct in animals to control and defend territory. Sack, by contrast, argues that human territoriality takes many different forms, depending on the social and geographical context, and that it should not be compared to an animal instinct. Instead, he calls for a better understanding of the human organization of the planet through a consideration of how and why different territorial strategies are pursued at different times and in different places.

Drawing from Sack's observations, political geographers have studied how people have changed the way territoriality is expressed and how ideas of territoriality vary over space and time. Today, territoriality is tied closely to the concept of **sovereignty**. As Sack explained, territorial behavior implies an expression of control over a territory. In international law, the concept of sovereignty is territorially defined. Sovereignty means having the last say (having control) over a territory—politically and militarily. At the world

scale, the states of the world have the last say—legally, at least—over their respective territories. When the international community recognizes an entity as a state, it also recognizes the entity as being sovereign within the state borders. Under international law, states are sovereign, and they have the right to defend their **territorial integrity** against incursion from other states. These modern ideas of how state, sovereignty, and territory are intertwined diffused from the mid-seventeenth century state system in Europe.

The Modern State Idea

In the 1600s, Europeans were not the only ones who behaved territorially, organized themselves into distinct political units, or claimed sovereignty. Because territoriality manifests itself in different ways, the idea of the state looked different in different regions of the world 400 or 500 years ago. The role territory played in defining the state and the sovereign varied by region.

In North America, American Indian tribes behaved territorially but not necessarily exclusively. Plains tribes shared hunting grounds with neighboring tribes who were friendly, and they fought over hunting grounds with neighboring tribes who were unfriendly. Territorial boundaries were shifting; they were not delineated on the ground. Plains tribes also held territory communally—individual tribal members did not "own" land. In a political sense, territoriality was most expressed by tribes within the Plains. Similarly, in Southeast Asia and in Africa, the concept of sovereignty and state-like political entities also existed. In all of these places and in Europe before the mid-1600s, sovereignty was expressed over a people rather than a defined and bordered territory. A sovereign had subjects who followed (and happened to live in place) rather than a defined space to rule.

The European state idea deserves particular attention because it most influenced the development of the modern state system. We can see traces of this state idea several millennia ago near the southeastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, where distinct kingdoms emerged within discrete territories. Greek philosophy on governance and aspects of Ancient Greece and Rome play parts in the modern state idea. Political geographer Rhys Jones studied state formation in the United Kingdom during the European Middle Ages. He found the first states in Wales were small in size but had the attributes of the modern state. In the late Middle Ages, governments constructed more sizable states in what are now the United Kingdom, France, and Spain. We cannot trace a clear evolution in the European state idea, but we can see aspects of the modern state in many places and points in European history.

The event in European history that marks the beginning of the modern state is the **Peace of Westphalia**, negotiated in 1648. The treaties that constituted this peace con-

cluded Europe's most destructive internal struggle over religion (the Thirty Years' War) and contained new language recognizing statehood and nationhood, clearly defined borders, and guarantees of security. The language of the treaties laid the foundations for a Europe made up of territorially defined states. They provided a framework through which Spain, the Dutch United Provinces, France, and the Holy Roman Empire gained regional stability.

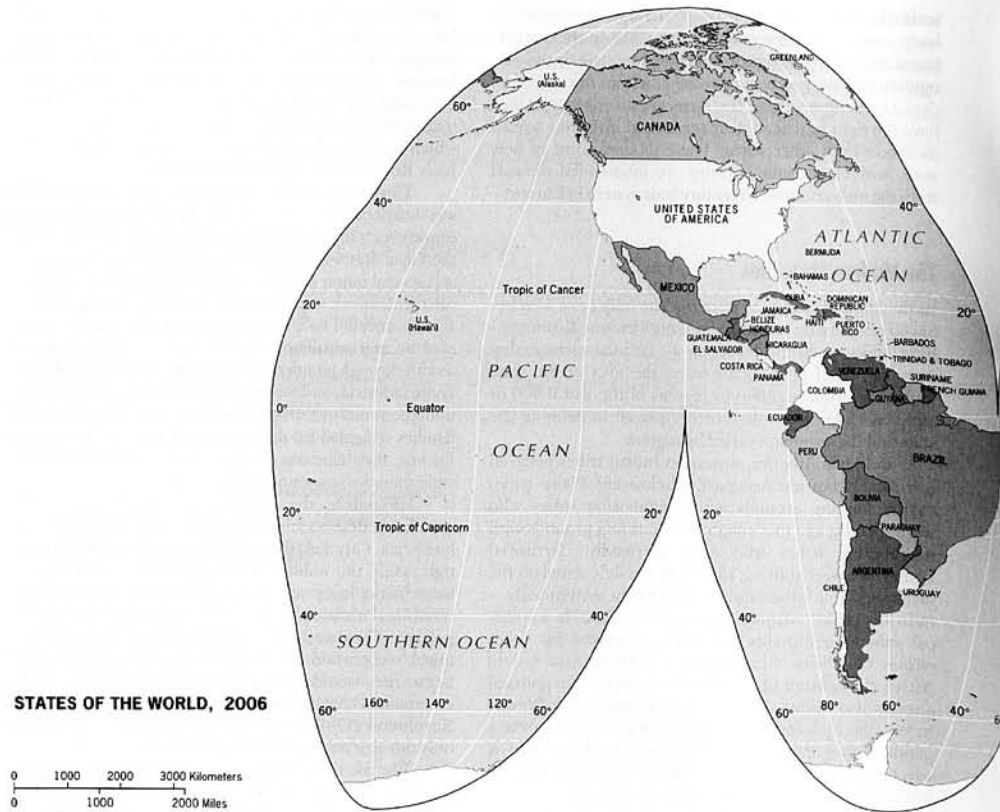
Thus, the political-geographic map of Europe in 1648 was fractionalized and evolving. In the mid-seventeenth century such states as the Republic of Venice, Brandenburg, the Papal States of central Italy, the Kingdom of Hungary, and several minor German states were all part of a complicated patchwork of political entities, many with poorly defined borders. The emerging political state was accompanied by **mercantilism**, which led to the accumulation of wealth through plunder, colonization, and the protection of home industries and foreign markets. Rivalry and competition intensified in Europe as well as abroad. Powerful royal families struggled for dominance in Eastern and Southern Europe. Instability was the rule, strife occurred frequently, and repressive governments prevailed.

Ultimately, the development of an increasingly wealthy middle class proved to be the undoing of absolutist rule. City-based merchants gained wealth and prestige, while the nobility declined. Money and influence were increasingly concentrated in urban areas, and the traditional measure of affluence—land—became less important. The merchants and businessmen demanded political recognition. In the 1780s, a series of upheavals began that would change the sociopolitical face of the continent. Overshadowing these events was the French Revolution (1789–1795), but this momentous event was only one in a series of political upheavals.

The rise of the modern state system marks a change, whereby territory defines society rather than society defining territory. The modern state system incorporates a distinctive view of territory as a fixed, exclusive element of political identification and group survival. States define exclusive, nonoverlapping territories, and they are sovereign over the territory and the people inside the territory. This particular way of defining territory and placing people in borders swept through Europe in the late 1600s. From a hearth in Europe, European colonizers exported their state idea throughout the entire world by 1900.

Nations

The popular media and press often use the words *nation*, *state*, and *country* interchangeably. Political geographers use *state* and *country* interchangeably (preferring state), but the word *nation* is distinct. State is a legal term in international law, and the international political community has some agreement about what this term means. *Nation*,



STATES OF THE WORLD, 2006

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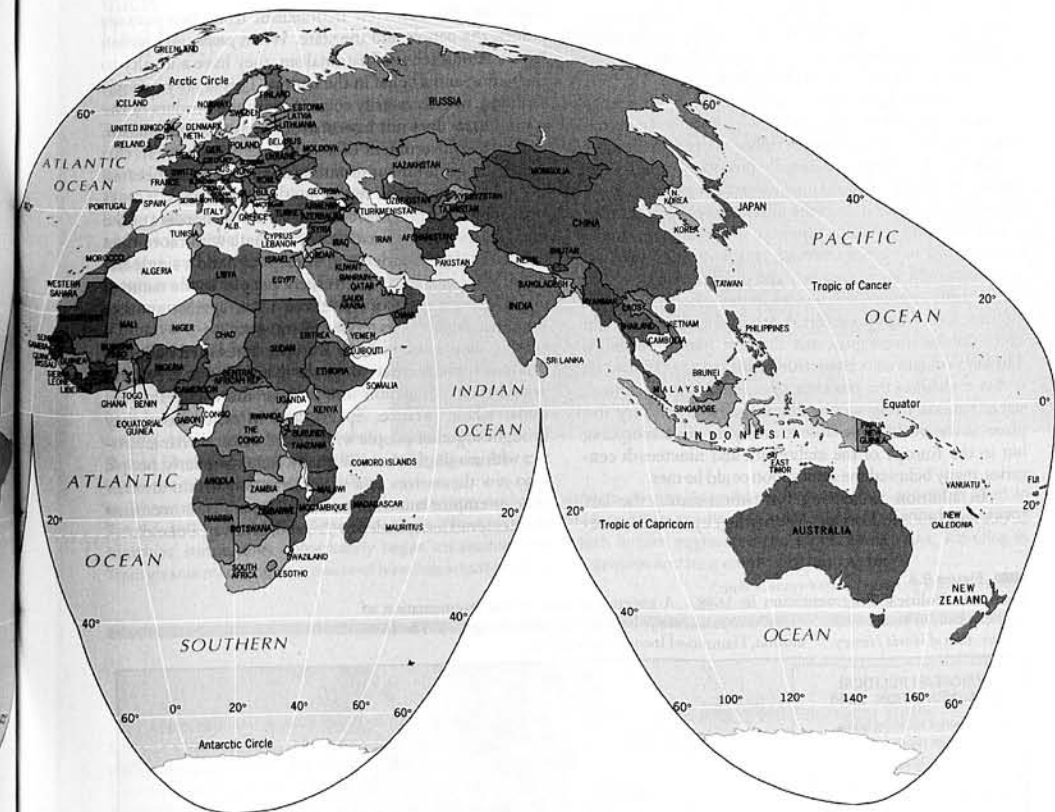
Figure 8.3
States of the World, 2006.

on the other hand, is a culturally defined term, and few people agree on exactly what it means. Some argue that a nation is simply the people within a state's borders; here, all people who live in Germany would compose the German nation. This definition gives little explanation to how politically charged the concept of nation is.

We define **nation** as a culturally defined group of people with a shared past and a common future who relate to a territory and have political goals (ranging from autonomy to statehood). This idea allows for different kinds of culturally defined nations. Nations variously see themselves as sharing a religion, a language, an ethnicity, or a history. How a nation is defined depends on the people who see themselves as part of the nation. All cultural com-

munities are ultimately mixtures of different peoples. The French are often considered to be the classic example of a nation, but the most French-feeling person in France today is the product of a melding together of a wide variety of cultural groups over time, including Celts, Ancient Romans, Franks, Goths, and many more. If the majority of inhabitants of modern France belong to the French nation, it is because they claim the French nation as an identity. It is not because the French nation exists as a primordial group that has always been distinct.

People in a nation look to their past and think, "we have been through much together," and when they look to their future they think, "whatever happens we will go through it together." Because the nation shares a common



past and a common future, the nation has staying power. A nation is identified by its own membership; therefore, we cannot simply define a nation as the people within a territory. Rarely does a nation's extent correspond precisely with a state's borders. For example, in the country of Belgium, two nations—the Flemish and the Wallonian—exist within the state borders.

This definition of nation is also workable because it allows for different views of how nations came to be. Historically, scholars saw the nation as something we were born into, something natural that changes over time. The widely held theory was that all people belong to a nation and always have. Recently, scholars have argued that nations are constructed, that people create nations to give themselves an identity at that scale. One of the most widely

read scholars on nationalism today, Benedict Anderson, defines the nation as an "imagined community"—imagined because you will never meet all of the people in your nation and community because, despite that fact, you see yourself as part of a collective.

Nation-State

The European model of the state—the nation-state—became the aspiration of governing elites around the world. Literally, a **nation-state** is a politically organized area in which nation and state occupy the same space. Since few (if any) states are nation-states, the importance of the nation-state concept lies primarily in the idea behind it. States and

the governments that run states desire a unified nation within their borders to create stability and to replace other politically charged identities that may challenge the state and the government's control of the state.

The goal of creating nation-states dates to the French Revolution, which sought control by an imagined cultural-historical community of people rather than a monarchy or colonizer. The Revolution initially promoted **democracy**, the idea that the people are the ultimate sovereign—that is, the people, the nation, have the ultimate say over what happens within the state. Each nation, it was argued, should have its own sovereign territory, and only when that was achieved would true democracy and stability exist.

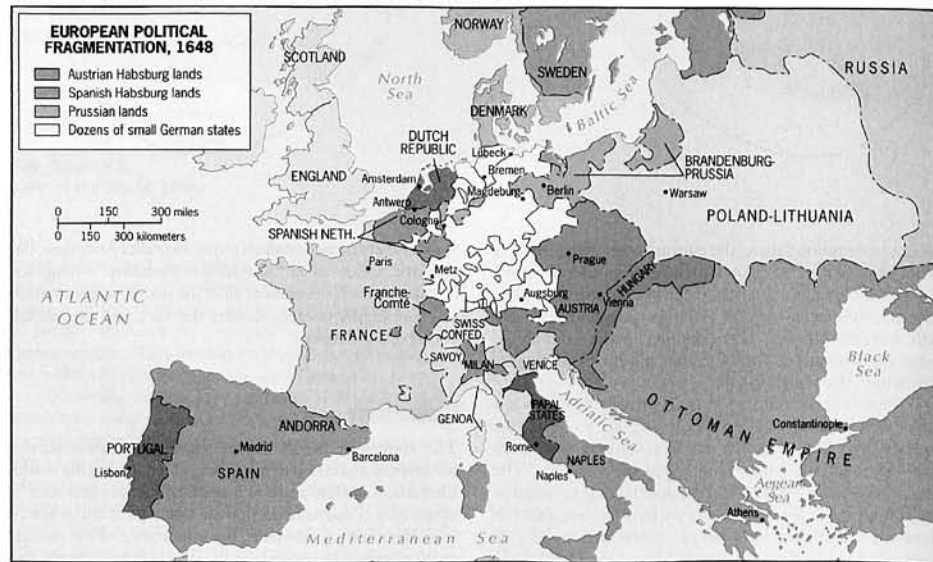
People began to see the idea of the nation-state as the ultimate form of political-territorial organization, the right expression of sovereignty, and the best route to stability. The key problem associated with the idea of the nation-state is that it assumes the presence of reasonably well-defined, stable nations living within discrete territories. Very few places in the world come close to satisfying this assumption, but in the Europe of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many believed the assumption could be met.

In addition to striving for nation-states, the late 1700s and 1800s in Europe were marked by the rise of na-

tionalism. We can view nationalism from two vantage points: the people and the state. When *people* in a nation have a strong sense of nationalism, they have a loyalty to the nation and a belief in the nation. This loyalty to a nation does not necessarily coincide with the borders of the state. A *state* does not have a strong sense of nationalism; rather, the government of a state is nationalistic. In this sense, the government promotes the nation, and because the government is the representative of the state, it seeks to promote a nation that coincides with the borders of the state. In the name of nationalism, a state with more than one nation in its borders can attempt to build a single national identity out of the divergent people. In the name of nationalism, a state can promote a war against another state that threatens its territorial integrity.

In nineteenth-century Europe, states used nationalism to achieve a variety of goals: in some cases they integrated their population into an ever more cohesive national whole (France, Spain), and in other cases they brought together people with shared cultural characteristics within a single state (Germany, Italy). Similarly, people who saw themselves as a separate nation within another state or empire launched successful separatist movements and achieved independence (Ireland, Norway, Poland).

Figure 8.4
European Political Fragmentation in 1648. A generalized map of the fragmentation of Western Europe in the 1600s. Adapted with permission from: Geoffrey Barraclough, ed. *The Times Concise Atlas of World History*, 5th edition, Hammond Incorporated, 1998.



Guest Field Note

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

To Hungarians, Transylvania is significant because it was an important part of the Hungarian Kingdom for a thousand years. Many of their great leaders were born and buried there, and many of their great churches, colleges, and architectural achievements are located there too. For example, in the city of Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár in Hungarian) is St. Michael's Cathedral and next to it is the statue of King Matthias, one of Hungary's greatest kings. Romanians have long lived in the territory too, tracing their roots back to the Roman Empire. To Romanian nationalists, the existence of Roman ruins in Transylvania is proof of their Roman ancestry and their right to govern Transylvania because their ancestors lived in Transylvania before those of the Hungarians. When archeologists found Roman ruins around St. Michael's Cathedral and King Matthias' statue, they immediately began excavating them, which in turn aggravated the ethnic Hungarians. Traveling in Transylvania made me very aware of how important places are to peoples and how contested they can be.

Credit: George White, Frostburg State University



Figure 8.5

Multistate Nations, Multinational States, and Stateless Nations

European states used the tool of nationalism to refine the state—to make the state a more workable form of political organization for them. The modern map of Europe is still fragmented, but much less so than in the 1600s (Fig. 8.4). In the process of creating nation-states in Europe, states absorbed smaller entities into their borders, resolved conflicts by force as well as by negotiation, and defined borders.

To help people within the borders relate to a nation that meshes with the borders of the state, states provide security, goods, and services to the citizens. States provide education, infrastructure, health care, and military to preserve the state and to create a connection between the people and the state—to build a nation-state. European states even used the colonization of Africa and Asia in the late 1800s and early 1900s as a way to promote nationalism. People could take pride in their state, in their nation, in its vast colonial empire. People could identify themselves with their French, Dutch, or British nation by contrasting themselves with the people in the colonies—people whom they defined as mystical or savage. By identifying against an "other," the state and the people helped identify the traits of their nation—and in so doing, worked to build a nation-state.

The sense of belonging to a nation rarely meshes perfectly with state borders. The lack of fit between nation and state creates complications, such as states with more than one nation, nations with more than one state, and nations without a state.

Nearly every state in the world is a **multinational state**, a state with more than one nation inside its borders. The people living in the former state of Yugoslavia never achieved a strong sense of Yugoslav nationhood. Millions of people who were citizens of Yugoslavia never had a Yugoslav nationality—they always identified themselves as Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, or members of other nations or ethnic groups within the state or region. Yugoslavia was a state that always had more than one nation, and eventually the state collapsed.

When a nation stretches across borders and across states, the nation is called a **multistate nation**. Political geographer George White studied the states of Romania and Hungary and their overlapping nations (Fig. 8.5). As he has noted, the territory of Transylvania is currently in

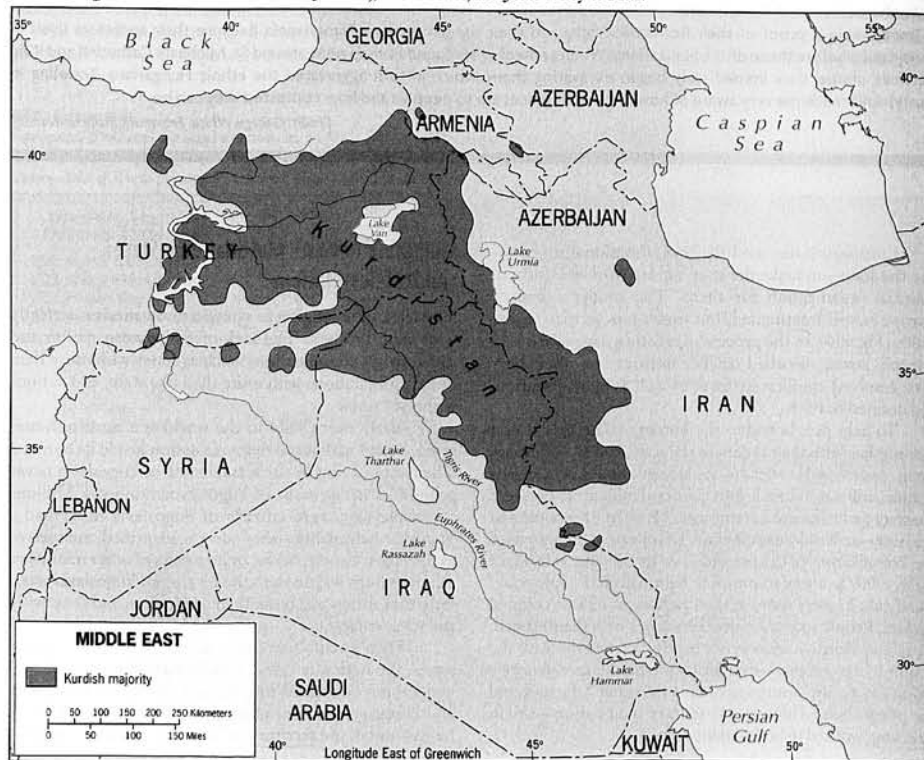
the middle of the state of Romania, but it has not always been that way. For two centuries, Hungary's borders stretched far enough east to incorporate Transylvania into the state of Hungary. The Transylvania region today is populated by Romanians and by Hungarians, and both states claim a desire and a right to control the territory. Both states have places within Transylvania that they see as pivotal to the histories of their nations. The desire to control the territory and to stretch the Hungarian state in order to mesh with what Hungarians see as the Hungarian nation requires the movement of state borders. White explains how important territory is to a nation: "The control and maintenance of territory is as crucial as the control and maintenance of a national language, religion, or a particular way of life. Indeed, a language, religion or way of life is difficult to maintain without control over territory." In the case of Romania and Hungary, and in similar states

where the identity of the nation is tied to a particular territory, White explains that nations will defend their territories as strongly as they defend their "language, religion, or way of life."

Another complication that arises from the lack of fit between nations and states is that some nations do not have a state; they are **stateless nations**. The Palestinians are an example of a stateless nation. In the 1990s, the Palestinian Arabs gained control over fragments of territory ("the Occupied Territories") that may form the foundations of a future state, but most of the 6.5 million Palestinians continued to live in Israel and several other countries, including Jordan (2.1 million), Lebanon (400,000), and Syria (350,000).

A much larger stateless nation is that of the over 20 million Kurds who live in an area called Kurdistan that covers parts of six states (Fig. 8.6). In the aftermath of

Figure 8.6
Kurdish region of the Middle East. H. J. de Blij, P. O. Muller, and John Wiley & Sons.



the 1991 Gulf War, the United Nations established a Kurdish Security Zone north of the 36th parallel in Iraq, but subsequent events have dashed any Kurdish hopes that one day this might become a state. The Kurds form the largest minority in Turkey, and the city of Diyarbakir is the unofficial Kurdish capital; however, relations between the 10 million Kurds in Turkey and the Turkish government in Ankara have been volatile. Without the consent of Turkey, no Kurdish state will be established anywhere in Kurdistan.

European Colonialism and the Diffusion of the Nation-State Model

Europe exported its concepts of state, sovereignty, and the desire for nation-states to much of the rest of the world through two waves of colonialism (Fig. 8.7). In the sixteenth century, Spain and Portugal took advantage of an increasingly well-consolidated internal political order and newfound wealth to expand their influence to increasingly far-flung realms during the first wave of colonialism. Later joined by Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, the first wave of colonialism established a far-reaching capitalist system. After independence movements in the Americas during the late 1700s and 1800s, a second wave of colonialism began in the late 1800s. The major colonizers were Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Italy. The colonizing parties met for the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885 and arbitrarily laid out the colonial map of Africa. Driven by motives ranging from economic profit to the desire to bring Christianity to the rest of the world, colonialism projected

European power and European organization of political space into the non-European world (Fig. 8.8).

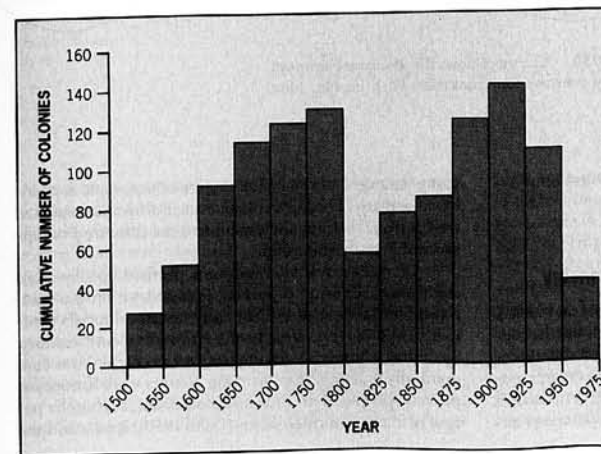
With Europe in control of so much of the world, Europeans laid the ground rules for the emerging international state system, and the modern European concept of the nation-state became the model adopted around the world. Europe also established and defined the ground rules of the capitalist world economy, creating a system of economic interdependence that persists today.

During the heyday of **colonialism**, the imperial powers exercised ruthless control over their domains and organized them for maximum economic exploitation. The capacity to install the infrastructure necessary for such efficient profiteering is itself evidence of the power relationships involved: entire populations were regimented in the service of the colonial ruler. Colonizers organized the flows of raw materials for their own benefit, and we can still see the tangible evidence of that organization (plantations, ports, mines, and railroads) on the cultural landscape.

Despite the end of colonialism, the political organization of space and the global world economy remain. And while the former colonies are now independent states, their economies are anything but independent. In many cases, raw material flows are as great as they were before the colonial era came to an end. For example, today in Gabon, Africa, the railroad goes from the interior forest (which is logged for plywood) to the major port and capital city, Libreville. The second largest city, Port Gentile, is located to the south of Libreville, but the two cities are not connected by road or railroad. Like Libreville, Port Gentile is export-focused, with global oil corporations responsible for

Figure 8.7

Two Waves of Colonialism between 1500 and 1975. Each bar shows the total number of colonies around the world. Adapted with permission from: Peter J. Taylor and Colin Flint, *Political Geography: World-Economy, Nation-State and Locality*, 4th ed., New York: Prentice Hall, 2000.



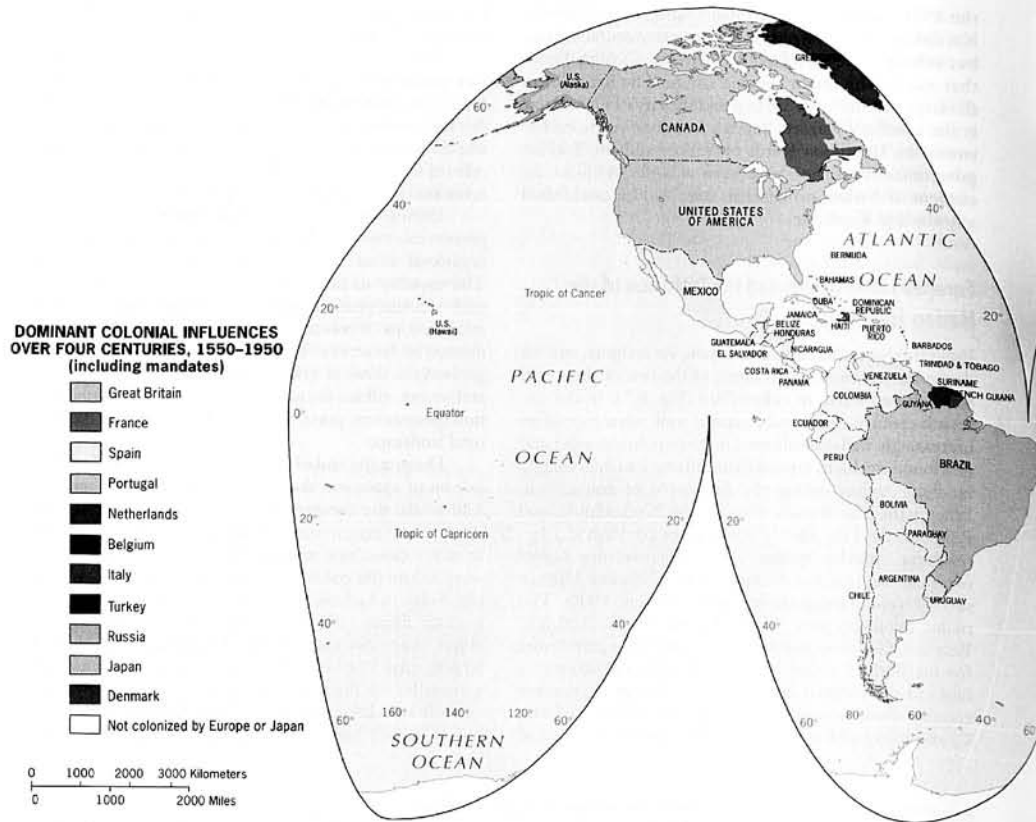


Figure 8.8

Dominant Colonial Influences from 1550–1950. The map shows the *dominant* European or Japanese colonial influence in each country over the four centuries. H. J. de Blij, John Wiley & Sons.

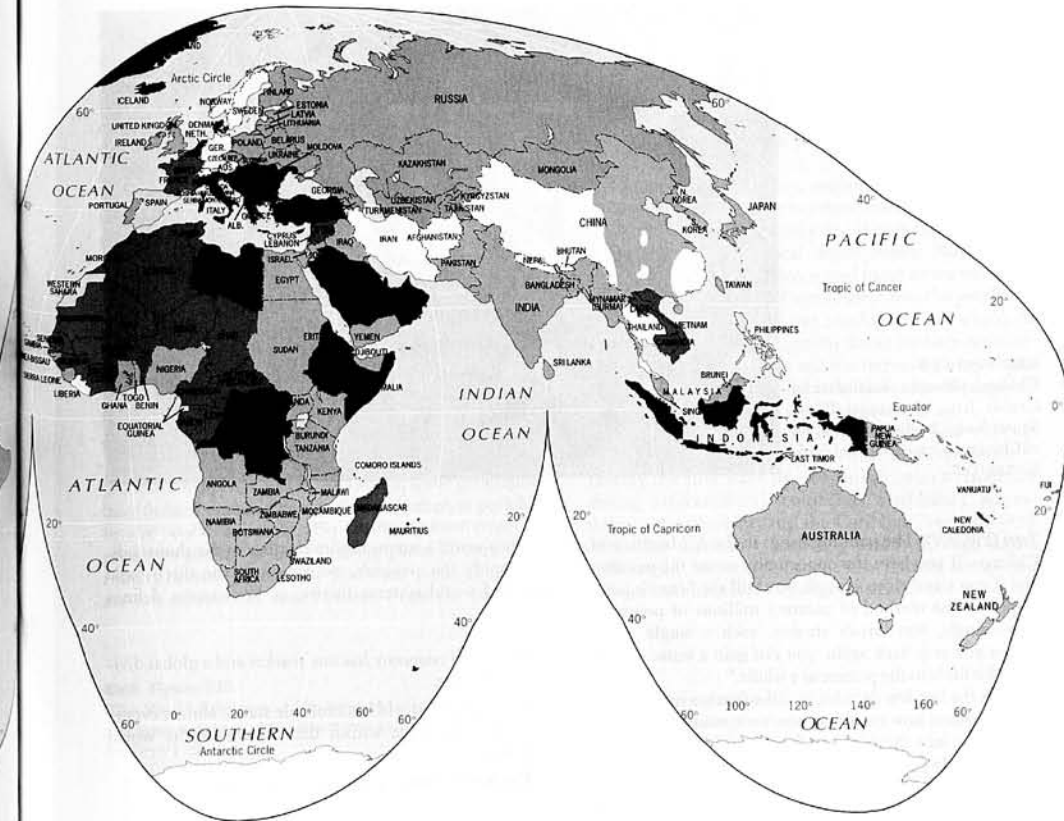
building much of the city and its housing, and employing most of its people.

Construction of the Capitalist World Economy

The long-term impacts of colonialism are many and varied. One of the most powerful impacts of colonialism was the construction of a global order characterized by great differences in economic and political power. The European colonial enterprise gave birth to a globalized economic order in which the European states and areas dominated by European mi-

grants emerged as the major centers of economic and political activity. Through colonialism, Europeans extracted wealth from colonies and established the colonized as subservient in the relationship.

Of course, not all Europeans profited equally from colonialism. Enormous poverty persisted within the most powerful European states. Similarly, not all colonizers profited to the same degree. In the late seventeenth century, Spain had a large colonial empire, but the empire was economically draining Spain by then. Neither were Europeans the only people to profit from colonialism. During the period of European colonialism (1500–1950), Russia and the



United States expanded over land instead of over seas, profiting from the taking of territory and the subjugation of indigenous peoples. Japan was a regional colonial power, controlling Korea and other parts of East and Southeast Asia as well as Pacific Islands through colonization. But the concentration of wealth that colonialism brought to Europe, and to parts of the world dominated by European settlers (such as the United States, Canada, and Australia), is at the heart of the highly uneven global distribution of power we still have today.

The forces of colonialism played a key role in knitting together the economies of widely separated areas—giving

birth to a global economic order, the world economy. Wealth is unevenly distributed in the world economy, as can be seen in statistics on per capita gross national product (GNP): Haiti's GNP is only \$510, whereas Norway's is \$42,222. But to truly understand why wealth is distributed unevenly, we cannot simply study each country, its resources and its production of goods. Rather, we need to learn how this country fits into the world economy. That is, we need to see the big picture.

Think of a pointillist painting. Specifically, envision the magnificent work of nineteenth-century French painter Georges-Pierre Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande*



Figure 8.9
Chicago, Illinois. Sunday on La Grande Jatte by Georges Pierre Seurat hangs in the Art Institute of Chicago. © Bridgeman Art Library/SUPERSTOCK.

Jatte (Fig. 8.9). The painting hangs in the Art Institute of Chicago. If you have the opportunity to see the painting and if you stand close enough, you will see Seurat's post-Impressionist method of painting millions of points or dots—single, tiny brush strokes, each a single color. When you step back again, you can gain a sense of how each dot fits into the picture as a whole.¹

In the last few decades, social scientists have sought to understand how each dot, how each country and each locality, fit into the picture of the world as a whole. To study a single dot or even each dot one at a time, we miss the whole. Even if we study every single dot and add them together, we still miss the whole. We need to step back and see the whole, as well as the individual dots, studying how one affects the other. By now, this should sound familiar—it is the geographer's way of using *scale*, something geographers have done for over a century.

Political geographers took note of one sociologist's theory of the world economy and added much to it. Building on the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, proponents of world-systems theory view the world as much more than the sum total of the world's states. Much like a pointillist painting, world-systems theorists hold that to understand any state, we must also understand its spatial and functional relationships within the world economy.

Wallerstein's publications number in the hundreds, and the political and economic geography publications

number in the thousands. To simplify the research, we can study the three basic tenets of world-systems theory, as Wallerstein defines them:

1. The world economy has one market and a global division of labor.
2. Although the world has multiple states, almost everything takes place within the context of the world economy.
3. The world economy has a three-tier structure.

First, the world economy is capitalist, beginning around 1450 and encompassing the globe by 1900. **Capitalism** means that in the world economy, people, corporations, and states produce goods and exchange them on the world market, with the goal of achieving profit. To generate a profit, producers seek the cheapest labor, drawing from the globe. As a result, a corporation can move production of a good from North Carolina to Mexico and then to China, simply to take advantage of cheaper labor. In addition to the world labor supply, producers gain profit by commodifying everything. **Commodification** is the process of placing a price on a good and then buying, selling, and trading the good. Companies create new products, generate new twists on old products, and create demand for the products through marketing. As children, none of the authors of this book could have imagined buying a bottle of water. Now, we do it all the time.

Second, despite the existence of approximately 200 states, everything takes place within the context of the

world economy (and has since 1900). Colonialism set up this system—exporting the politically independent state and also constructing an interdependent global economy. When colonies became independent, gaining the legal status of sovereign states was relatively easy for most colonies; the United Nations Charter even set up a committee to help colonies do so after World War II. But gaining economic independence is simply impossible. The economies of the world are tied together, generating intended and unintended consequences that fundamentally change places.

Lastly, world-systems theorists see the world economy as a three-tiered structure: the core, periphery, and semi-periphery. The core and the periphery are not just places but processes. **Core** processes incorporate higher levels of education, higher salaries, and more technology—core processes generate more wealth in the world economy. **Periphery** processes incorporate lower levels of education, lower salaries and less technology—peripheral processes generate less wealth in the world economy.

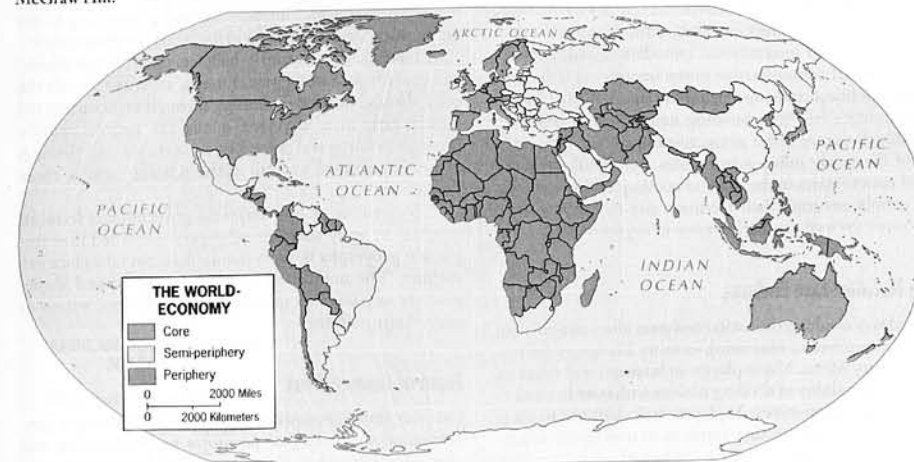
The core and periphery are processes, but these processes happen in places. As a result, some geographers have defined certain places as core and others as periphery in the world economy (Fig. 8.10). Others stress the processes and try to avoid labeling places as core or periphery because processes in places are not static and they are not confined by state borders. From the beginning,

Wallerstein defined the **semi-periphery** as places—places where core and periphery processes are both occurring—places that are exploited by the core but in turn exploit the periphery. By taking advantage of its cheap labor or lax environmental standards, the core exploits the periphery. The semi-periphery acts as a buffer between the core and periphery, preventing the polarization of the world into two extremes.

Political geographers, economic geographers, and other academics continue to debate world-systems theory, with the major concern being that it overemphasizes economic factors in political development. Nonetheless, Wallerstein's work has encouraged many to see the world political map as a system of interlinking parts that need to be understood in relation to one another and as a whole. As such, the impact of world-systems theory has been considerable in political geography, and it is increasingly commonplace for geographers to refer to the kinds of core-periphery distinctions suggested by world-systems theory.

World-systems theory helps explain how colonial powers were able to amass great concentrations of wealth. During the first wave of colonialism (which happened during mercantilism), colonizers established plantations in the Americas and the Caribbean and exploited Africa for slave labor, amassing wealth through sugar, coffee, fruit, and cotton production. During the second wave of colonialism (which happened after the Industrial

Figure 8.10
The World Economy. The three tier structure of the world-economy: the core, periphery, and semi-periphery. Adapted with permission from: Michael Bradshaw, *World Regional Geography*, McGraw Hill.



¹We must give credit to former student Kelsey Lynd, who came up with this metaphor for world-systems theory in a political geography class at the University of Mary Washington in 1999.

Revolution), colonizers set their sights on cheap industrial labor and cheap raw materials.

Not all core countries in the world today were colonial powers, however. Countries such as Switzerland, Singapore, and Australia have significant global clout even though they were never classic colonial powers, and that clout is tied in significant part to their positions in the global economy. These positions were gained through the access these countries had to the networks of production, consumption, and exchange in the wealthiest parts of the world and their ability to take advantage of that access.

World-Systems and Political Power

Are economic power and political power one and the same? No, but certainly economic power can bring political power. In the current system, economic power means wealth, and political power means the ability to influence others to achieve your goals. Political power is not defined by sovereignty. Each state is sovereign, but not all states have the same ability to influence others or achieve their political goals. Having wealth helps leaders amass political power. For instance, a wealthy country can establish a mighty military. But political power is not simply militaristic; it is also diplomatic. Switzerland's declared neutrality, combined with its economic might, aids the country's diplomatic efforts.

World-systems theory helps us understand how Europe politically reorganized the world during colonialism. When colonialism ended in Africa and Asia, the newly independent people continued to follow the European model of political organization. The arbitrarily drawn colonies of Africa from the Berlin Conference became the boundaries of the newly independent states. On the map, former colonies became new states; administrative borders transformed into international boundaries; and, in most cases, colonial administrative towns became capitals. The greatest political challenge facing the states of Africa since independence has been building nation-states out of incredibly divergent (even antagonistic) peoples. The leaders of the newly independent states continually work to build nation-states in the hope of quelling division among the people, securing their territory, and developing their economic (as well as other) systems of organization.

The Nation-State Endures

The idea of meshing the nation and state into a nation-state was not confined to nineteenth-century Europe or twentieth-century Africa. Major players in international relations still see the validity of dividing nations with state borders—of creating nation-states. As players seek solutions to complex political conflicts, they continue to turn to the nation-state idea, believing that only it can bring long-term peace. In solutions drawn for the Balkan Peninsula (the former

Yugoslavia) and for Israel/Palestine, the central question is how to draw state boundaries around nations—how to make nation and state fit. In all of these ways, the European state became the world model and is still shaping the political organization of space in the world.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

Imagine you are the leader of a newly independent state in Africa or Asia. Determine what your government can do to build a nation that corresponds with the borders of your state. Consider the roles of education, government, military, and culture in your exercise in nation-building.

HOW DO STATES SPATIALLY ORGANIZE THEIR GOVERNMENTS?

In the 1950s, a famous political geographer, Richard Hartshorne, described the forces within the state that unify the people as **centripetal** and the forces that divide them as **centrifugal**. Whether a nation (or a state) continues to exist, according to Hartshorne, depends on the balance between centripetal and centrifugal forces. Many political geographers have thought about Hartshorne's theory, and most have concluded that we cannot take a given event or process and declare it as centrifugal or centripetal in isolation from the context in which it is situated. An event, such as a war, can pull the state together for a short time and then divide the state over the long term. Timing, scale, interaction, and perspective factor into unification and division in a state at any given point.

Instead of creating a balance sheet of centripetal and centrifugal forces, governments attempt to unify the state through nation-building, through structuring the government in a way that quells the nations within, through defining and defending boundaries, and through expressing control over all of the territory within those boundaries.

By looking at how different governments have attempted to unify their states, we are reminded how important geography is. Governance does not take place in a vacuum. The uniqueness of place factors in and shapes whether any possible governmental "solution" solves or exacerbates matters.

Form of Government

One way states promote unification is by choosing a governmental structure that promotes nation-building and quells division within. Two governmental structures commonly found in the world are unitary and federal.

To address multinational states, governments, even democratic governments, can and have suppressed dissent by forceful means. Until the end of World War II, most European governments were **unitary** governments: they were highly centralized, with the capital city serving as the focus of power. States made no clear efforts to accommodate minorities or outlying regions where the sense of state-scale national identity was weaker. Europe's nation-states were unitary states, with the culture of the capital city defined as the nation's culture. Any smaller nations within (such as Britons in France or Basques in Spain) were repressed and suppressed. The administrative framework of a unitary government is designed to ensure the central government's authority over all parts of the state. The French government divided the state into more than 90 *départements*, whose representatives came to Paris not to express regional concerns but to implement governmental decisions back home.

Another way to govern a multinational state is to construct a **federal** system, organizing state territory into regions, substates (States), provinces, or cantons. In a strong federal system, the regions have much control over government policies and funds, and in a weak federal system, the regions have little control over government policies and funds. Most federal systems are somewhere in between, with governments at the state scale and at the substate scale

each having control over certain revenues and certain policy areas. By giving control over certain policies (especially culturally relative policies) to the substates, a government can keep the state as a whole together.

Differences in culture within a country can be seen when we examine maps of culturally relative policies that are determined by States. In Nigeria, the 36 States choose their own judicial system. In the Muslim north, the States have Shari'a laws (legal systems based on traditional Islamic laws), and in the Christian and animist south, the States do not (Fig. 8.11). In the United States, the death penalty, access to alcohol, and concealed weapons are limited by State (Fig. 8.12).

Federalism accommodates regional interests by vesting primary power in provinces, States, or other regional units over all matters except those explicitly given to the central government. The Australian geographer K. W. Robinson described a federation as "the most geographically expressive of all political systems, based as it is on the existence and accommodation of regional differences . . . federation does not create unity out of diversity; rather, it enables the two to coexist."

Choosing a federal system does not always quell nationalist sentiment. After all, the multinational states of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia fell apart, despite changing to federal systems.

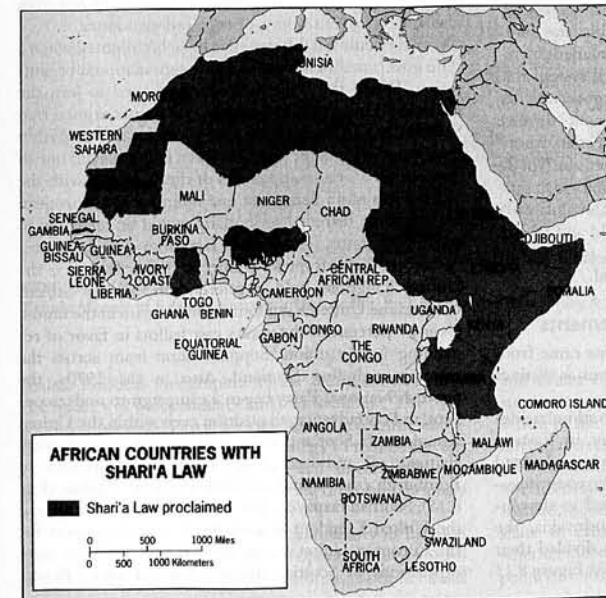


Figure 8.11
Countries in Africa with Shari'a Laws (Either Civil or Criminal). Data from a variety of sources, including: The United States Department of State, the CIA World Factbook, University of Pittsburgh Law School, Emory University School of Law, and All Africa.

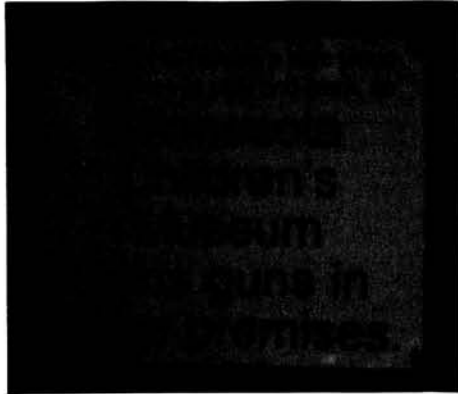


Figure 8.12

St. Paul, Minnesota. A sign hanging on the front door of the Minnesota Children's Museum cautions visitors that the museum "bans guns in these premises." Under Minnesota's concealed weapons law, businesses that do not want concealed weapons on the premises must post signs of a certain size, font, and color at each entrance to the establishment. © Erin H. Foulberg.

Devolution

Devolution is the movement of power from the central government to regional governments within the state. Sometimes, devolution is recognized as permanent by reworking a constitution to establish a federal system that recognizes the permanency of the regional governments, as Spain has done. In other places, governments devolve power without altering constitutions, almost as an experiment. In the United Kingdom, the Parliament in Northern Ireland resulted from devolution, but the British government suspended its activities in 2002. Devolutionary forces can emerge in all kinds of states, old and young, mature and emergent. These forces arise from several sources: ethnocultural, economic, and spatial.

Ethnocultural Devolutionary Movements

Many of Europe's devolutionary movements came from nations within a state that define themselves as distinct ethnically, linguistically, or religiously.

The capacity of ethnocultural forces to stimulate devolutionary processes is especially evident in Eastern Europe. Parts of the Eastern European map have changed quite drastically over the past decade, and two countries—Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia—succumbed to devolutionary pressures. In the case of Czechoslovakia, the process was peaceful: Czechs and Slovaks divided their country along a new international border. As Figure 8.13

shows, however, one of the two new states, Slovakia, is not homogeneous: about 11 percent of the population is Hungarian, and that minority is concentrated along the border between Slovakia and Hungary. The Hungarian minority, facing discriminatory policies involving language and other aspects of its culture, has at times demanded greater autonomy (self-governance) to protect its heritage in the new state.

Compared to the constituent units of the former Yugoslavia (discussed in detail in Chapter 7), other countries shown in Figure 8.14 have dealt with devolutionary pressures more peacefully. Among these are Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, and Ukraine. Elsewhere in the world, however, ethnocultural fragmentation has produced costly wars. Ethnocultural differences lie at the heart of the decades-long conflict between the Muslim North and the non-Muslim South in Sudan, Africa. Similar forces have given rise to a seemingly endless civil war in Sri Lanka (South Asia), where the Sinhalese (Buddhist) majority has been unable to suppress or to accommodate the demands of the Tamil (Hindu) minority for an independent state. Moreover, devolutionary forces are gaining momentum in places that have long looked stable from the outside; China's far west is a case in point, where an Uyghur separatist movement is gaining momentum. The point is that ethnocultural differences are weakening the fabric of many states in today's global political framework, and if anything the trend is in the direction of more, rather than fewer, calls for autonomy, or even independence.

Ethnocultural differences can be highlighted when a state government chooses to join a supranational organization. When the United Kingdom moved to join the European Union, some Scottish nationalists argued that Scotland would be disadvantaged by such a move. Within the United Kingdom, Scotland was a major player, one of the four territorial components of the state. But with the United Kingdom being just one member of a European Union, some feared that Scotland would be relegated to third-level status. The United Kingdom joined the precursor to the European Union in 1973. In 1975, the United Kingdom held a referendum, asking citizens whether the United Kingdom should remain in the union. Over 67 percent of the voters cast ballots in favor of remaining in the union. Support came from across the country, including Scotland. Also in the 1970s, the Scottish National Party began a campaign to underscore Scotland's disadvantaged position even within the United Kingdom. If Scotland were independent, party leaders claimed, oil and natural gas revenues would flow to Edinburgh (the capital of Scotland), not London (Fig. 8.15); Scottish taxpayers' funds would serve Scotland, not the United Kingdom as a whole. Scotland's support for the European Union and its calls for independence were expressions of Scottish independence at two different

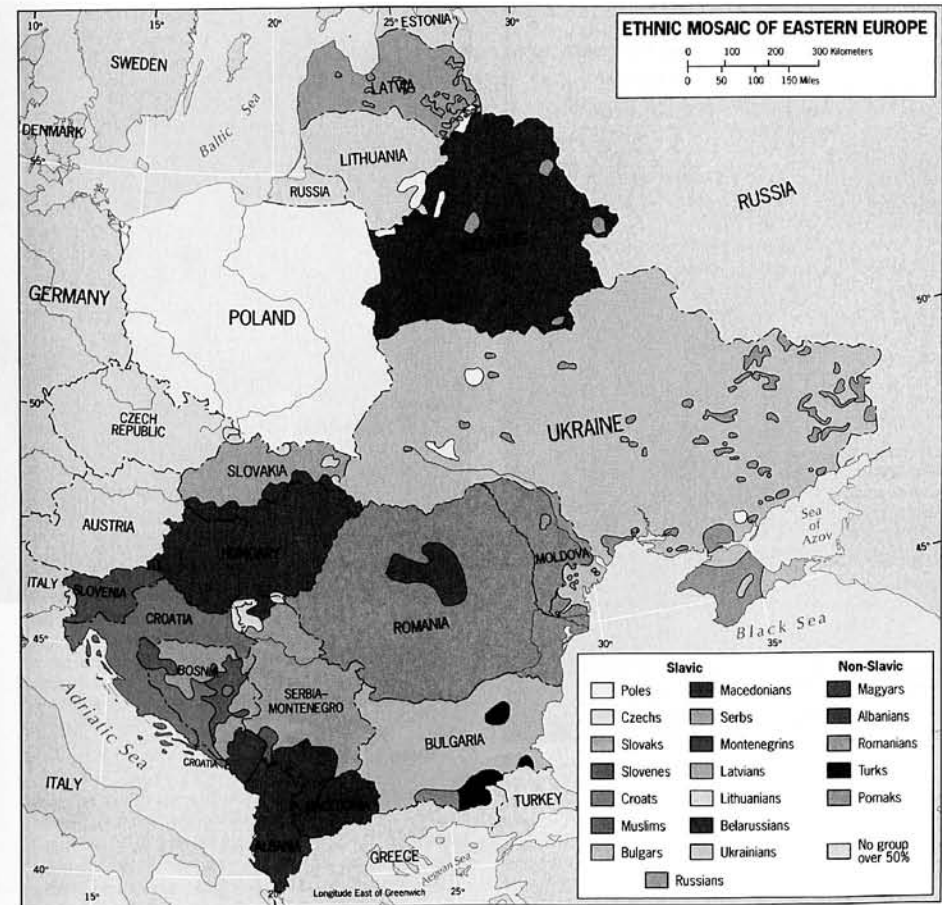


Figure 8.13

Ethnic Mosaic of Eastern Europe. H. J. de Blij, P. O. Muller, and John Wiley & Sons.

scales. Political Geographer Fiona Davidson described the balance of independence and membership: "The SNP (Scottish National Party) uses the idea of economic stability in the EU as a campaigning strategy to reduce the understandably high level of fear and uncertainty that plagues the Scottish population every time they seriously consider independence."

In 1997, the newly elected Labor Party in London gave the Scots (and the Welsh) the opportunity to vote—not for independence, but for devolution. Both Scotland

and Wales voted in favor, taking a major devolutionary step in one of Europe's oldest and most stable unitary states. In the new system, London yielded greater autonomy to the regional parliaments in Scotland and Wales.

Interestingly, Scotland's new autonomous status has not necessarily fueled greater calls for independence. Instead, Scotland's new Parliament is coming in for its share of criticism—raising doubts among some about whether Scotland would truly be better off as an independent entity. Moreover, in the wake of the European

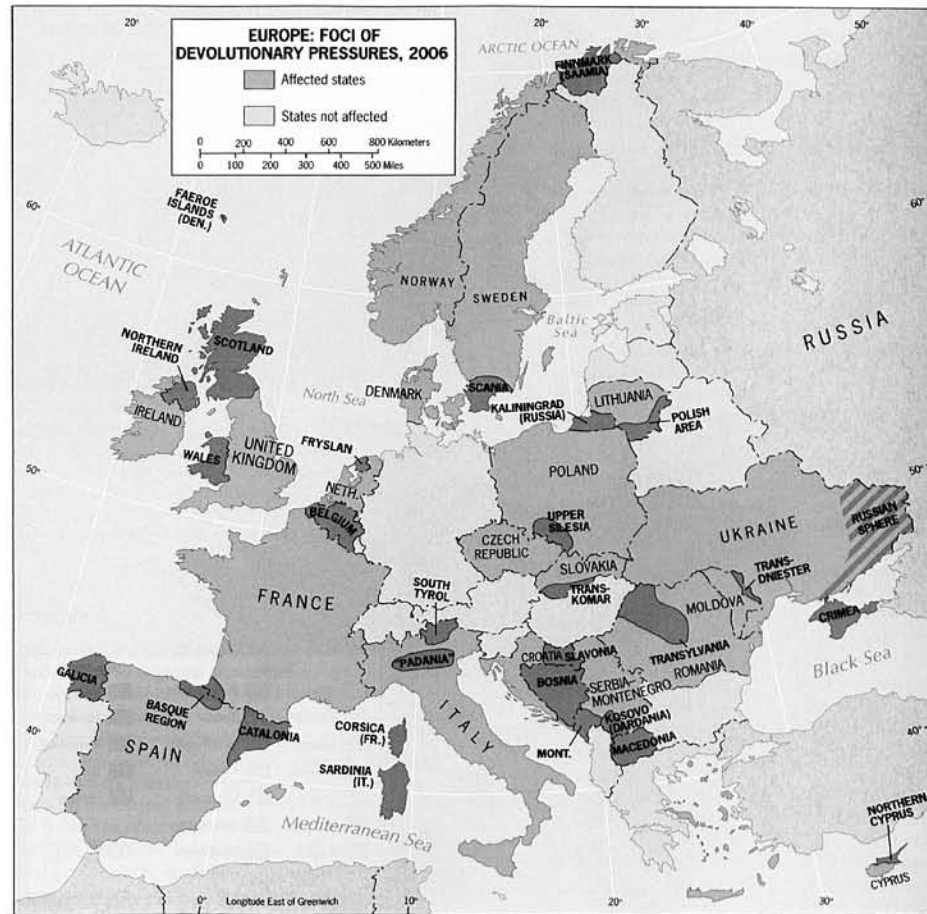


Figure 8.14
Europe: Foci of Devolutionary Pressures, 2006. H. J. de Blij, P. O. Muller, and John Wiley & Sons.

Union's efforts to provide greater recognition and support of regions, some Scottish nationalists now see supranationalism as a positive development for Scotland—offering a political framework for the country that is not always based on London. What all of this shows is just how complicated devolution can be. At the heart of most devolutionary movements, however, is a strong sense of ethnocultural or economic difference—and when sense of

difference coincide with conflicting senses of territory, the results can be explosive.

Economic Devolutionary Forces

Devolutionary pressures often arise from a combination of sources. In Catalonia, for example, ethnocultural differences play a significant role, but Catalonians also cite

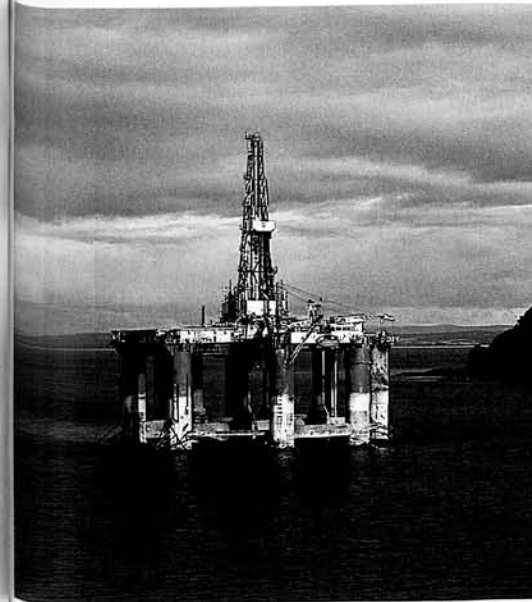


Figure 8.15
Invergordon, Scotland. Oil-drilling platforms in the North Sea tap into the oil- and gas-rich subsoil of the sea. The wealth of energy resources off the coast of Scotland has been a factor in the rise of Scottish nationalism and the desire for greater independence. © H. J. de Blij.

economics; with about 6 percent of Spain's territory and just 17 percent of its population, Catalonia produces some 25 percent of all Spanish exports by value and 40 percent of its industrial exports (Fig. 8.16). Such economic strength lends weight to devolutionary demands based on Catalan nationalism.

Economic forces play an even more prominent role in Italy and France. In Italy, demands for autonomy for Sardinia are deeply rooted in the island's economic circumstances, with accusations of neglect by the government in Rome high on the list of grievances. But Italy faces serious devolutionary forces on its mainland peninsula as well. One is the growing regional disparity between north and south. The Mezzogiorno region lies to the south, below the Ancona Line (an imaginary border extending from Rome to the Adriatic coast at Ancona). The wealthier north stands in sharp contrast to the poorer south. Despite the large subsidies granted to the Mezzogiorno, the development gap between the north, very much a part of the European core, and the south, part of



Figure 8.16
Catalonia, Spain. Barcelona's long-standing economic and political significance is indelibly imprinted in the urban landscape. Once the heart of a far-flung Mediterranean empire, Barcelona went on to become a center of commerce and banking as the Iberian peninsula industrialized. In the process, the city became a center of architectural innovation that is not just evident in the major public buildings. The major streets are lined with impressive buildings—many with intricate stone facades. © Alexander B. Murphy.

the European periphery, has been widening. Some Italian politicians have exploited widespread impatience with the situation by forming organizations to promote northern interests, including devolution. The most recent of these organizations was the Northern League, which raised the prospect of an independent state called Padania in the part of Italy lying north of the Po River. After a surge of enthusiasm, the Padania campaign faltered. But it did push the Italian government to give more rights to the country's regions, moving it toward a more federal system. Although

Field Note

"As I drove along a main road through a Honolulu suburb I noticed that numerous houses had the Hawai'i State flag flying upside down. I knocked on the door of this house and asked the homeowner why he was treating the State flag this way. He invited me in and we talked for more than an hour. 'This is 1993,' he said, 'and we native Hawai'ians are letting the State government and the country know that we haven't forgotten the annexation by the United States of our kingdom. I don't accept it, and we want our territory to plant our flag and keep the traditions alive. Why don't you drive past the royal palace, and you'll see that we mean it.' He was right. The Iolani Palace, where the Hawai'ians last monarch, Queen Liliuokalani, reigned until she was deposed by a group of American businessmen in 1893, was draped in black for all of Honolulu to see. Here was devolutionary stress on American soil."



Figure 8.17
Honolulu, Hawai'i. © H. J. de Blij.

the Northern League's efforts fell short, the fundamental reasons behind its temporary attainments have not disappeared, and Italy will confront devolutionary forces again.

Europe is not alone in confronting devolutionary forces with an economic dimension. During the 1990s, a devolutionary movement rooted in economic differences arose in Brazil. As in northern Italy, a separatist movement emerged in a better-off, well-defined region of the country, the south (the three southernmost States of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Paraná). Southerners complained that the government was mispending their tax money on assistance to Amazonia. The southerners found a leader, manufactured a flag, and demanded independence for their Republic of the Pampas. The Brazilian government responded by outlawing the separatists' political party, but the issue continues to affect Brazilian politics.

Spatial Devolutionary Forces

We have seen how political decisions and cultural and economic forces can generate devolutionary processes in states. Devolutionary events have at least one feature in common: they most often occur on the margins of states. Note that every one of the devolution-affected areas shown in Figure 8.12 lies on a coast or on a border. Distance, remoteness, and marginal location are allies of

devolution. The regions most likely to seek devolution are those far from the national capital. Many are separated by water, desert, or mountains from the center of power and adjoin neighbors that may support separatist objectives.

Note also that many islands are subject to devolutionary processes: Corsica (France), Sardinia (Italy), Taiwan (China), Singapore (Malaysia), Zanzibar (Tanzania), Jolo (Philippines), Puerto Rico (United States), Mayotte (Comoros), and East Timor (Indonesia) are notable examples. As this list indicates, some of these islands became independent states, while others were divided during devolution. Insularity clearly has advantages for separatist movements.

Not surprisingly, the United States faces its most serious devolutionary pressures on the islands of Hawai'i (Fig. 8.17). The year 1993 marked the hundred-year anniversary of the United States' annexation of Hawai'i, and in that year, a vocal minority of native Hawai'ians and their sympathizers demanded the return of rights lost during the "occupation." These demands included the right to reestablish an independent state called Hawai'i (before its annexation Hawai'i was a Polynesian kingdom) on several of the smaller islands. Their hope is that ultimately the island of Kauai, or at least a significant part of that island, which is considered ancestral land, would become a component of the independent Hawai'ian state.

At present, the native Hawai'ians do not have the numbers, resources, or influence to achieve their separatist aims. The potential for some form of separation between Hawai'i and the mainland United States does exist, however. The political geographer Saul Cohen theorized in 1991 that political entities situated in border zones between geopolitical powers may become gateway states, absorbing and assimilating diverse cultures and traditions and emerging as new entities, no longer dominated by one or the other. Hawai'i, he suggests, is a candidate for this status.

Spatial influences can play a significant role in starting and sustaining devolutionary processes. Spatial distance can be compounded by differences in physical geography—a feeling of remoteness can be fueled by being isolated in a valley or separated by mountains or a river. Basic physical-geographic and locational factors can thus be key ingredients in the devolutionary process.

Electoral Geography

A final key component to the spatial organization of government is the state's electoral system. Electoral geographers examine how the spatial configuration of electoral districts and the voting patterns that emerge in particular elections reflect and influence social and political affairs. Various countries use different voting systems to elect their governments. For example, in the 1994 South African election, the leaders of the country formulated a system to provide majority rule while awarding some power to each of nine newly formed regions. The overall effect was to protect, to an extent, the rights of minorities in those regions.

The geographic study of voting behavior is especially interesting because it relates the way people vote to their geographic environments. Maps of voting patterns often produce surprises that can be explained by other maps, and Geographic Information Systems technology has raised this kind of analysis to new levels. Political geographers study church affiliation, income level, ethnic background, education level, and numerous other social and economic factors to learn why certain voters in a certain region voted the way they did.

Probably the most practical area of electoral geography is the geography of representation. In a democracy with representatives elected by district, spatial organization of the districts determines whose voice is heard in a given place and greatly impacts who is elected. A voter's most direct and important contact with government is at the local level. The United States Constitution establishes a system of **territorial representation** in the House of Representatives, where each representative is elected from a territorially defined district.

The Constitution also establishes a census every 10 years in order to enumerate the population and reapportion

the representatives accordingly. **Reapportionment** is the process by which districts are moved according to population shifts, so that each district encompasses approximately the same number of people. For example, after the 2000 census, the State of New York lost two representatives and the State of Georgia gained two representatives.

In the United States once reapportionment is complete, individual States go through redistricting, each following its own system. The criteria involved in redistricting are numerous, but the most important is equal representation, achieved by ensuring that districts are equally populated. In addition, the Supreme Court prefers compact and contiguous districts that keep political units (such as counties) intact. Finally, the courts have repeatedly called for representational equality of racial and linguistic minorities.

Even after the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, minorities were refused voting rights in a multitude of districts and States around the country. County registrars would close their doors when African Americans came to register to vote, and people were intimidated from voting at the polls. Even in places where minorities were allowed to register and vote, the parties drawing the voting districts or choosing the electoral system would make it nearly impossible for the election of a minority to be realized. For example, if a government has to draw 10 districts in a State that is 60 percent white, 30 percent African American, and 10 percent Hispanic, it can easily dilute the minority voters by **splitting** them among the ten districts, ensuring that the white population holds the majority in each district.

In 1982, the United States Congress amended the 1965 Voting Rights Act by outlawing districts that have the effect of weakening minority voting power. In a series of decisions, the courts interpreted this amendment to mean States needed to redistrict in a way that would maximize minority representation. Using this criterion in the redistricting that followed the 1990 census, States increased the number of majority-minority districts in the House of Representatives from 27 to 52. **Majority-minority districts** are packed districts where a majority of the population is from the minority. In the hypothetical State described above, a redistricting following this criterion could have the goal of creating at least three majority-minority districts and a fourth where minorities had a sizable enough population to influence the outcome of the election.

Ideally, majority-minority districts would be compact and contiguous and follow existing political units. Both political geographers Jonathan Leib and Gerald Webster have researched the court cases that have resulted from trying to balance these often-conflicting criteria. To pack minorities who do not live compactly and contiguously, States have drawn crazy-shaped districts, connecting minority populations with meandering corridors and following Interstates to connect urban areas that have large minority populations (Fig. 8.18).

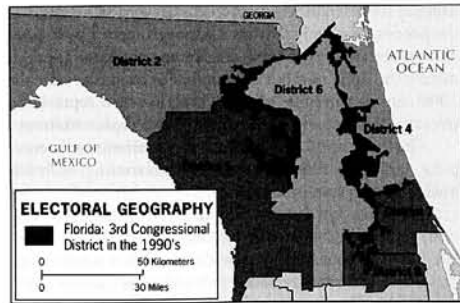


Figure 8.18
Electoral Geography. Florida's Third Congressional District during the 1990s was an example of the spatial manipulation used to create majority-minority districts after the 1990 Census. In 1990, District 3 had about 310,000 African-American residents, 240,000 whites, and 16,000 Hispanics. In places, District 3 was no wider than U.S. Highway 90. *Adapted with permission from: Tanya de Blij, Geographer/Analyst for the Florida House of Representatives.*

Strange-looking districts that have been constructed to attain certain political ends are nothing new in American politics. In 1812, Governor Elbridge Gerry (pronounced with a hard G) of Massachusetts signed into law a district designed to give an advantage to his party—a district that looked so odd to artist Gilbert Stuart that he drew it with a head, wings, and claws. Stuart called it the “salamander district,” but a colleague immortalized it by naming it a gerrymander. Ever since, the term **gerrymandering** has been used to describe “redistricting for advantage.” Certainly, many of the districts now on the United States electoral map may be seen as gerrymanders, but for an important purpose: to provide representation to minorities who, without it, would not be represented as effectively in the House of Representatives. Despite this well-intended goal, others argue that the packing of minorities into majority-minority districts simply concentrates minority votes so much that fewer Democrats are being elected from states, creating a countrywide government that is less responsive to minority concerns.

The larger point is that the spatial organization of voting districts is a fundamentally geographical phenomenon, and it can have profound impacts on who is represented and who is not—as well as peoples' notions of fairness. And that is only the beginning. The voting patterns that emerge from particular elections can help reinforce a sense of regionalism and can shape a government's response to issues in the future. Small wonder, then, that many individuals who have little general understanding of geography at least appreciate the importance of its electoral geography component.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

Choose an example of a devolutionary movement and determine whether autonomy (self-governance) for that region would benefit the autonomous region, the country in which it is located, or both.

HOW ARE BOUNDARIES ESTABLISHED, AND WHY DO BOUNDARY DISPUTES OCCUR?

The territories of individual states are separated by international boundaries (borders). Boundaries may appear on maps as straight lines or may twist and turn to conform to the bends of rivers and the curves of hills and valleys. But a boundary is more than a line, far more than a fence or wall on the ground. A **boundary** between states is actually a vertical plane that cuts through the rocks below (called the subsoil) and the airspace above, dividing one state territory from another (Fig. 8.19). Only where the vertical plane intersects the Earth's surface (on land or at sea) does it form the line we see on a map.

Many boundaries were established on the world map before the extent or significance of subsoil resources was known. As a result, coal seams stretch over boundaries, and oil and gas reserves are split between states. Europe's coal reserves, for example, extend from Belgium underneath the Netherlands and on into the Ruhr area of Germany. Soon after mining began in the mid-nineteenth century, these three neighbors began to accuse each other of mining coal that did not lie directly below their own national territories. The underground surveys available at the time were too inaccurate to pinpoint the ownership of each coal seam.

During the 1950s–1960s, Germany and the Netherlands argued over a gas reserve that lies in the subsoil across their boundary. The Germans argued that the Dutch were withdrawing so much natural gas that the gas was flowing from beneath German land to the Dutch side of the boundary. The Germans wanted compensation for their “lost” gas. A major issue between Iraq and Kuwait, which in part led to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, was the oil in the Rumaylah reserve, which lies underneath the desert and crosses the boundary between the two states. The Iraqis asserted that the Kuwaitis were drilling too many wells and draining the reserve too quickly; they also alleged that the Kuwaitis were drilling oblique boreholes to penetrate the vertical plane extending downward along the boundary. At the time the Iraq–Kuwait boundary was established, however, no one knew this giant oil reserve lay in the subsoil or that it would help create an international crisis (Fig. 8.20).

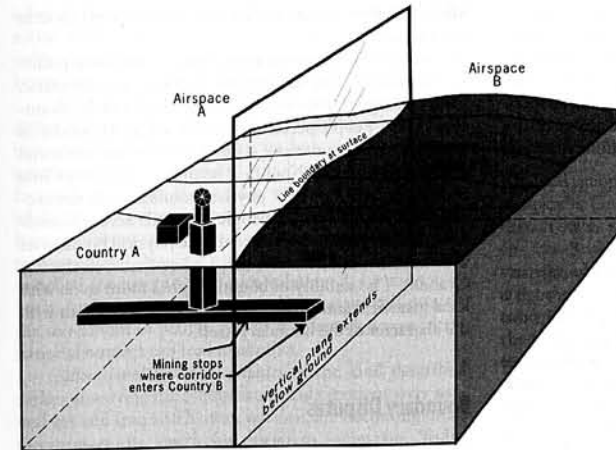


Figure 8.19
The Vertical Plane of a Political Boundary. H. J. de Blij, A. B. Murphy, E. H. Foubert, and John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

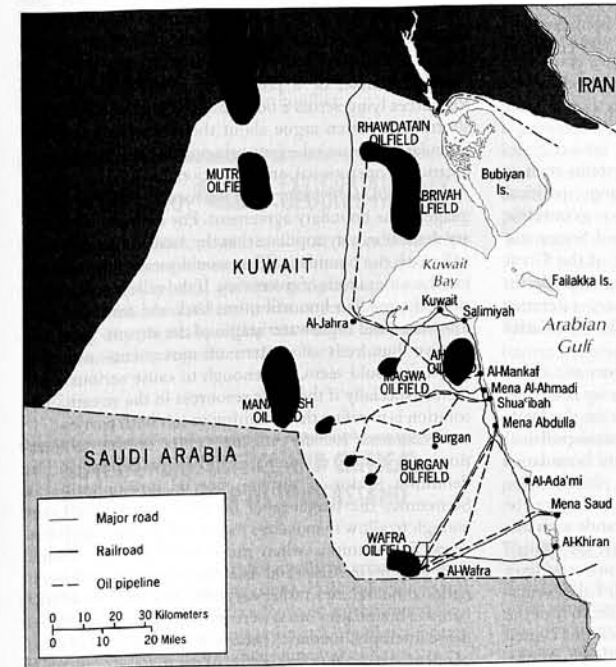


Figure 8.20
The International Boundary between Iraq and Kuwait. Kuwait's northern boundary was redefined and delimited by a United Nations boundary commission; it was demarcated by a series of concrete pillars 1.24 miles (2 kilometers) apart. H. J. de Blij, A. B. Murphy, E. H. Foubert, and John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Above the ground, too, the interpretation of boundaries as vertical planes has serious implications. A state's "airspace" is defined by the atmosphere above its land area as marked by its boundaries, as well as by what lies beyond, at higher altitudes. But how high does the airspace extend? Most states insist on controlling the airline traffic over their territories, but they have not yet done the same in regard to satellite orbits.

Establishing Boundaries

Establishing a boundary between two states typically involves four steps. First, states *define* the boundary through a treaty-like, legal document in which actual points in the landscape or points of latitude and longitude are described. Next, cartographers *delimit* the boundary by drawing on a map. Third, if either or both of the states so desire, they can *demarcate* the boundary by using steel posts, concrete pillars, fences, walls, or some other visible means to mark the boundary on the ground. By no means are all boundaries on the world map demarcated. Demarcating a lengthy boundary is expensive, and it is hardly worth the effort in high mountains, vast deserts, frigid polar lands, or other places with few permanent settlements. The final step is to *administrate* the boundary—to determine how the boundary will be maintained and how goods and people will cross the boundary.

Types of Boundaries

When boundaries are drawn using grid systems such as latitude and longitude or township and range, political geographers refer to these boundaries as **geometric boundaries**. In North America, the United States and Canada used a single line of latitude west of the Great Lakes to define their boundary. During the Berlin Conference, colonial powers used arbitrary reference points and drew straight lines to establish the boundaries in much of Africa.

At different times, political geographers and other academics have advocated "natural" boundaries over geometric boundaries because they are visible on the landscape as physical geographic features. **Physical-political** (also called natural-political) boundaries are boundaries that follow an agreed-upon feature in the physical geographic landscape, such as the center point of a river or the crest of a mountain range. The Rio Grande is an important physical-political boundary between the United States and Mexico; an older boundary follows crest lines of the Pyrenees between Spain and France. Lakes sometimes serve as boundaries as well; for example, four of the five Great Lakes of North America (between the United States and Canada) and several of the Great Lakes of East

Africa (between Congo and its eastern neighbors) serve as boundaries.

Physical features sometimes make convenient political boundaries, but topographic features are not static. Rivers change course, volcanoes erupt, and slowly, mountains erode. People perceive physical-political boundaries as more stable, but many states have entered territorial conflicts over physical-political boundaries (notably Chile and Argentina). Similarly, physical boundaries do not necessarily stop the flow of people or goods across boundaries, leading some states to reinforce physical boundaries with human-built obstacles (the United States on the Rio Grande). The stability of boundaries has more to do with local historical and geographical circumstances than with the character of the boundary itself.

Boundary Disputes

The boundary we see as a line on an atlas map is the product of a complex series of legal steps that begins with a written description of the boundary. Sometimes that legal description is old and imprecise. Sometimes it was dictated by a stronger power that is now less dominant, giving the weaker neighbor a reason to argue for change. At other times the geography of the borderland has actually changed; the river that marked the boundary may have changed course, or a portion of it has been cut off. Resources lying across a boundary can lead to conflict. In short, states often argue about their boundaries. These boundary disputes take four principal forms: definitional, locational, operational, and allocational.

Definitional boundary disputes focus on the legal language of the boundary agreement. For example, a boundary definition may stipulate that the median line of a river will mark the boundary. That would seem clear enough, but the water levels of rivers vary. If the valley is asymmetrical, the median line will move back and forth between low-water and high-water stages of the stream. This may involve hundreds of meters of movement—not very much, it would seem, but enough to cause serious argument, especially if there are resources in the stream. The solution is to refine the definition to suit both parties.

Locational boundary disputes center on the delimitation and possibly the demarcation of the boundary. The definition is not in dispute, but its interpretation is. Sometimes the language of boundary treaties is vague enough to allow mapmakers to delimit the line in various ways. For example, when the colonial powers defined their empires in Africa and Asia, they specified their international boundaries rather carefully. But internal administrative boundaries often were not strictly defined. When those internal boundaries became the boundaries of independent states, there was plenty of room for argument. In

a few instances, locational disputes arise because no definition of the boundary exists at all. An important case involves Saudi Arabia and Yemen, whose potentially oil-rich boundary area is not covered by a treaty.

Operational boundary disputes involve neighbors who differ over the way their border should function. When two adjoining countries agree on how cross-border migration should be controlled, the border functions satisfactorily. However, if one state wants to limit migration while the other does not, a dispute may arise. Similarly, efforts to prevent smuggling across borders sometimes lead to operational disputes when one state's efforts are not matched (or are possibly even sabotaged) by its neighbor's. And in areas where nomadic lifeways still prevail, the movement of people and their livestock across international borders can lead to conflict.

Allocational boundary disputes of the kind described earlier, involving the Netherlands and Germany over natural gas and Iraq and Kuwait over oil, are becoming more common as the search for resources intensifies. Today many such disputes involve international boundaries at sea. Oil reserves under the seafloor below coastal waters sometimes lie in areas where exact boundary delimitation may be difficult or subject to debate. Another growing area of allocational dispute has to do with water supplies: the Tigris, Nile, Colorado, and other rivers are subject to such disputes. When a river crosses an international boundary, the rights of the upstream and downstream users of the river often come into conflict.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

People used to think physical-political boundaries were more stable than geometric boundaries. Through many studies of many places, political geographers have confirmed that this idea is false. Construct your own argument explaining why physical-political boundaries can create just as much instability as geometric boundaries.

HOW DO GEOPOLITICS AND CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS HELP US UNDERSTAND THE WORLD?

Geopolitics is the interplay among geography, power, politics, and international relations. Political science and international relations tend to focus on governmental institutions, systems, and interactions. Geopolitics brings locational considerations, environmental contexts, terri-

torial perspectives, and spatial assumptions to the fore. Geopolitics is a wide arena that helps us understand the arrangements and forces that are transforming the map of the world.

Classical Geopolitics

Classical geopoliticians generally fit into one of two camps: the German school, which sought to explain why certain states are powerful and how to become powerful, and the British/American school, which sought to offer strategic advice for states and explain why countries interact at the global scale the way they do. A few geopoliticians tried to bridge the gap, blending the two schools, but for the most part classical geopoliticians who are still writing today are in the British/American school, offering geostrategic perspectives on the world.

The German School

Why are certain states powerful, and how do states become powerful? The first political geographer who studied these issues was the German professor Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904). Ratzel postulated that the state resembles a biological organism whose life cycle extends from birth through maturity and, ultimately, decline and death. To prolong its existence, the state requires nourishment, just as an organism needs food. Such nourishment is provided by the acquisition of territories belonging to less powerful competitors (what Ratzel deemed *lebensraum*) and by the people who live there. If a state is confined within permanent and static boundaries and deprived of overseas domains, Ratzel argued, it will atrophy. Territory is the state's essential, life-giving force.

Ratzel's organic theory held that a nation, which is an aggregate of organisms (human beings), would itself function and behave as an organism. This was an extreme form of the environmental determinism that dominated human geography for decades to come, but it was so speculative that it would probably have soon been forgotten had it not given rise to a subfield of political geography called geopolitics. Some of Ratzel's students translated his abstract writings into practical policies, and these were drawn on to help justify the territorially expansionist Nazi policies of the 1930s.

The British/American School

Not long after the publication of Ratzel's initial ideas, other geographers began looking at the overall organization of power in the world, studying the physical geographic map of the world for the most strategic places.

Prominent among them was the Oxford University geographer Sir Halford J. Mackinder (1861–1947). In 1904, he published an article titled “The Geographical Pivot of History” in the Royal Geographical Society’s *Geographical Journal*. That article became one of the most intensely debated geographic publications of all time.

Mackinder was concerned with power relationships at a time when Britain had acquired a global empire through its naval supremacy. To many of his contemporaries, the oceans—avenues of colonial conquest—were the key to world domination, but Mackinder disagreed. He concluded that a land-based power, not a sea power, would ultimately rule the world. His famous article contained a lengthy appraisal of the largest and most populous landmass on Earth—Eurasia. At the heart of Eurasia, he argued, lay an impregnable, resource-rich “pivot area” extending from Eastern Europe to eastern Siberia (Fig. 8.21). Mackinder issued a warning: if this pivot area became influential in Europe, a great empire could be formed.

Mackinder later renamed his pivot area the heartland, and his notion became known as the heartland theory. In his book *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1919), Mackinder (defining Eurasia as the World Island) issued a stronger warning to the victors of World War I, stating:

*Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland
Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island
Who rules the World Island commands the World*

When Mackinder proposed his heartland theory, there was little to foretell the rise of a superpower in the heartland. Russia was in disarray, having recently lost a war against Japan (1905), and was facing revolution. Eastern Europe was fractured. Germany, not Russia, was gaining power. But when the Soviet Union emerged and World

War II gave Moscow control over much of Eastern Europe, the heartland theory attracted renewed attention.

In 1943, Mackinder wrote a final paper shortly before he died. He was concerned about Stalin’s leadership abilities in the Soviet Union—his ability to capitalize on the heartland and exert control over the states of Eastern Europe. He offered strategies for keeping the Soviets in check, including avoiding the expansion of the heartland into the inner crescent (Fig. 8.21) and creating an alliance around the North Atlantic to join the forces of land and sea powers against the heartland. Within the next 10 years, the United States began its containment policy, and the United States, Canada, and Western Europe formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Influence of Geopoliticians on Politics

Ratzel and Mackinder are only two of many geopoliticians who influenced international relations. Their writings, grounded in history, current events, and physical geography, sounded logical and influenced many politicians, and in some ways still do. NATO still exists and has not invited Russia to join the military alliance, but it has extended membership to Eastern European states and is working in partnerships with former republics of the Soviet Union.

Despite the staying power of geopolitical theories, geopolitics dropped from the map after World War II. Because of the influence Ratzel’s theory had on Hitler and because another geopolitician, Karl Haushofer, also influenced Hitler, the term *geopolitics* gained an extremely negative connotation. For some decades after World War II, the term was in such disrepute that few political geographers, even those studying power relationships, would identify themselves as students of geopolitics. Time, along with more balanced perspectives, has reinstated geopolitics as an appropriate name for the study of the spatial and territorial dimensions of power relationships past, present, and future.

Critical Geopolitics

Today, geopoliticians do much less predicting and prescribing. Rather, in critical geopolitics, geographers deconstruct and focus on explaining the underlying spatial assumptions and territorial perspectives of politicians. Political geographers Georoid O’Tuathail and John Agnew refer to the politicians in the most powerful states, the core states, as “intellectuals of statecraft.” The basic concept behind *critical geopolitics* is that intellectuals of statecraft construct ideas about places, these ideas influence and reinforce their political behaviors and policy choices, and these ideas affect how we, the people, process our own notions of places and politics.

In a number of publications, O’Tuathail has studied American geopolitical reasoning by examining speeches

and statements by U.S. intellectuals of statecraft regarding certain wars, certain places, and certain times. He has come to the conclusion that American intellectuals of statecraft have spatialized politics into a world of “us” versus “them.” In American politics, the president has an incredible influence on Americans, shaping how they see places and organize international space in their minds. By drawing on American cultural logic and certain representations of America, presidents have repeatedly defined an “us” that is pro-democracy, independent, self-sufficient, and free and a “them” that is in some way against all of these things.

During the Cold War, President Ronald Reagan coined the term *Evil Empire* for the Soviet Union and represented the United States as “the shining city on a hill.” Over the last two presidencies, terrorism has replaced the Soviet Union as the “they.” Sounding remarkably similar, Democratic President William J. Clinton and Republican President George W. Bush justified military actions against terrorists. In 1998, President Clinton explained American military action in Sudan and Afghanistan as a response to terrorist plans by Osama bin Laden by stating that the terrorists “come from diverse places but share a hatred for democracy, a fanatical glorification of violence, and a horrible distortion of their religion, to justify the murder of innocents. They have made the United States their adversary precisely because of what we stand for and what we stand against.” Immediately after September 11, President George W. Bush exclaimed to the world, “They [the terrorists] stand against us because we stand in their way.” In 2002, President Bush again explained, “I’ve said in the past that nations are either with us or against us in the war on terror.”

Statements such as these propel cultural oddities such as “freedom fries” instead of “French fries” being served in American restaurants once the president and media explained France’s hesitancy to be “with” the United States government in the war against Iraq. More importantly, they shape the way other intellectuals of statecraft, and Americans more generally, see the spatial workings of international politics. Like Ratzel’s environmental determinist theory, the danger in these statements is that they sound so logical.

Geopolitical World Order

Political geographers study the geopolitical world order—the temporary periods of stability in how politics are conducted at the global scale. For example, during the Cold War, the geopolitical world order was bipolar—the Soviet Union versus the United States (and its close ally the United Kingdom). After a stable geopolitical world order breaks down, the world goes through a transition, eventually settling into a new geopolitical world order. Noted

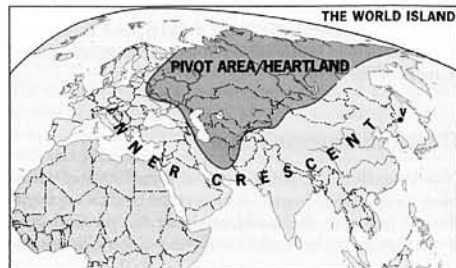
political geographers Peter J. Taylor and Colin Flint argue that at the end of World War II, five possible orders could have emerged among the three major powers, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Each could have created its own bloc with its own allies; the three could come together under the United Nations; or three possible alliances could have occurred—the US and USSR against the UK, the US and UK against the USSR, or the UK and USSR against the US. What emerged was the bipolar world order of the Cold War: the US and UK against the USSR.

After the USSR collapsed in 1991, the world entered a transition period, and during the transition any range of possible world orders was possible. Politicians spoke optimistically about a new geopolitical world order—one where a standoff of nuclear terror between two superpowers would no longer determine the destinies of states. Supposedly this new geopolitical order would be shaped by forces that connect nations and states, by supranational unions like the European Union (discussed in the next section of this chapter), and by multinational action should any state violate international rules of conduct. The risks of nuclear war would recede, and negotiation would replace confrontation. When Iraq was driven out of Kuwait by a United Nations coalition of states led by the United States in 1991, the framework of a New World Order seemed to be taking shape. Russia, which a few years earlier might have led the Soviet Union in support of Iraq, endorsed the United Nations operation. Arab as well as non-Arab forces helped repel the invaders.

Soon, however, doubts and uncertainties began to cloud hopes for a mutually cooperative geopolitical world order. Although states were more closely linked to each other than ever before, national self-interest still acted as a powerful force. For all its faults and changed circumstances, the state continued to function as a central building block in the new global framework. At the same time, a variety of nonterritorially specific forces posed an increasing challenge to the traditional dominance of fixed territorial entities in the international arena. Some of these forces were tied to the emergence of economic and social networks that are not spatially bounded. Others were tied to the growing influence of groups with political agendas that are not channeled through states (such as terrorist groups)—and are often far-flung and spatially disaggregated.

The new geopolitical world order is one of *unilateralism*, with the United States in a position of hard-power dominance and with allies of the United States following rather than joining the political decision-making process. In critical geopolitics, political geographers analyze how international political actors talk about and see the United States. Much of the antagonism toward the United States in the current geopolitical order is directed toward the unilateral actions of the United States government. Today only one state can be described as a superpower, but if history is

Figure 8.21
The Heartland Theory. The Pivot Area/Heartland, the Inner Crescent/Rimland, and the World Island, following the descriptions of Halford Mackinder.



any guide American dominance will not last forever. Challenges to the current order include globalization, the diffusion of nuclear weapons, China's emergence as a global power, terrorism, the economic (and potential political) strength of the European Union, and the instability of the region stretching from Southwest Asia into Russia.

In addition, predictions about future geopolitical orders often assume that *individual states will continue to be the dominant actors in the international arena*. Yet with the traditional powers of the state under increasing strain, other geopolitical arrangements may emerge. Chief among these arrangements are clusters of former states that are bound together by history, tradition, common economic interests, and perceptions of mutual geopolitical advantage (such as the European region). An alternative, and perhaps more likely, version of a multipolar world would be one composed of as many as five or six such clusters, each under the sway of one or several dominant powers. Moreover, within these clusters the power of traditional states may well be increasingly supplemented by the power of regions—whether substate or transstate. In the final section of this chapter, we consider several other challenges to the state that may lead to unforeseen geopolitical orders.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

Read a major newspaper (in print or online) and look for a recent statement by a world political leader regarding international politics. Using the concept of critical geopolitics, determine what view of the world the world leader has—how he/she defines the world spatially.

WHAT ARE SUPRANATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE STATE?

Ours is a world of contradictions. Over the past couple of decades some Quebecois have demanded independence from Canada even as Canada joined the United States in NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement). At soccer games in Scotland, fans drown out "God Save the Queen" with a thunderous rendition of "Flower of Scotland," while in London Parliament debates Britain's entry into the European Monetary Union. At every turn we are reminded of the interconnectedness of nations, states, and regions, yet separatism and calls for autonomy are rampant. In the early years of the twenty-

first century, we appear to be caught between the forces of division and those of unification.

Despite the conflicts arising from these contradictory forces, today hardly a country exists that is not involved in some supranational organization. A **supranational organization** is a separate entity composed of three or more states that forge an association and form an administrative structure for mutual benefit and in pursuit of shared goals. The twentieth century witnessed the establishment of numerous supranational associations in political, economic, cultural, and military spheres.

Today, states have formed over 60 major supranational organizations, many of which have subsidiaries that bring the total to more than 100. The more states participate in such multilateral associations, the less likely they are to act alone in pursuit of a self-interest that might put them at odds with neighbors. Ample research establishes that participation in a supranational entity is advantageous to the partners and that being left out can have serious negative effects on state and nation.

From League of Nations to United Nations

The modern beginnings of the supranational movement can be traced to the conferences following World War I. Woodrow Wilson, president of the United States, proposed an international organization that would include all the states of the world (fewer than 75 states existed at that point), leading to the creation of the League of Nations in 1919. Even though it was the idea of an American president, the United States was among the countries that did not join this organization (isolationists in the U.S. Senate opposed joining). In all, 63 states participated in the League, although the total membership at any single time never reached that number. Costa Rica and Brazil left the League even before 1930; Germany departed in 1933, shortly before the Soviet Union joined in 1934. The League was born of a worldwide desire to prevent future aggression, but the failure of the United States to join dealt the organization a severe blow. In the mid-1930s, the League had a major opportunity when Ethiopia's Haile Selassie made a dramatic appeal for help in the face of an invasion by Italy, a member state until 1937. However, the League failed to take action, and in the chaos of the beginning of World War II the organization collapsed.

Nonetheless, the interwar period witnessed significant progress toward interstate cooperation. The League of Nations spawned other international organizations. Prominent among these was the Permanent Court of International Justice, created to adjudicate legal issues between states, such as boundary disputes and fishing rights. The League of Nations also initiated international nego-

tiations on maritime boundaries and related aspects of the law of the sea. The conferences organized by the League laid the groundwork for the final resolution of the size of territorial seas decades later.

After World War II, states formed a new organization to foster international security and cooperation: the United Nations (UN). The representation of countries in the United Nations has been more universal than it was in the League (Fig. 8.22). A handful of states still do not belong to the United Nations, but with the most recent additions in 2002, it now has 191 member states. The United Nations General Assembly and Security Council have overshadowed the cooperative efforts of numerous less visible but enormously productive subsidiaries, such as the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), and WHO (World Health Organization). Membership in these organizations is less complete than in the United Nations as a whole, but their work has benefited all humanity.

We can find evidence of the important work of the United Nations in the "world" section of any major newspaper. UN peacekeeping troops have helped maintain stability in some of the most contentious regions of the world. The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees is called upon to aid refugees in crises throughout the world. UN documents on human rights standards, such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, set a precedent and laid the groundwork for countless human rights groups working in the world today.

Participation in the United Nations serves to commit states to internationally approved standards of behavior. Many states still violate the standards, embodied in the United Nations Charter, but such violations can lead to collective action as, for example, in the cases of South Africa, Iraq, and North Korea. Even when censured or subjected to United Nations-sponsored military action, states do not withdraw from the organization. Membership is too valuable to lose; thus, state governments develop an understanding of the advantages of international cooperation.

Regional Supranational Organizations

The League of Nations and the United Nations are global manifestations of a phenomenon that is expressed even more strongly at the regional level. States organize supranational organizations at the regional scale to position themselves more strongly economically, politically, and even militarily.

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg undertook the first major modern experiment in regional

interstate cooperation. The three countries have much in common, linguistically and economically. Dutch farm products are sold on Belgian markets, and Belgian industrial goods go to the Netherlands and Luxembourg. During World War II, representatives of the three countries decided to create common tariffs and eliminate import licenses and quotas. In 1944, even before the end of the war, the governments of the three states met in London to sign an agreement of cooperation, creating the *Benelux* region.

Following World War II, the U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall proposed that the United States finance a European recovery program. A committee representing 16 Western European states plus (then) West Germany presented the United States Congress with a joint program for economic rehabilitation, and Congress approved it. From 1948 to 1952, the United States gave Europe about \$12 billion under the Marshall Plan. This investment revived European national economies and also spurred a movement toward cooperation among European states.

The European Union

From the European states' involvement in the Marshall Plan came the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), and this body in turn gave rise to other cooperative organizations. Soon after Europe established the OEEC, France proposed the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) with the goal of lifting the restrictions and obstacles that impeded the flow of coal, iron ore, and steel among the mainland's six primary producers: France, West Germany, Italy, and the three Benelux countries. The six states entered the ECSC, and gradually, through negotiations and agreement, enlarged their sphere of cooperation to include reductions and even eliminations of certain tariffs and a freer flow of labor, capital, and nonsteel commodities. This led, in 1958, to the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC).

The success of the EEC induced other countries to apply for membership. Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom joined in 1973, Greece in 1981, and Spain and Portugal in 1986. The organization became known as the European Community (EC) because it was seen as more than an economic union. By the late 1980s, the EC had 12 members: the three giants (Germany, France, and the United Kingdom); the four southern countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece); and the five small states (the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, and Ireland). These 12 members initiated a program of cooperation and unification that led to the formal establishment of a European Union (EU) in 1992. In the mid-1990s,

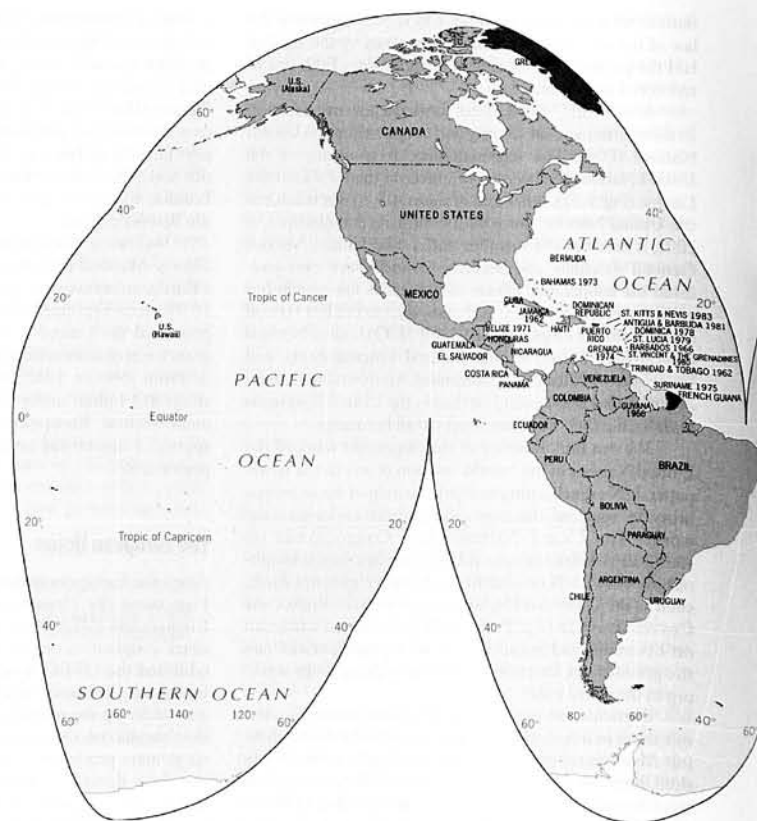


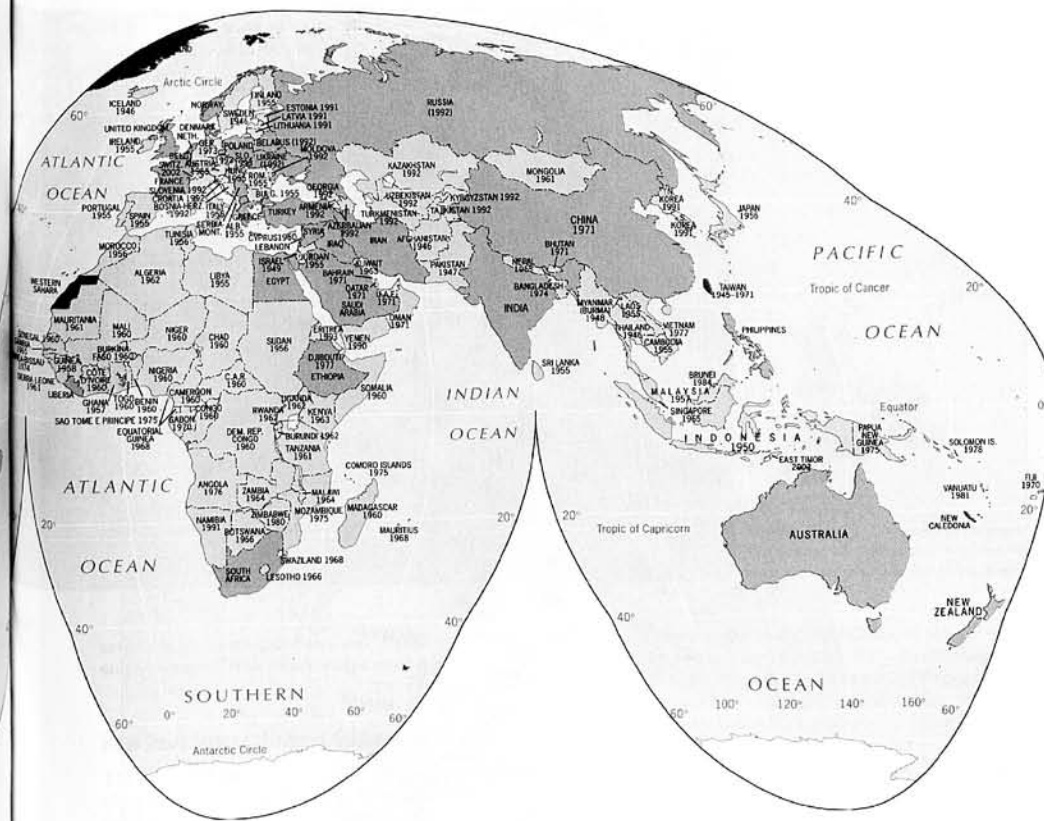
Figure 8.22
Member States of the United Nations. This map shows charter members, members after 1945 (with dates of entry), and nonmembers of the United Nations. Data from: the United Nations, www.un.org

Austria, Sweden, and Finland joined the EU, bringing the total number of members to 15 (Fig. 8.23).

In the late 1990s, the EU began preparing for the establishment of a single currency—the euro (Fig. 8.24). First, all financial transactions were denominated in euros, and on January 1, 2002, the EU introduced euro coins and notes. Not all EU member states are currently a part of the euro-zone, but others may join soon as the euro begins to creep into their economies anyway.

The integration of 10 Eastern European and Mediterranean island states into the European Union in 2004 is the most significant development of its kind in the

world today. Integration is a difficult process in which the anticipated advantages are increasingly being weighed against concerns over the loss of local autonomy. Integration often requires painful adjustments because of the diversity of the European states. For example, agricultural practices and policies have always varied widely. Yet some general policy must govern agriculture throughout the European Union. Individual states have found these adjustments difficult at times, and the EU has had to devise policies to accommodate regional contrasts and delays in implementation. In addition, integration requires significant expenditures. Under the rules of the EU, the



richer countries must subsidize (provide fixed subsidies to) the poorer ones; therefore, the entry of Eastern European states adds to the financial burden on the wealthier Western and northern European members.

Another concern is the maintenance of a balance of power in the European Union. Germany is the most populous and economically powerful of the EU's members, and with a common currency it is increasingly able to exert great influence over fiscal matters. This, in turn, leads to worries that the traditional balance of power between France and Germany will be upset. The Union is a patchwork of states with many different ethnic traditions

and histories of conflict and competition. Economic success and growing well-being tend to submerge such differences, but should the Union face difficult economic or social times, divisive forces could well reassert themselves.

Another difficult problem involves Turkey. Some Western Europeans would like to see Turkey join the EU, thereby widening the organization's reach into the Muslim world. Turkey has long indicated its strong interest in joining, but many Greeks are hesitant to support Turkish integration because of the long-standing dispute between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus (among other matters). Other EU members have expressed concern



Figure 8.23
European Supranationalism. Members of the European Union and their dates of entry. Data from: the European Union, www.europa.eu.int

over Turkey's human rights record, specifically its treatment of the Kurdish minority, which would not meet the standards set by the Union. Behind these claims lies an unspoken sense among many that Turkey is not "European" enough to warrant membership. Despite the varied opinions on Turkey's membership in the European Union, in late 2004, the EU extended an accession invita-

tion to Turkey, with Turkey's recognition of Cyprus remaining a potential stumbling block.

Even as the debate over expansion continues, the EU is experiencing other stresses. An overarching question remains—just where is the European Union heading? Member states are considering a constitution for the European Union, the European Union is becoming more



Figure 8.24
Hesdin, France. A market in northern France advertises the price of mushrooms in euros. © Marie-Louise Avery/Alamy Images.

activist in international affairs, and the effects of the 2004 enlargement will not be known for some time.

How Does Supranationalism Affect the State?

The notion of a supranational association for mutual benefit is a worldwide phenomenon. Other economic associations, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Central American Common Market, the Andean Group, the Southern Cone Community Market (MERCOSUR), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Asia-Pacific Economic Council (APEC), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), have drawn up treaties to reduce tariffs and import restrictions in order to ease the flow of commerce in their regions. Not all of these alliances are successful, of course, but economic supranationalism is a sign of the times, a grand experiment still in progress.

Yet, when we turn back to the European Union, we are looking at a supranational organization that is unlike any other. In simple terms, it is a beast we have never seen before. It is not a state, nor is it simply an organization of states. The European Union is remarkable in that it has taken on a life of its own—with a multifaceted government

structure, three capital cities, and billions of euros flowing through its coffers. The European Union is extending into foreign relations, domestic policies, and military policies, with sovereignty over certain issues moving from the states to the European Union. Geographer Alexander Murphy has studied how Europeans in some regions are feeling a greater attachment to their region and to the European Union than to their own state (Fig. 8.25). Identifying with the European Union (over the state) is strong in the Benelux countries (the first members) and in regions where people have been disempowered by their state governments. With the European Union, we may be witnessing a transformation in the political organization of space similar to the transformation to the modern state system in Europe in the seventeenth century.

Other movements in addition to the European Union are posing major challenges to the state as we know it—all questioning whether the spatial organization of the world into states is logical, effective, or even necessary. Among these challenges are the demand of nations within states for independence (as discussed earlier), the proliferation of nuclear weapons, economic globalization, increasing connectedness among people and cultures, and terrorism perpetrated in the name of religion.

Nuclear weapons give even small states the ability to inflict massive damage on larger and distant adversaries.



Figure 8.25
Brussels, Belgium. A woman with a European Union umbrella shops in the flower market in the Grande Place of Brussels.
© Erin H. Foubert.

Combined with missile technology, this may be the most serious danger the world faces, which is why the United Nations insisted on the dismantling of Iraq's nuclear capacity after the 1991 Gulf War and why North Korea's apparent progress in the nuclear arms arena in the 1990s caused President Clinton to threaten military action. Although it was always known that the former Soviet Union and several Western powers possessed nuclear bombs and the missiles to deliver them to enemy targets, the nuclear capabilities of other countries have been carefully guarded secrets. Thus in 1981, when reports of Iraq's nuclear program reached Israel, the Israelis attacked Iraq. But Israel itself is believed to possess a nuclear arsenal; South Africa was building one during the Apartheid period; India and Pakistan have recently joined the nuclear club; and Iran may well be building itself up as a nuclear power. As nuclear weapons became smaller and "tactical" nuclear arms were developed, the threat of nuclear weapons sales had to be taken seriously. It is now possible for a hostile state to purchase the power with which to threaten the world.

Although states provide the territorial foundation from which producers and consumers still operate and they continue to exert considerable regulatory powers, economic globalization makes it ever more difficult for the state to control economic relations. States are responding to this situation in a variety of ways, with some

giving up traditional regulatory powers and others seeking to insulate themselves from the international economy. Still others are working to build supranational economic blocs that they hope will help them cope with an increasingly globalized world. The impacts of many of these developments are as yet uncertain, but it is increasingly clear that states now compete with a variety of other forces in the international economics arena.

The state's traditional position is being further eroded by the globalization of social and cultural relations. Networks of interaction are being constructed in ways that do not correspond to the map of states. When unrest breaks out in southern Mexico, for example, activists use the Internet to contact interested people throughout the world. Scholars and researchers in different countries work together in teams. Increased mobility has brought individuals from far-flung places into much closer contact than before. Paralleling all this change is the spread of popular culture in ways that make national borders virtually meaningless. Gwen Stefani is listened to from Iceland to Australia; fashions developed in northern Italy are hot items among Japanese tourists visiting Hawaii; Thai restaurants are found in towns and cities across the United States; countless Russian women hurry home to watch the next episode of soap operas made in Mexico; and movies produced in Hollywood are seen on screens from Mumbai to Santiago.

Another global phenomenon with major implications for a future world order is the revival of religion as a force in global affairs. In Chapter 6, we noted the continuing diffusion of the major faiths, especially Islam, and the renaissance of the Russian Christian churches in the post-Soviet era. This is another contrast in a world of contradictions: even in an era of science and secularism, millions of people are turning to religion to make sense of their lives and goals.

Extremist religious movements commit violent acts in the name of their faith. Whether at the local scale with an individual acting alone or at the global scale with an entire network operating, violence by extremists challenges the state. The state's mission to defeat terrorism often produces support for the state government in the short term, but the state's inability to "fix" terrorist attacks may weaken the state in the long term. Bolstered by a sense of righteousness rooted in Christian fundamentalist ideas, Timothy McVeigh wreaked havoc in Oklahoma City in the late 1990s. A wave of international terrorism toward Western states began in the 1980s, with events such as the bombing of an airplane in Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Terrorism came to dominate the international scene on September 11, 2001, with the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the downing of Flight 93 in Pennsylvania.

Some speculate that the divisions emerging in the wake of recent events could lead to a new bipolar international system pitting the Islamic world against the Judeo-Christian world. This is the scenario posited in a controversial book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, by Harvard historian Samuel Huntington. Many academics have strenuously challenged Huntington's thesis for its failure to recognize the extraordinary

diversity within the Islamic and the Judeo-Christian realms and for its role in promoting stereotypes that do not represent the heterogeneous character of different religious traditions. Moreover, as we have seen, migrations and religious conversions over the past several decades have produced such an extensive interpenetration of peoples that it is increasingly difficult to assign single religious labels to large swaths of territory. Nonetheless, some see the world in bipolar religious terms—including the terrorists who seek to promote large-scale intercultural conflict.

Globalization has produced economic, social, and cultural geographies that look less and less like the map of states (Fig. 8.3). At the same time, the traditional sovereign authority of the world's approximately 200 states is being increasingly eroded. The state system is unlikely to disappear anytime soon, but we are apparently headed for a world in which the spatial distribution of power is more complex than the traditional map of states would suggest. Describing that spatial distribution will be a challenge for geographers for generations to come.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

In 2004, the European Union welcomed 10 additional states, and in 2007, the European Union plans to welcome 2 more states. Examine the European Union website (listed below in the Learn More Online section). Read about the European Union's expansion and what is going on in the European Union right now. Consider how complicated it is for the European Union to bring together these many divergent members into one supranational organization.

Summary

We tend to take the state for granted. Although the modern state idea is less than 400 years old, the idea and ideal of the nation-state have diffused around the globe, primarily through colonialism and international organizations.

The state may seem natural and permanent, but it is not. New states are being recognized, and existing states are vulnerable to many destructive forces. From organizing governments to defining and defending boundaries, to nation-building, to terrorism, to sharing or splitting sovereignty with supranational organizations, political geographers wonder what the future of the state is. How long can this way of politically organizing space last?

As we look to political organization beyond the state, we can turn to the global scale and consider what places the global world economy most affects, shapes, and benefits. In the next chapter, we study global cities—places where major links in the world economy connect and places that in many ways transcend the state.

Geographic Concepts

political geography
state
territoriality
sovereignty
territorial integrity
Peace of Westphalia
mercantilism
nation
nation-state
democracy
multinational state
multistate nation
stateless nation
colonialism

scale
capitalism
commodification
core
periphery
semiperiphery
ability
centripetal
centrifugal
unitary
federal
devolution
territorial representation
reapportionment

splitting
majority-minority
districts
gerrymandering
boundary
geometric boundary
physical-political
boundary
heartland theory
critical geopolitics
unilateralism
supranational
organization

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CHAPTER 9

Urban Geography

Field Note Straddling the Wall



Figure 9.1
West Berlin, West Germany. The Berlin Wall as it stood when the city was divided. This photo was taken in West Berlin, looking across the wall to East Berlin. © Alexander B. Murphy.

As a child, I stood in West Berlin, facing the Berlin Wall. I looked at the gray wall and gray city of East Berlin (Fig. 9.1) and turned around to see the more vibrant city of West Berlin. Why, I wondered, why is this city divided this way? Why is the East German government working so hard to keep their citizens in East Berlin? My mother interrupted my thought, saying, "Look! Look at the guards. Their guns are pointing EAST!" The East German guards along the wall were watching the East Germans to make sure they did not escape to the West.

In 1989, the people of East Berlin and West Berlin took control of the streets, the guard towers, and the wall itself. Berliners occupied the buffer spaces that had divided East Berlin and West Berlin and they stood on the wall. The guards stood