

Political Patterns and Processes

AP Human Geography • Unit 4

AP Human Geography



Political Patterns and Processes

What we will cover

- 1 States & nations
- 2 Power & territoriality
- 3 Boundaries
- 4 Boundary function
- 5 Governance
- 6 Devolution & sovereignty

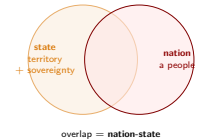
1 States and nations

Political Patterns and Processes

States and nations

States, nations, nation-states

- A **state** 国家 (政治) has territory + sovereignty; a **nation** 民族 is a people.
- A **nation-state** 民族国家 matches one nation to one state.
- A **stateless nation** 无国家民族 has identity but no state.



one nation + one state = nation-state

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States and nations

Power and territoriality

- **Sovereignty** 主权: a state governs itself; **self-determination** 自决: a people chooses.
- **Territoriality** 领域性: controlling an area to influence it.
- A **choke point** 咽喉要道 controls a vital route; the **EEZ** 专属经济区 extends 200 nm.



States claim sovereignty in a global order

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States and nations

Empire, and the geography of pressure points

colonialism 殖民主义	settling and controlling distant territory directly
imperialism 帝国主义	extending power over other territories, by settlement or by control
neocolonialism 新殖民主义	continued economic control after formal independence – through debt, trade terms and corporate ownership
choke points 咽喉要道	narrow passages a great deal of trade must pass: the Suez Canal, the Strait of Malacca, Hormuz
shatterbelts 破碎地带	regions caught between competing powers, so internal conflict is amplified from outside

Colonial boundaries drawn in Europe still explain conflicts today, because they cut through nations and joined rivals. That is the link the FRQ is looking for.

2 Boundaries

Defining boundaries

- **Antecedent** 先成边界 (before settlement), **subsequent** 后成边界 (fits culture),
- **superimposed** 强加边界 (forced on), **relict** 残余边界 (no longer functions).
- Stages: defined, delimited, demarcated, administered.



Boundaries are drawn, marked, then enforced

Making a boundary takes three steps

definition 界定	agreeing the wording of the treaty – what the line is
delimitation 标定	drawing it on a map
demarcation 划界	marking it on the ground with fences, posts or walls – most boundaries are never demarcated
then administration 管理	who polices it, and how goods and people cross
at sea	UNCLOS 联合国海洋法公约 sets a 12 nautical-mile territorial sea and a 200-mile exclusive economic zone 专属经济区 (EEZ)

Most boundary disputes are failures at one named step – vague definition, a badly drawn map, or a line nobody ever marked. Say which.

Worked example – name that boundary

Classify each: (a) the 49th parallel, drawn across near-empty land; (b) Europe's line between Dutch- and French-speakers; (c) Africa's straight lines drawn in Berlin; (d) the old inner-German border, still visible in the landscape.

- (a) **antecedent** – drawn **before** settlement.
- (b) **subsequent** – it **followed** the culture.
- (c) **superimposed** – **forced** on from outside.
- (d) **relict** – gone, but still marked.

The label is about **timing**, not shape: what existed **first** – the line or the people? A straight line is not automatically superimposed.

The function of boundaries

- Boundaries organise voting; **redistricting** 重新划分选区 redraws districts.
- **Gerrymandering** 不公正划分选区 draws them unfairly.
- Disputes: definitional, locational, operational, allocational.

The function of boundaries, in detail



AP HuG · U4 · five shapes of states

States take different shapes; each shape affects how easily the state can be governed

3 Governance and change

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Governance and change

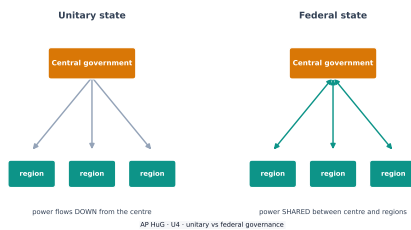
Forms of governance

- A **unitary state** 单一制国家 centralises power.
- A **federal state** 联邦制国家 shares power with strong regions.
- Federalism suits large, diverse countries.



Where power sits shapes the state

A unitary state keeps power central; a



A unitary state keeps power central; a federal state shares power with regional governments

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Governance and change

Devolution and sovereignty

- **Devolution** 权力下放: power moves to regions (physical, ethnic, economic factors).
- **Supranational organizations** 超国家组织 (UN, EU) limit sovereignty from above.
- **Centripetal** 向心力 forces unify a state; **centrifugal** 离心力 forces divide it.



Borders and regions test state power

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Governance and change

What pulls sovereignty apart, from inside and outside

- devolution** 权力下放: a central government hands powers to a region – Scotland, Catalonia, Quebec
- autonomy** 自治: strong ethnic, linguistic or economic differences win a region self-rule, or fuel a movement for full independence
- supranational organisations** 超国家组织: the EU and UN take decisions members must follow – sovereignty given up in exchange for influence
- globalisation** 全球化: capital, corporations and the internet all cross borders a state cannot close

Devolution pulls power down to regions; supranationalism pushes it up to a larger body. The state is squeezed from both directions at once.

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Governance and change

Three forces on the modern state

- Ethnonationalism**: Ethnonationalism claims that a nation defined by ethnicity should have its own state – the strongest centrifugal force in the unit.
- Failed states**: Failed states cannot provide security, services or law across their territory, so power devolves to militias and neighbours.
- UNCLOS**: The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets the territorial sea, the contiguous zone and the 200 nautical-mile exclusive economic zone – which is what makes small islands strategically valuable.
- Supranationalism**: Joining the EU or the WTO trades some sovereignty for market access and security – a centripetal force at one scale and a centrifugal one at another.

Sort every force by scale and direction: does it pull the state together or apart, and at which level?

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Key points State = territory+sovereignty; nation = a people Unitary centralises; federal shares power Boundaries: antecedent / sub- sequent / superimposed / relict Centrifugal forces + devo- lution challenge sovereignty	Worked example – the command word is the question “Define the concept of an independent state.” (real AP question) “A sovereign country that governs itself and its own territory, is not controlled by any outside power, and is recognised by other states.” Define wants a short, precise meaning – one clear sentence is enough. You do not need examples here; save those for “Describe” and “Explain”.

Political Patterns and Processes Governance and change	
Introduction to Political Geography Political geography 政治地理学 studies how humans divide and control space. ■ A state 国家 (country) is an area with defined borders, a permanent population, a government, and sovereignty 主权 – full control over its own affairs. ■ A nation 民族 is a group of people with a shared culture and identity; a nation-state 民族国家 is a state whose borders match one nation (Japan is close). ■ A multinational state 多民族国家 contains several nations; a stateless nation 无国家民族 (like the Kurds) has no state of its own.	Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces  Cities concentrate political and economic power across territory

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Exam tips ■ Keep state (territory + sovereignty), nation (a people), and nation-state clearly separate. ■ Classify a boundary by history (antecedent / subsequent / superimposed / relict) and by stage (defined to administered). ■ Name the boundary-dispute type: definitional, locational, operational, or allocational. ■ Compare unitary and federal governance, and link the choice to managing diversity. ■ Explain instability through centrifugal and centripetal forces and devolution; use neutral examples.	4 Recap

Unit 4 – key takeaways

1 Terms

state vs nation vs nation-state

2 Boundary

antecedent/subsequent/superimposed/relict

3 Dispute

definitional, locational,
operational, allocational

4 Stability

centrifugal vs centripetal;
devolution

Check yourself

- 1 What three things define an independent state?
- 2 Nation or state: a people sharing a culture?
- 3 What is devolution?
- 4 Superimposed or antecedent: a boundary drawn ignoring culture?

Answers 1. sovereignty, territory, recognition 2. a nation 3. power moving from central to regional government 4. superimposed