

Class 8b: Political geography II

- Boundaries and border disputes
- Domestic political geography
- Electoral geography: voting patterns

National boundaries

- Limits of sovereignty
- Three-dimensional
- 14 miles of ocean; 200 miles of fishing rights
- Frontier zones vs. boundaries

“Natural” or physical boundaries

- Mountains
 - Often a barrier anyway
 - Ridgeline or watershed?
- Rivers or lakes
 - Not always stable; which side?
 - Can unite as well as divide

“Artificial” or cultural boundaries

- Geometric
 - Parallels or meridians
 - Typically sparsely settled
- Religious or linguistic
 - Criteria for dividing states

Antecedent vs. subsequent

- Antecedent: drawn before dense settlement
- Subsequent: after cultural landscape is established
 - Consequent: take landscape into account
 - Superimposed: no regard for cultural landscape

Boundaries as sites of conflict

- Landlocked states
- Water as boundary
- Rivers across boundaries
- Nations not matching state boundaries
- Resource access or use

Internal state structure

- Core area: historical center
 - Densest population, largest cities
 - Most economically developed
- Ex.: Moscow, London, eastern U.S.
- Not found in all countries

Unitary vs. federal states

- Unitary: highly centralized, homogeneous
 - Strong national identity
 - Centralization in core area
 - European cores, newly independent states

Unitary vs. federal states

- Federal: decentralized government
 - Provinces or states have considerable responsibility
 - Capital often deliberately created in core, or periphery