

Unit IV – Political Organization of Space

Chapter 10 – A World of Nations and States

Introduction:

- One of the key concerns of human geography relates to the ways in which people organize and govern themselves politically
- Political is a very broad term, but it most generally refers to the exercise of power, control, and authority
- Political geography examines how human beings govern themselves, what facilitates governance, and what either impedes or aids the ability to get things done
- Political geography is particularly concerned with how the exercise of political power, political identity, and political resistance is reflected spatially

Module 10A – Sovereignty, Legitimacy, and Territoriality of Political Units:

- **Political Unit** – organizational entities at several different spatial scales that aid the study of political geography. The most important of these is the country, or state
- **State** – another term for country
- A country, or state, is the most important of these units, but many others exist and influence our actions
- A town or city is a political unit on a smaller scale
- Political units can also exist at the largest scales
 - Example – EU and UN
- Three guiding principles help us understand the nature of these political units: Sovereignty, legitimacy, and territoriality
 - **Sovereignty** indicates that particular government has complete control and jurisdiction over a defined area
 - Sovereignty indicates power, and full sovereignty allows a government to determine exactly what goes on within its territory
 - **Legitimacy** defines whether the government of the unit is considered to have the standing or right to rule a state's people and territory
 - Legitimacy can be conferred externally and internally (**Study Figure 10A.1**)
 - In the case of a state, this recognition is marked by the establishment of **diplomatic relations**, which includes sending out an ambassador, establishing an embassy, and signing treaties
 - The consent of the people gives a government internal legitimacy
 - There should also be a means to make changes to the government in a peaceful way
 - Often a **democracy** is a government that is considered to rule with the consent of its people and, so, is internally legitimate
 - **Territory** – an area in which a government has some measure of sovereignty. Outside the boundaries, a government does not have sovereignty
 - There are some parts of the world for which no government exercises sovereignty
 - The ocean is one such area – **High Seas**
 - Antarctic continent is another area without sovereignty or jurisdiction
 - In fact, the entire continent is considered to be outside of state sovereignty

Module 10B – History of Political Forms:

- Unlike the modern state, not all of these political entities were exclusively territorial
 - Example – tribal groups or **chiefdoms**
- While involving many more people, a **feudal system** also results in a political organization not necessarily tied to complete territorial control
- a very common form of political territory was the **city-states**
 - city states had an advantage of high levels of flexibility, as well as a political simplicity that was useful in a world in which transportation was hazardous and difficult

- **Empire** – made up of several culturally distinct regions that are held together by force, under the control of a single dominant region (large political entities)
 - Most were ruled autocratically
 - Political geographers distinguish between the dominant part of the empire, sometimes termed the **metropole**, and the parts of the empire that are subordinate and have very little right to self-determination, sometimes termed **colonies** (Study Figure 10B.3)

Module 10C – History of States:

- Study the figures so that you can review past history
- **Modern state system** – a system composed of territories that are more closely controlled and integrated than political territories had been and that eventually replaced many different types of political forms
- How did the map of 1491 turn into the map of 2012?
 - 1. Westphalian state system – dates from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and is based on the idea of a world composed autonomous, clearly bounded, sovereign territorial states
 - 2. The growth of nationalism and the nation-state ideal
 - 3. Europe’s impact on much of the non-European world
 - 4. Decolonization

Module 10D – Variations in Modern States:

- The modern world is made up of about 195 states
- But not all states are created equally
- Individual states exhibit vast differences in levels of sovereignty and legitimacy
- **Satellite state** – a term often used to describe states with less actual sovereignty
 - Example – Former Soviet Union’s relationship with several Eastern European countries (Study Figure 10D.1)
- The legitimacy of states also varies. Some states are recognized only by a few countries, or even just a single country (Study Figure 10.2 - .4)
- There are huge variations in the size and the population of each state in the world
 - largest states by area are Russia, Canada, the United States, Brazil, Australia, and several others
 - other states such as India, Indonesia, and Japan have very large populations
 - the tiniest states include Monaco, San Marino, the Maldives, Bahrain, Barbados, Grenada, Nauru, and the Vatican City are what we might describe as **micro-states**

Module 10E – Four Markers of a Nation:

- **Nation** is not a synonym for country, rather it is meant to represent a group of people who feel that they belong together as a polity for a number of reasons
 - The marker is a shared cultural heritage or shared belief (language or religion) that helps unite a group of people and distinguishes them from their neighbors. Nations are generally large, including sometimes millions or even hundreds of millions of people
 - The second marker is loyalty
 - This loyalty is expressed toward all the people of that nation; in other words, it is a **horizontal loyalty**
 - In the past, the people were expected to owe allegiance to the ruler, a **vertical loyalty**
 - The idea of loyalty to the nation is an extremely powerful aspect of nationhood
 - The nation expects a primarily loyalty, which transcends that of other allegiances
 - This is necessary to persuade individuals to die for the national cause
 - It also expects an implicit acknowledgement of **exclusivity** – that a person is loyal to only one nation
 - The third marker of a nation is its territorial expression
 - Like a state, a nation has a distinct territory, which it considers to be its natural **homeland**

- Unlike a state, the members of a particular nation may not be found in a territorially demarcated and contained place
- The fourth marker of a nation is based in its political goals
 - Being a defined nation means that members of the nation seek **self-determination** – whereby members of a nation are allowed to form their own sovereign state – is what animates the ideology of **nationalism** – the ideology that maintains that members of a nation should be allowed to form their own sovereign state

Module 10F – The Relationship between Nations and States:

- Study all Figures in this module
- The ideal arrangement under nationalist ideology is that every nation should have control over a state
- **Nation-state ideal** – the ideal arrangement under nationalist ideology that every nation should have control over a state. Conversely, every political state should embody a specific nation
- However, there are approximately 195 states in the world and scholars argue that there might be as many as 4,000 to 5,000 nations
- **Nation state** – a state that contains a single nation that is not disputed by anyone inside or outside
 - Examples – Iceland and Japan
- **Multinational state** – a country contains more than one nation
 - Example – Russia, US, Canada
- **Multistate nation** – when a nation encompasses more than one state
 - These nations may or may not have control of the state
 - Instead of wanting to break the country apart, some politicians and residents of a multistate nation may seek ways to join the pieces together
 - Examples – Arab nation, Kurds,
- **Stateless nation** – when a nation does not have a state of their own
 - Example – Kurds, Palestinians
- **Diaspora** – a group that has at some point left its homeland – although this may be more legendary than historical
 - Example – the Jews

Module 10G – Nationalism as an Ideology and Force in Statecraft:

- **Primordialism** – the view that nations are organically grown entities, that the world is divided into different national groups that have persisted for some time, and that nationalist movements represent an awakening of already significant identities
- **Constructivism** – the view that nations are artificial creations that result from modernization, elite aspirations, or a series of events that makes nation building a much more viable approach than anything else
- **Instrumentalism** – a view which sees nations as emerging for a particular purpose, to meet the demands of a situation
- **Centripetal forces** – forces which unify and bring people of state or nation together
 - **Examples** – nationalism
 - Economically, the nation-state offers a number of advantages over other forms
 - People are more honest about taxes, because people are willing to give up some of their money to benefit the nation
 - A strong national identity develops a sense of “us-ness,” which is opposed to others who are outside of this group
- **Unifying institutions** – help promote nationalist ideology and bring member of the nation together
 - Example – compulsory national service like in Germany, Israel, and Switzerland
 - Excellent transportation and communication networks – roads, decent phone systems, strong banking networks – integrate the state, which can also benefit national integration
- **Centrifugal forces** – forced that tend to pull apart and disperse

- Several factors can make nationalism into a strong centrifugal force
 - **Ethnoregionalism** occurs where a **minority national groups** (a group that considers itself a nation but does not have control of the state) is concentrated in a particular region of a country (**Study Figure 10G.3**)
 - These ethnoregional or subnational movements can be manifested in a couple of different ways
 - People who feel unfulfilled are likely to demand some sort of autonomy, although the level of autonomy desired may vary
 - Throughout the world, there are separatist movements looking to become independent and a few of these are successful
 - complete independence does not always need to be the goal. Sometimes, a region simply seeks more power, as well as more autonomy
 - **Devolution** movements, as have been practiced most recently by Scotland within the United Kingdom, can be successful in satisfying a people's yearning for some control over their own destiny
 - Sometimes, ethnoregional movements do not seek to create their own independent country but, rather, to separate from their existing state in order to join a neighboring state
 - Such irredentist movements are different from a simple boundary dispute, which often has to do with historical claims or a desire to capture certain resources
 - The danger with **irredentist movements** is that they automatically involve a neighboring country, which broadens the potential conflict considerably (**Study Figure 10G.2**)

Module 10H – Boundaries and Borderlands:

- Study the figures in this module
- **International boundary** – a recognized line that separates one state from another
- The problem is often that national territories overlap or that a national territory does not coincide with a state boundary
- **Borderland or border region** – the area that surrounds the boundary
- **The border** is thus a region, while a boundary is simply a line
- **Effective national territory** relates to the fact that the legal area, or **de jure area**, of a state is not coincident with the territory that it effectively controls, the **de facto area**
- **Frontier** – an area at the edge of any type of effective political control or a at the edge of settlement
 - The frontier's edge shifts frequently with settlement advances or increasing military control
- **Natural boundaries** – occurs where there are natural features that divide one country from another
 - An island is a perfect example of a natural boundary
- **Geometric boundaries** – are drawn up as lines on a map without much interest in whatever natural or cultural features are present.
 - Example – the line dividing the US and Canada at the 29th parallel is a good example of geometric boundary. However, portions of the US-Canadian boundary are also natural
- **Antecedent boundary** – created after recognized settlement
- All international boundaries share the same basic purpose, separating one state from another, but in so doing they several distinct functions
 - First, *boundaries disrupt traffic*, be it of people, goods, or information
 - The **Cold War** was marked by the creation of heavily **militarized boundaries** that discouraged crossing
 - At the other extreme are **open boundaries**, where crossing is unimpeded
 - As noted before, the **Schengen Agreement** allows for completely unrestricted and uncontrolled crossing between several European countries

- Second, *boundaries may represent division* between two realms of governments, two economic systems, and even two different levels of welfare
 - Example – Iron Curtain
- Boundaries may divide very different societies with different social mores or divide prosperous from more improvised societies
- In these cases, illegal immigration can be an issue
- Third, *boundaries help embody the edge of national identity*
 - In some cases, people on each side of state boundary have more in common with each other than they do with their respective countries
- Border regions, often at the margin of national life, can be zones of political economic, and cultural overlap, and they may develop their own identity distinct from that of either state

Module 10I – Geopolitics and the Global Order:

- Study Figures 10I.1 and .2
- **Geopolitics** – is the study of how geographical space – including the types of interrelationships between states, the different functions of states, and the different patterns of states – affect global politics
- The term geopolitics was first coined in 1904 and popularized by a man named Halford Mackinder
- According to Mackinder,
 - *Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island control the world.*
- One other theory, written a decade earlier by Alfred Mahan, examined the influence of sea power and, in some ways, serves as a counterpoint to Mackinder
- Later on, a theory by Alexander De Seversky used a polar project map to define areas of US air dominance, Soviet air dominance, and the zone of overlap where both faced off
- Unfortunately for Mackinder’s theory and for geopolitics as a field of study, the most influential early proponents were German Nazis
- German geographer Friedrich Ratzel, who wrote about the biological nature of states and tied the health of a state with its expansion
- The German term *Lebensraum*, meaning “living space,” became associated with territorial aggression and the subjugation of conquered people
- After WWII, American foreign policy experts adopted geopolitical principles to fashion a view of the world
- One was the policy of **containment**, which sought to limit any Soviet advance to any **nonaligned countries** – countries not allied with either the Soviet Union or the US
- Other policy addressed the **domino theory**
- During the Cold War era, the leaders of the Soviet Union also adopted geopolitical strategies, in particular the idea that they would need to expand as much as possible and control their borders through the creation of a series of satellite states
- Various democracy movement in Hungary and Czechoslovakia were brutally put down by the Soviet Union because of the fear that they would open the way to a breach of the Soviet motherland
- We use the term critical geopolitics to dissect the ways that boundaries are perceived, relationships between states, and the ways the world is portrayed
- The creation of geopolitical visions can be intentional, as when a country seeks justification for going to war
 - Example – Orientalism, axis of evil, Third World, Eastern Europe

Unit IV – Political Organization of Space

Chapter 11 – Geography of Governance and Representation

Introduction:

- The modern political state is a complicated thing
- The modern welfare state is responsible for its residents' education, health, welfare, infrastructure, safety, arbitration, environmental protection ... the list goes on
- This also means that the government has to raise money to pay for all of these programs
- Countries manipulate space to make governance easier and to recognize a country's diversity
- The national government may provide additional funding but often expects regional and local governments to deliver the services
- on differences
- A government may even establish autonomous regions that grant a regional population special rights and How do institutions use space to administer and govern effectively?
- Most use space – in particular, the subdivision of territory – or **political subunits**
- In all of these examples, territory is being used as a means to manipulate space and make the administration of the institution more efficient
- We can point to a few basic for this:
 - 1. Basic *efficiency*: subdividing a large territory into a number of smaller subunits makes administration far more efficient and allows greater ease in determining where some of the potential trouble spots are
 - 2. Greater *flexibility*: subdividing the territory into appropriate spatial units provides a eater flexibility in administering some units differently than others
 - For government, this can be related to the establishment of different traditions, or even different languages found within different regions of a state
 - 3. Greater degree of *responsiveness*:
- Beyond these three positive reasons are two negative reasons:
 - 4. Subdividing territories can more easily *restrict access* to only certain people
 - 5. A *mismatch* between the actual scope of a problem and the ability to effectively deal with the problem may result from the proliferation of subdivisions
- The territorial development of the Roman Catholic Church exemplifies how territory evolved as a strategy
- The identification of a community with a parish and the power of the parish priest in the lives of his parishioners is quite pronounced in some societies (Study Figure 11.2)

Module 11B – Political Economy and Functions of the Modern State:

- **Political economy** – refer to the relationship among the state, the members of the state, and the economic activities contained within the state
- While most **private sector** factories, firms, and offices in a capitalist society are responsible for producing goods and providing services, there are still some things left for the public sector to do
- **Study Figures 11B.1 - .4**
- Beyond these basic functions, many modern states take on additional roles
- Some are related to caring for the population
 - *Education*
 - *Social welfare*
 - Example – pension system for elderly
 - *Health care* – most industrialized societies also provide a national system of health care. Even those that do not, such as the US, provide some health care for the elderly and poor
- Governments also have other functions to ensure that the economy operates as smoothly and fairly as possible:
 - *Currency*
 - *Business regulation*

- *Infrastructure*

Module 11C – Theories of the State:

- Geographers and other scholars use a few well-known **theories of the state** to discuss how states operate, particularly those within democratic, capitalist systems
- A **pluralist theory** of the state views government as a neutral arbiter of all the different stakeholders
- An election that favors a government from the left is likely to provide more services and regulate business more tightly. Such governments are often described as democratic socialist, or in the US, liberal
- An election won by a government on the right is likely to favor business interests and looks to reduce the scope of state power
- More recently, the term **neoliberalism** (not to be confused with political liberalism) has been used to describe a set of policies that favor minimal government interference in markets and the promotion of free trade
- **Elite theories of the state** see governments, no matter what their political ideology or their constitution, as likely to support an elite class of people
- State is not a neutral entity, but promotes the interests of a particular group
- **Marxist theories of the state** look at the state as a vehicle promoting capitalism and the capitalist class – in other words, those who control the means of production
- **Authoritarian, or autocratic, states** concentrate political power in a single individual or a clique (term an oligarchy)
- Most premodern states were autocracies or oligarchies, and several survive today
- Totalitarianism is one type of autocracy that has been associated with ideologies of fascism, communist, and religious fundamentalism (**Study Figure 11C.3**)
- The state represents a particular party, no opposing to that party is allowed, and no popular dissent is permitted to challenge the government or its laws
- The difference between a totalitarian and an authoritarian type of government is sometimes murky but often has to do with the degree of control vested in the government and the conformity demanded of the people
- A totalitarian government is generally directed from a single political party and an official ideology

Module 11D – Citizenship:

- The notion of **citizenship** embodies the responsibilities and rights that (some) residents of a state possess
- *Citizenship* is an old term, rooted in ancient Greece and Rome, and it came into widespread use in a number of European trading cities during the Middle Ages
- Citizens have political rights, civil rights, and in some societies economic and social rights
- It is important to remember that just because people are said to be citizens does not necessarily mean that they enjoy full participation in the political process
 - Example – African Americans before 1960
- Two main systems in which citizenship is determined
 - **Jus sanguinis** (Latin for “right of blood”) applies when your citizenship is based on that of your parents
 - A child born in Germany of Turkish parentage does not automatically gain citizenship. This system can result in generations of people residing in a country but not allowed to be citizens
 - **Jus soli** (“right of the soil”) applies whenever citizenship is acquired through birth within a state’s territory
 - Jus soli also applies to those born within American abroad
 - In many countries, multiple or dual citizenship is allowed

Module 11E – Subdividing the State:

- Every state further divides its territory into political subunits
- These political subunits are known by many different names

- The first order of subdivision, for example, may be known as a state, a province, a prefecture, a district, or any number of names (**Study Figure 11E.1**)
- The development of political subunits demonstrates the use of territoriality
- They are developed in order to promote greater efficiency, flexibility, and responsiveness
- Two types of systems define the relationship between the central government and its first-order subunits: unitary states and federal states
- **Unitary states** – nearly all of the sovereignty and power reside with the central government
 - in unitary states, the central government may determine how each subdivision is government, even going so far as to appoint an administrator
 - such unitary states may be perfectly democratic; it is just that the decision-making process resides at the center
- **Study Figures 11E.5-8**
- **Federal states**, each of the subunits is granted an independent constitutional authority, which defines its level of power
 - Federal states always have their own independent governments and legislatures, as well as the ability to make their own laws, which may be quite different from those of other subunits in the country
 - The former Soviet Union (and in its successor state of Russia), federalism is a method of ensuring that each of the different national groups within these multinational states are given possession of some sort of territory
 - In this way, federalism attempts to fashion stability between rival ethnic and national groups
 - Federalism is also a good way to manage large countries
 - Seven of the eight largest countries by land area – Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Russia, and the US – are organized as federal states. Only China continues as a unitary state
- In confederations, sovereign states agree to abridge some their independent powers in order to work together as a group, but each state retains a great deal of sovereignty
- Many countries grapple with the relationship between their central government and its political subunits
- Multinational countries that include a number of ethnoregional groups, for instance, may seek to grant some of these regions more autonomy in the hopes of staving off secessionist movements
- Conversely, some countries may seek to tighten up the relationship between the central state and its subunits
- Study Figures 11E.9 – 11

Module 11F – Cores and Capitals:

- Many states include a clearly defined **core region** – this core region can represent the place where the state and the dominant nationality emerged
- The state contains a **capital city** as well as a **capital region**
 - The capital of the country – as the political center – may or may not be in the core, depending on the logic of capital location
 - Some states contain more than one capital, each having separate political functions, such as legislative, executive, or judicial
 - In approximately half of all counties, the capital is the largest, most important city
- **Study Figures 11F.1 – 10**

Module 11G – Peripheral and Special Regions:

- **Form** integrated into the state, cultural distinct, or exclaves
- Peripheral regions are often given special treatment and may be describes as special regions, political subunits that are granted different powers than regular subunits
- **Special regions** are given a status that marks them as distinct from other units within the state
 - Puerto Rico, defined as a commonwealth

- Greenland, for example, is a self-governing region of Denmark
 - Yet while Denmark is a part of the EU, Greenland is not. The same is true of the Danish Faeroe Islands
- Many countries include regions that they feel ought to have a special status partly because of their cultural distinctiveness
 - Quebec, Canada, enjoys special powers, although nothing in the Canadian constitution mandates this
 - Spain designates the Basque region Catalonia for special levels of sovereignty
- One special region common in the Americas but found throughout the world is **reservations**
 - These are established as a territory for indigenous people
 - The level of autonomy and self-rule vary, depending on the country
- **Study Figures 11G.1 - .7**

Module 11H – Electoral Geography:

- **Pure democracy** – in which all citizens have a say in all the issues pertaining to their community, has given way to a **representative democracy**, a more complicated structure in which people elect representatives who are supposed to take the time to understand the issues and to represent their interests
- **(Study Figure 11H.3)**
- **Electoral geography** examines how people’s political preferences are manifested in representation
- Electoral geographers are also interested in how geography affects electoral outcomes, why context is important, and how manipulating electoral districts can benefit one political interest over another
- One aspect of electoral geography lies in the interpretation of election outcomes
- Where is party support strongest and where is it weakest? Which district shows the greatest degree of change from one election to the next?
- Geographers have long wondered whether people’s electoral behavior is shaped by the others in their community
- In other words, is there an independent neighborhood effect or contextual effect, in which the characteristics of people in a local area help determine their political preferences?
- There has been some support for this neighborhood effect, and some studies indicate that where people live can be as important as who they are and where their other interests lie

Module 11I – Electoral Systems and Manipulation:

- **Study Figure 11I.1**
- One form of manipulation is through **malapportionment**, in which some electoral districts vary in size although they are equal in representation
- 1962 (Baker vs. Carr) that “the one person, one vote” principle made these forms of malapportionment illegal
- Constitutional malapportionment still exists, however – the US Senate is based on small states having same representation as large states – and some forms are unavoidable, since congressional districts cannot straddle state lines, but malapportionment has been considerably minimized
- **Gerrymandering** - Another tactic is to concentrate the support of one party or one group of people in one district and dilute their support throughout a number of other districts
- this type of manipulation, is possible only in a plurality or majority system, since proportional systems would not shut out a second or third party with support in a district
- it has also been used to enhance the electoral prospects of particular ethnic and racial groups
- geographic information software, with access to electoral databases
- it used to be that electoral districts were drawn only once every 10 years after the census results, but recently some politicians have decided that nothing stops them from redrawing electoral boundaries whenever the time seems right

- it does not seem to be nearly as common as in the US, in many cases because of a proportional system and in many cases because of proportional system and in other cases because districts are drawn by independent commissions

PETRAS