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 pivitol 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.

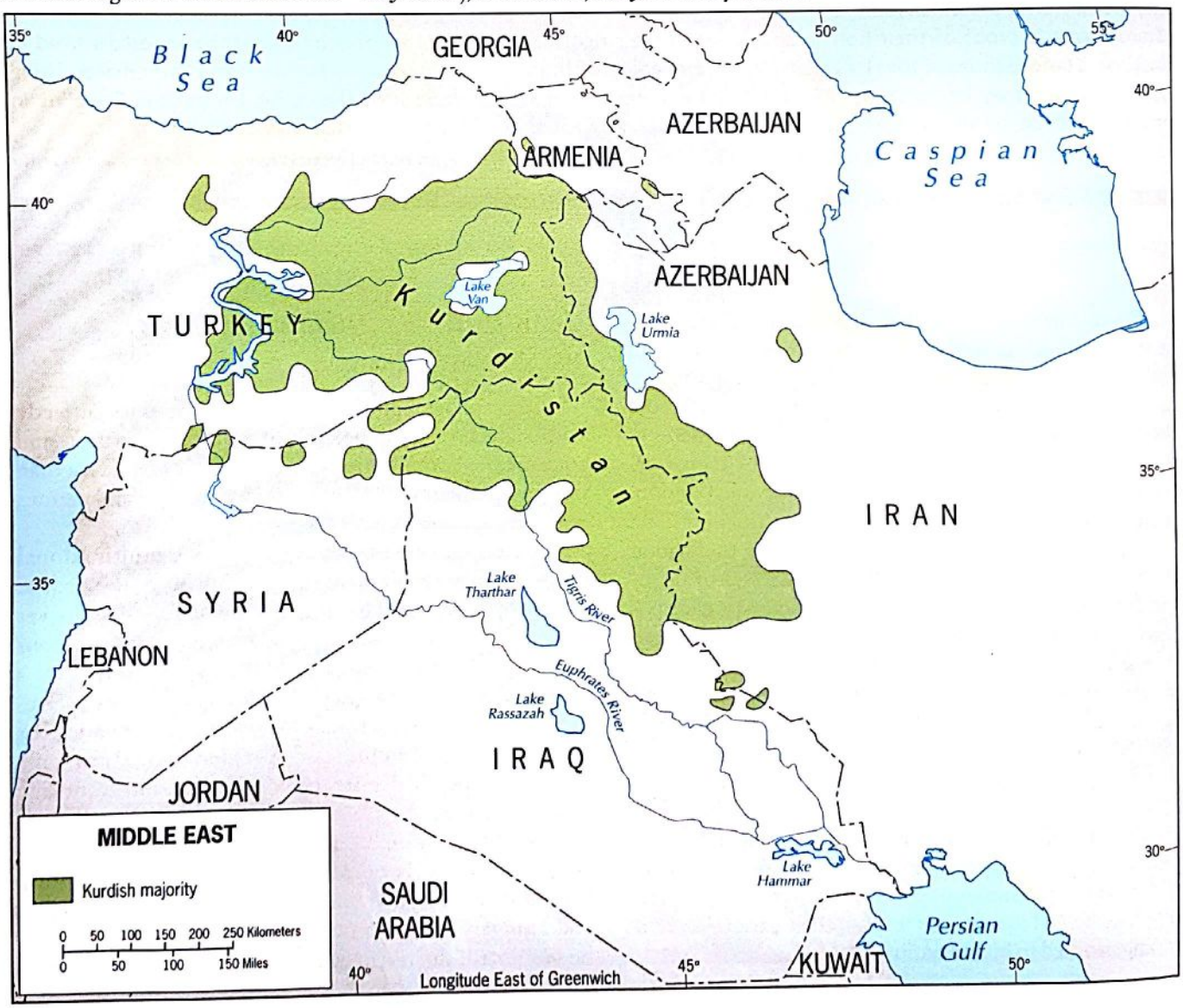


Figure 8.14
Europe: Foci of Devolutionary Pressures, 2006. H. J. de Blij, P. O. Muller, and John Wiley & Sons.

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

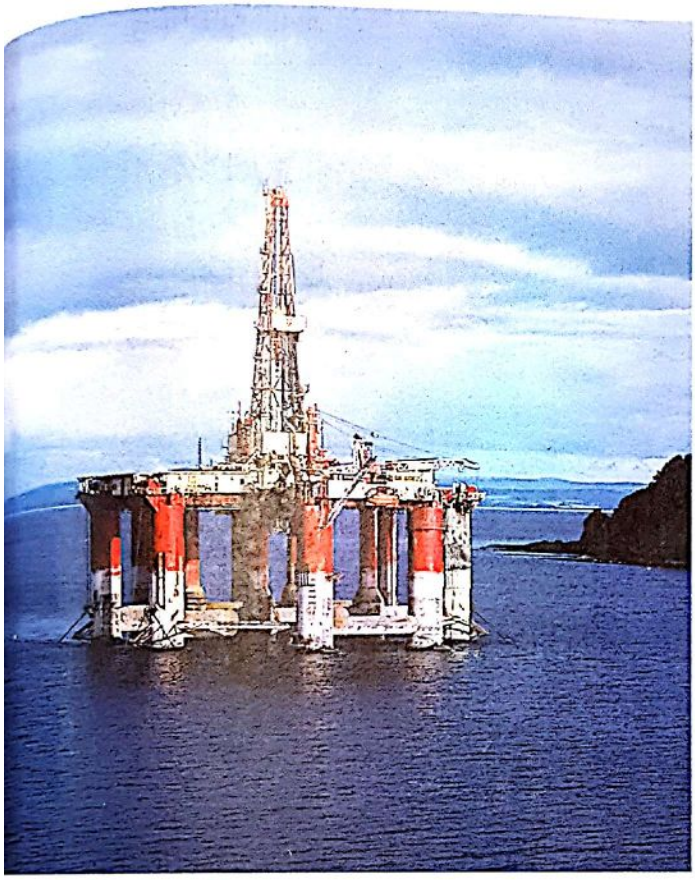


Figure 8.15
Invergordon, Scotland. Oil-drilling platforms in the North Sea tap into the oil- and gas-rich subsoil of the sea. The wealth of energy resources off the coast of Scotland has been a factor in the rise of Scottish nationalism and the desire for greater independence. © H. J. de Blij.

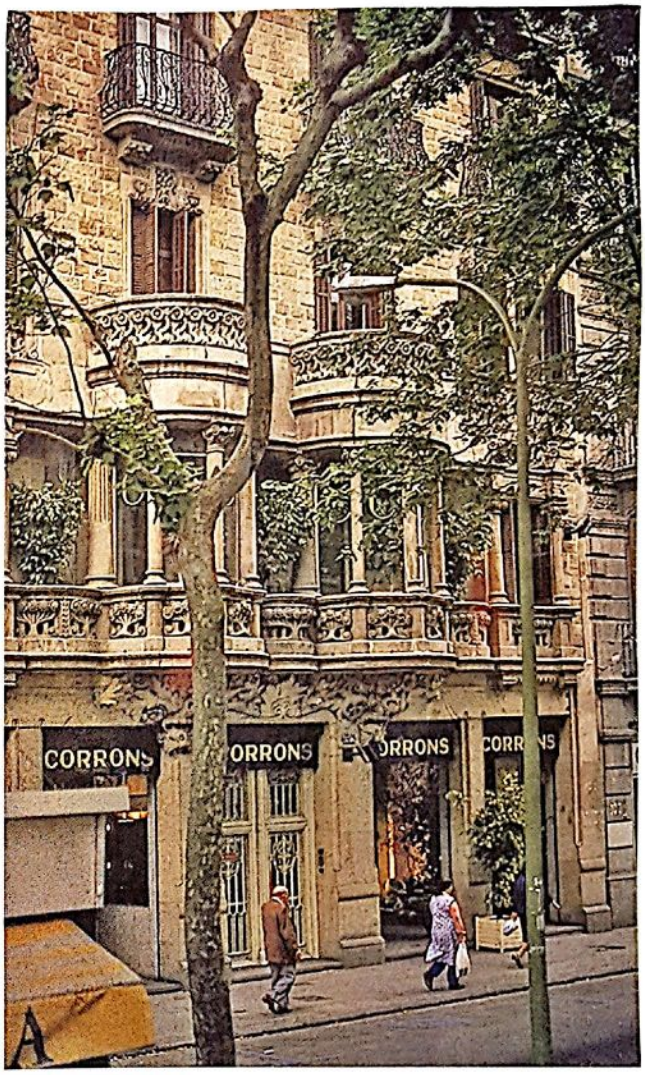


Figure 8.16
Catalonia, Spain. Barcelona's long-standing economic and political significance is indelibly imprinted in the urban landscape. Once the heart of a far-flung Mediterranean empire, Barcelona went on to become a center of commerce and banking as the Iberian peninsula industrialized. In the process, 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.

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 Catalonian 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 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 Parana). Southerners complained that the government was misspending 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).

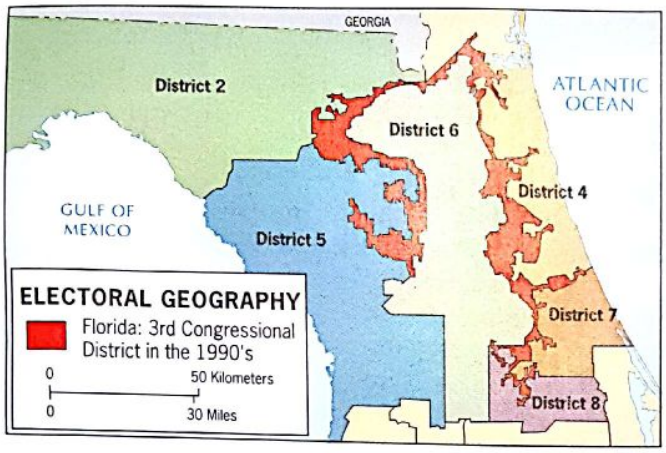


Figure 8.18

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).

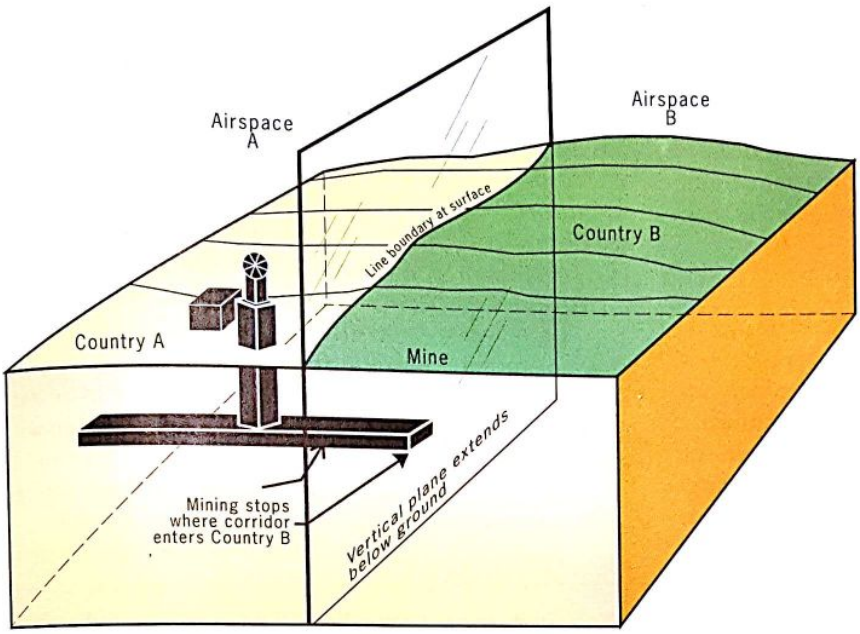


Figure 8.19
The Vertical Plane of a Political Boundary. H. J. de Blij, A. B. Murphy, E. H. Fouberg, and John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

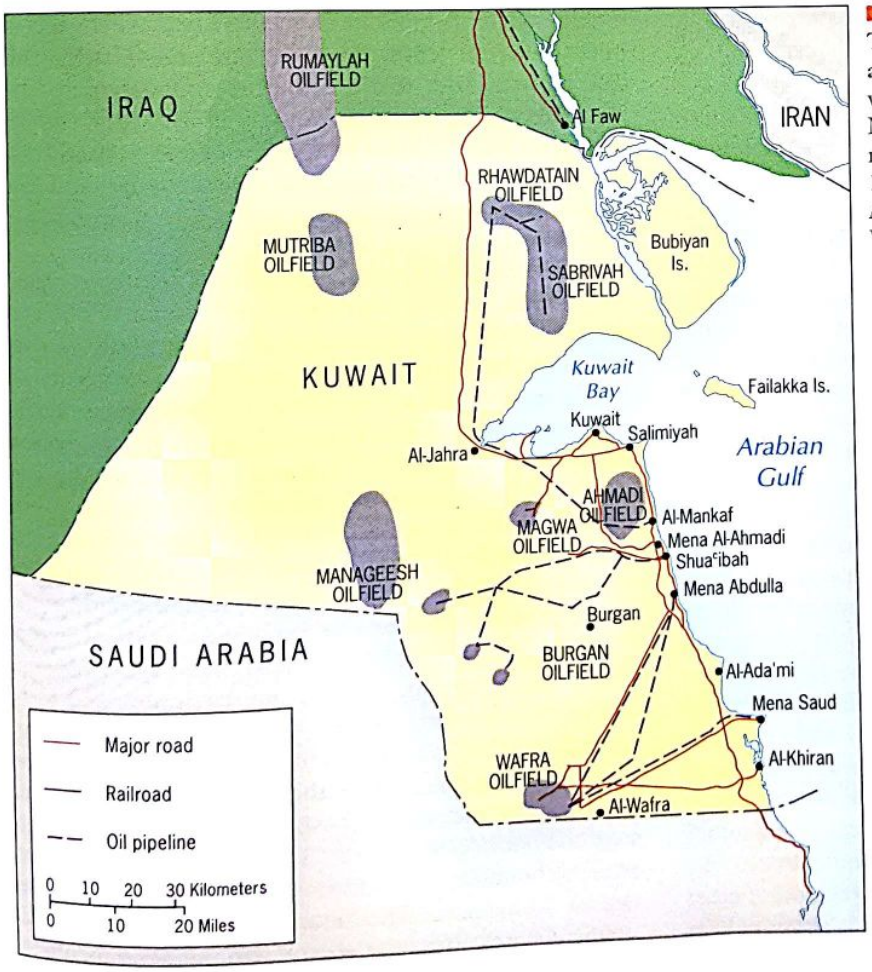


Figure 8.20
The International Boundary between Iraq and Kuwait. Kuwait's northern boundary was redefined and delimited by a United Nations boundary commission; it was demarcated by a series of concrete pillars 1.24 miles (2 kilometers) apart. H. J. de Blij, A. B. Murphy, E. H. Fouberg, and John Wiley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

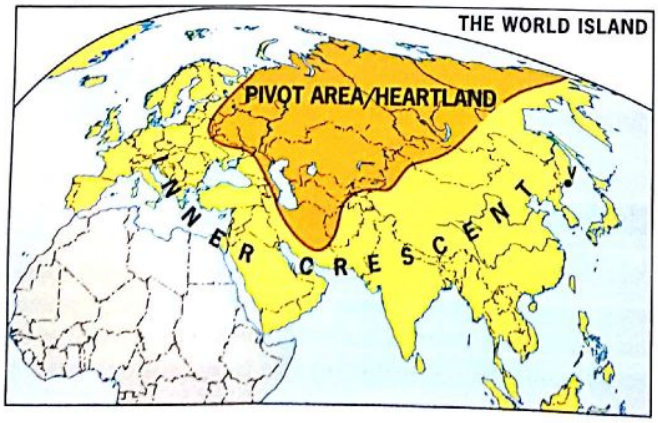
Mackinder later renamed his pivot area the heartland, and his notion became known as the heartland theory. In his book *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1919), Mackinder (defining Eurasia as the World Island) issued a stronger warning to the victors of World War I, stating:

> *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).

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



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 Gearoid 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 incredibe 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 Ladin 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

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 unforseen 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 militaristically.

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,

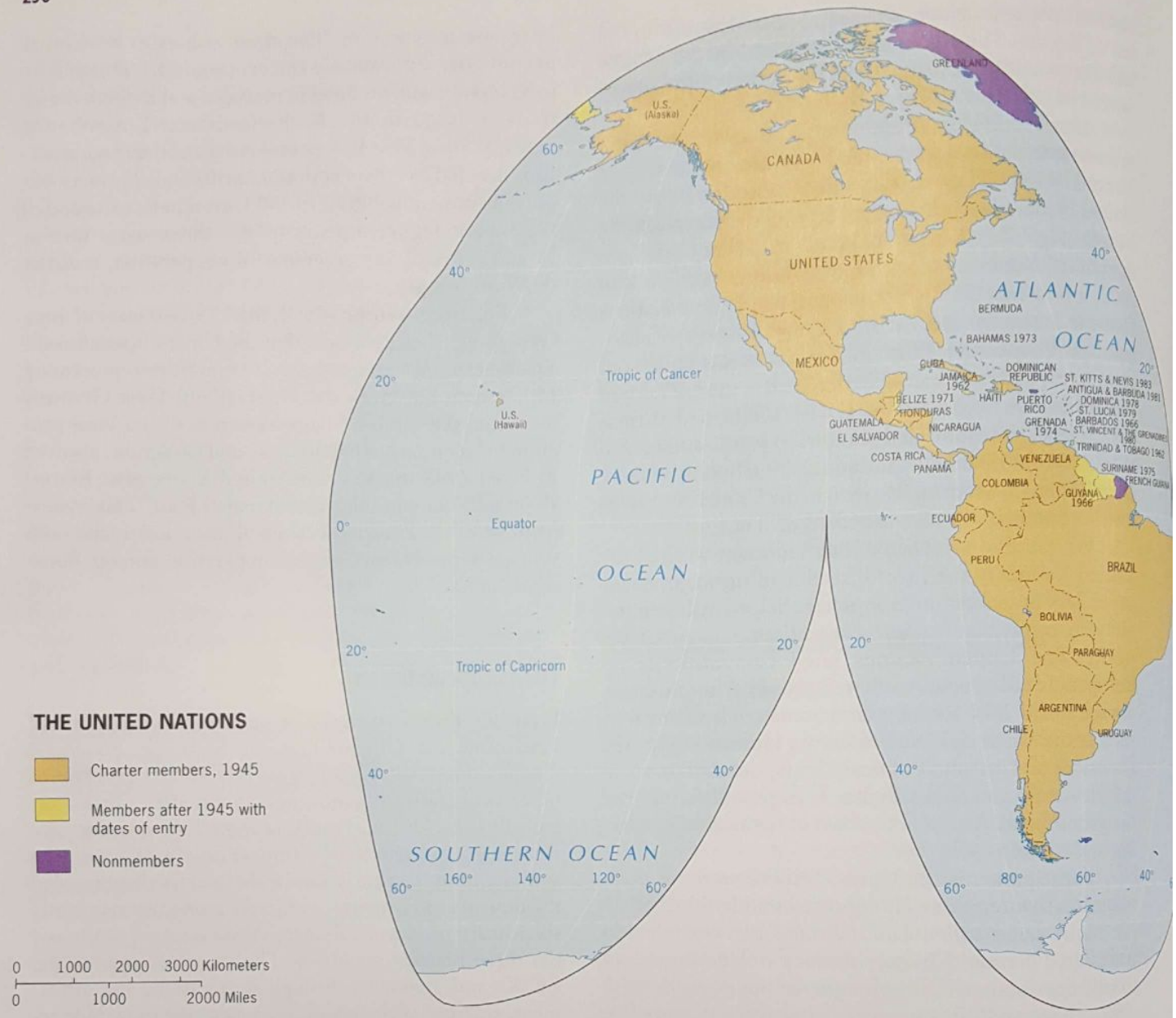
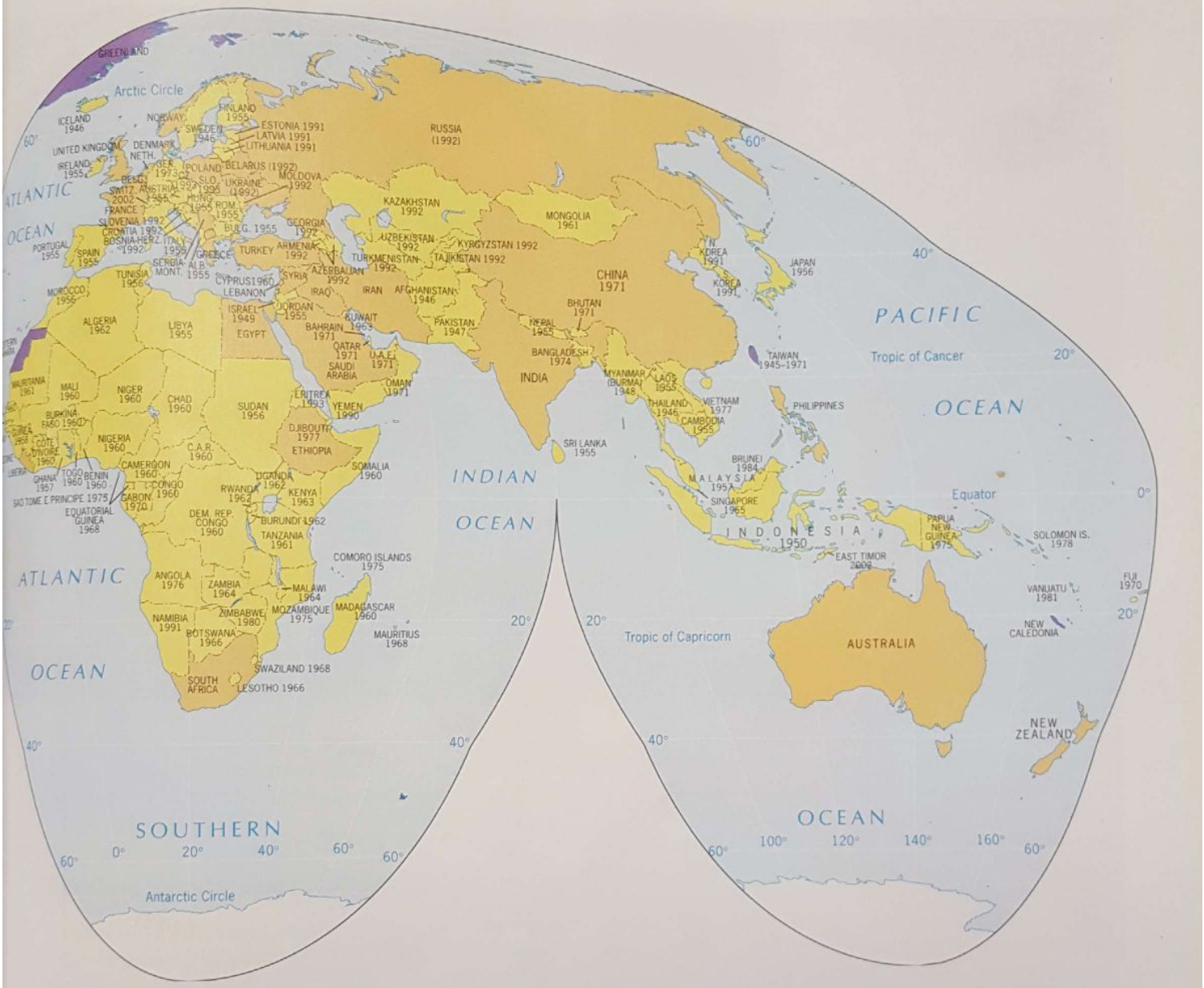


Figure 8.22
Member States of the United Nations. This map shows charter members, members after 1945 (with dates of entry), and nonmembers of the United Nations. *Data from*: the United Nations, *www.un.org*

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 invitation 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.

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 Hawai'i; 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 1900s. 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.