Initial Understandings

Nation - a group of people bound together by a common political identity
State - an area organized into a political unit and ruled by an established government that has control over its internal and foreign affairs. It has a permanent population, occupies defined territory, and has sovereignty.
Nation-state - a state where the territory of the state corresponds to that occupied by a particular ethnicity (or nation).
Sovereignty - independence from control of its internal affairs by other states

Deeper Understandings

Territoriality are attempts to control pieces of the Earth's surface. The study of this has led to **geopolitics**, the study of the spatial and territorial dimensions of power.
The first states were **city-states** in the Fertile Crescent. These early states were comprised of a city and the surrounding countryside.
A major influence in recent times has been **self-determination**, the concept that ethnicities have a right to govern themselves. This has fueled aspirations in **stateless nations** like the Kurds who identify as a unique nation but do not have a state of their own.
States that comprise multiple ethnicities are *multi-ethnic states*. If these ethnicities have histories of self-governance, it is considered a **multi-national state**. Multinational states are common in regions with **superimposed boundaries** such as Africa, and are inherently less stable than nation-states.
Irredentism is the annexation of territories belonging to another state on grounds of common ethnicity or historical possession.

Gerrymandering

The process of redrawing legislative boundaries for the purpose of benefitting the party in power is called **gerrymandering**.
Wasted vote spreads opposition supporters across many districts but in the minority.
Excess vote concentrates opposition supported into a few districts.
Stacked vote links distant areas of like minded voters through oddly shaped boundaries

Boundary Disputes

There are 4 primary types of boundary disputes.
Positional disputes are arguments over where the border actually is (ex: historical Texas boundary with Mexico)
Territorial disputes are arguments over who owns a region (ex: Kashmir)
Resource disputes are arguments over natural resources that lie in border areas (ex: Iraq-Kuwait oil disputes prior to Persian Gulf War)
Functional disputes are arguments over what policies should govern a border region (ex: current US-Mexico border disputes)

Government Classifications

States are classified as a **democracy** when citizens can elect leaders and run for office. They are classified as an **autocracy** when the state is non-democratic and ran in the interests of the leader. An **anocracy** is a mixture of the two forms. Democracies are notable for their democratic selection of leaders, citizen participation in the political process, and checks and balances within the government.

Government Classifications (cont)

States are classified as **unitary** if they concentrate power into a single central government. States are considered **federal** if they divide the power between the central government and regional sub-units.
Confederal states attempt to spread the power between the sub-units while maintaining a weak central government, but there are no lasting examples of this today.
Democratization describes the reality that the world is becoming more democratic. We are currently in the *3rd Wave of Democratization* (1st - Developed naturally over time; 2nd - Decolonization; 3rd - Collapse of dictatorial rulers)

Theory

Ratzel - State is like a living organism, with a birth, death, and predictable rise & fall of power
Heartland (Mackinder) - Control of the Eurasian "pivot area" would give a country the natural and human resources necessary to dominate the world
Rimland (Spykman) - Eurasian rim the key to global power. Because this area is so vast and diverse, it was unlikely to fall under one state's control, thus maintaining a global balance of power

Boundaries & Shapes

Physical boundaries include *mountain*, *water*, and *desert* boundaries. **Cultural boundaries** include *geometric* boundaries (straight lines on the map) and *ethnic boundaries* (differences in religion, language, etc)
Compact states are efficient because the distance from the center to any side of the state is roughly equal, allowing for good communications.
Elongated states are long and narrow, but may suffer from communcation and transportation problems.

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Boundaries & Shapes (cont)

Prorupted states appear compact except for a large projecting extension. This extension either grants the state access to a resource or divides two other states.
Perforated states completely surround another state (ex: South Africa)
Fragmented states are divided geographically. This can create difficulties in government, trade, and travel.
States that lack access to the ocean are considered **landlocked**. States with very small territories and populations are known as **microstates**.

Supranational Organizations

States group together into **supranational organizations** - cooperating groups of states that operate on either a regional or international level
United Nations (UN) - 193 states as members, serves as a platform for dialogue between countries. All UN members sit in the *General Assembly*, but 15 sit on the *Security Council*, which is the only body that can authorize military force. 5 countries (USA, UK, France, Russia, China) have permanent seats on the SC and also hold veto power.
NATO - Military alliance initially designed by the USA to prevent the spread of communism
Warsaw Pact - Mutual-defense alliance between Eastern European satellite states and Soviet Union. Now defunct.
COMECON - Promote trade amongst communist states. Now defunct.
European Union (EU) - Initially formed to help Western Europe recover from WW2. Expansion has included majority of Eastern Europe. Key goals are economic and political cooperation. The EU has moved towards **integration**, with members pooling their sovereignty to gain collective political, economic, and social power (ex: unified *monetary policy* - introduction of the Euro)

Supranational Organizations (cont)

Other organizations include the *Organization of American States*, *Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, the *African Union*, *Arab League*, and the *British Commonwealth*.

Forces on States

Centripetal forces bind together the people of a state, making them stronger. Examples might include a common religion, common language, schools, or *nationalism* (loyalty to ones nation).
Centrifugal forces destabilize a government and encourage a state to fall apart. Examples might include differences in religion, ethnicity, and language. *Separatist movements* represent one of these forces, where nationalities demand independence from the state.
As a reaction to some centrifugal forces, states might resort to **devolution**, transferring power from the central government to regional governments in an attempt to appease the unhappy group.

Last few terms

Terrorism - the systematic use of violence by a group in order to intimidate a population or coerce a government into granting its demand
Politicization of Religion - the use of religious principles to promote political ends and vice versa
An **enclave** is a landlocked piece of territory that is separated from the rest of the state.
An **exclave** is similar, but lies on a coast rather than being landlocked.
Sometimes physical barriers such as mountain ranges create **shatterbelts**, or zones of great cultural complexity, because groups are able to retain unique identities due to their relative isolation.
A **colony** is a territory that is legally tied to a different state, rather than being sovereign.

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