

Political Patterns and Processes

AP Human Geography ■ Unit 4

AP Human Geography



Political Patterns and Processes

What we will cover

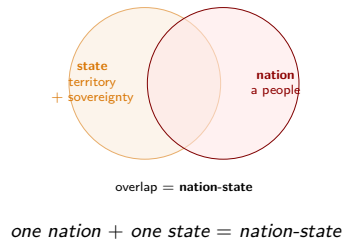
- 1 States & nations
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- 5 Governance
- 6 Devolution & sovereignty

1

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.



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

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

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.

3 Governance and change

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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

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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

Key points

State = territory+sovereignty;
nation = a people

Boundaries: antecedent / subsequent / superimposed / relict

Unitary centralises;
federal shares power

Centrifugal forces + devolution 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”.

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