

5 Shapes of Countries and Enclaves and Exclaves

Definition - The boundaries of a country and the shape of the land that it encompasses can present problems or it can help unify the nation. Each shape of state has advantages, as well as disadvantages. The shape of most countries can be divided into five main categories: compact, prorupted, perforated, fragmented, and elongated.

Explanation -

Compact – A compact shaped state is small and centralized. This type of state is the simplest to manage, since the government is close to all portions of the state. The compact form helps to keep the country together by making communications easier within it. In addition, compact states are much easier to defend than states of other shapes. However, compact states are primarily small in size, and therefore may not have as many natural resources as larger states have. A perfect example of a compact state would be Poland.



Prorupted – A prorupted state has a long extension, or an extended arm of territory. This protrusion gives the state several advantages. For example, the state gets easy access to the coast and the local resources around it. In addition, prorupted states are also able to prevent a rival access. An example of a prorupted state would be Thailand.



Perforated – A perforated state completely surrounds another. A classic example would be South Africa since it surrounds Lesotho. The surrounded nation can only be reached by going through one country. More problems can arise if there is hostility between the two nations. This makes it difficult to enter the surrounding nation.

Fragmented – A state that is separated by a physical or human barrier. This creates several problems for the country. Many portions of the state are separated by oceans, lakes, and mountains. It is difficult to govern such a country composed of islands, such as Indonesia. In addition, communication is difficult within the state; since portions are separated from the main part of the country.



Elongated – An elongated shaped state is long and narrow. This type of state also has many disadvantages. For example, they are difficult to defend. An elongated state, such as Chile, makes for difficult governance of the peripheral areas in the north and south. However, an elongated state encompasses a variety of landscapes.



Enclave – A country or part of a country that is surrounded by another. However, an enclave does not have political affinity to the surrounding state. Also, an enclave does not belong to another country. For example, the Vatican City is an enclave of Rome. The Vatican City has its own government and is independent from Rome and Italy. Therefore, it is not bound by the rules of Rome, as well as the rules of Italy.

Exclave – An exclave is part of a country that is or almost completely separated from the main part of the country. Alaska is an example of an exclave. Although it is separated from the U.S., it shares boundaries with Canada. Another example is Hawaii, which is completely separated from the U.S. by the Pacific Ocean.

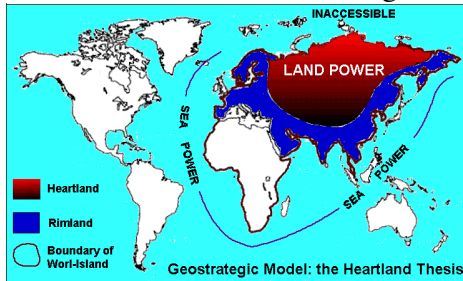


The Heartland Theory

Definition - In 1904, Sir Halford Mackinder published the Heartland theory. The theory proposed that whoever controls Eastern Europe controls the Heartland. It also supported the concept of world dominance.

Explanation - A more revised version explains that whoever controls the heartland, controls the world island. Whoever controls the World Island, will soon rule the world. In other words, the group or nation who dominates the heartland, can then extend its domination over a far wider area. The heartland has primarily been Central Asia, the high seas, and Eurasia.

Example - The Nazi party was in favor of the concept during World War II. The idea was very popular with the party, and they sought to achieve it. Also, the theory was accepted by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Each nation made great territorial strides toward the heartland, but to no avail.



The Rimland Theory

Definition - In 1942, Nicholas Spyman created a theory which countered Mackinder's Heartland theory. Spyman stated that Eurasia's rimland, the coastal areas, is the key to controlling the World Island.

Explanation - The rimland contains the Heartland. Whoever would control the rimland, would eventually control the World Island. Whoever would control the World Island would soon control the world.

Example - His theory was influential mainly during the Cold War. The Soviet Union desired to control the rimland around them. If accomplished, the Soviet Union would control the heartland, rimland, and the World Island.

The Domino Theory

Definition - The domino theory speculated that if one land succumbed to communism, then the surrounding would follow in domino effect. The effect suggests that some change, relatively small in itself, will cause a similar change nearby, which then will cause another similar change, and so on.

Explanation - The domino theory was a foreign policy that existed during the 1950s to the 1980s. It was primarily promoted by the United States at the time. The domino theory was used by the successive United States administrations during the Cold War to clarify the need for American intervention around the world. However, there is much controversy regarding the theory, since there is evidence that suggests the theory is true and that it is also untrue.

Example - The major evidence that supports the domino theory is the communist takeover of three Southeast Asian countries in 1975. These three countries were South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In addition, this theory can be further supported by the rise of terrorist incidents in Western Europe. In Italy, this includes the kidnapping and assassination of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro. In West Germany, this includes the terrorist actions of the Red Army Faction. Finally, terrorist actions took place in the United Kingdom, while receiving weapons from the Soviet Union.



Mahan's Sea Power Theory

Definition - Alfred Thayer Mahan believed that domination and power was associated with the sea, with its usage for trade and its control in war. He soon published his theory in his book, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, which discussed the factors needed to support and achieve sea power.

Explanation - Mahan argued that sea power was crucial in determining national supremacy. In other words, if you controlled the sea, you would control the whole world.

Example - The British Empire first adopted Mahan's theory and used the strategy to win many decisive battles. The United States also accepted Mahan's theory and used it tactically in several battles as well. Today, the United States has naval fleets stationed at sea, which also supports the theory.

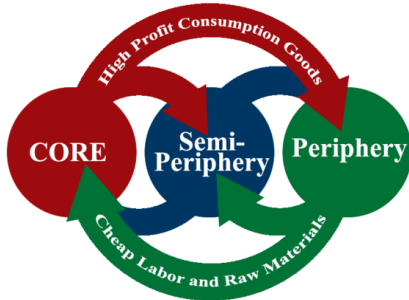


Wallerstein's World Systems Theory

Definition - The basic World-systems approach is a view of the recent five centuries of world history, as well as ideas by several theorists, to studying international relations, world history, and sociology. The world-systems theory was proposed by world-systems analyst Immanuel Wallerstein.

Explanation - Immanuel Wallerstein proposed that the world system as a set of mechanisms which distributes resources from the periphery to the core. He stated that the core is the more developed,

industrial part of the world, and the periphery is typically the raw materials-exporting, poor part of the world. The market being the means by which the core exploits the periphery. Wallerstein evaluates the World System as, “A system is defined as unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems.” In the current world system, the United States is the key core country.



Wallerstein's World System Theory Model

Federal and Unitary States

Definition - A federal state places its power in the hands of a central government, as well as its sub-state territorial units. A unitary state, however, shares its power between local and national governments.

Explanation - In a unitary state, subnational units are created as well as abolished. Their powers may even be broadened and narrowed. The small administrative divisions exercise only powers that the central government, which remains supreme, chooses to appoint. On the contrary, federal states share sovereignty with the central government. The states of the federation have an existence and power functions that can't be changed by the central government. Some countries are unitary states, but also have federal systems. These countries are considered a hybrid of the two.

Example - The United Kingdom is an example of a unitary state. Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, and England all have a degree of autonomous devolved power. However, the power is only appointed by Britain's central government. An example of a federal state is the United States. Power is shared between the federal government of the U.S. and the U.S. states individually.

