
OCR Geography A-level

Power and Borders

PMT Education

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Power and Borders

Nation States

- National sovereignty is the concept of independent nations having an organised government who have the right to make laws and regulations without other nations interfering.
- National sovereignty states vary in their ethnic, cultural and linguistic unity and this results from the history of population growth, their isolation and the role of migration. If you were to compare two countries, such as Iceland and Singapore, the differences would be a result of variations in national sovereignty.
- National borders occur due to physical geography and historical development whilst other borders are a result of colonial history which may exclude different ethnic and religious groups from having an input. This can lead to problems of sovereignty and legitimacy, leading to tensions erupting within the nation, which becomes split.
- India was ruled by the British Empire. Once they left, there were overwhelming demands from Muslims to have their own country. Punjab was the agricultural basket of India, supplying the nation's crops and food demands. After intense conflict in 1947, Punjab was partitioned; West Punjab became Pakistan.
- The partition was devastating as riots erupted and widespread looting broke out. Women were kidnapped, raped and battered by Hindus and Muslims alike and trains filled with tortured women and children would arrive between the borders of India and Pakistan daily. There were 600,000 murders in just 7 days.
- During rioting, there was mass migration; in three months East Punjab was emptied of all Muslims and West Punjab of all Sikhs and Hindus.
- India also faced further partitions when Bangladesh was separated from India.
- There are many contested borders, such as between Ukraine and Russia or India and China, whilst not all nation states are recognised, such as Taiwan. This can stimulate conflict and complicate population movements.



The Role of Nationalism in Developing the Modern World

- Nationalism is the extreme form of patriotism where one nation feels superior over other countries. 19th century nationalism was vital in the development of empires, such as the Roman Empire, but created a source of conflict as other nations became part of larger empires (the British Raj in India).
- Since 1945, many new nations emerged as empires disintegrated. Macmillan's "wind of change" speech was the first sign that the British government accepted that the Empire had collapsed. This speech was paramount in speeding up the process of African independence.
- Patterns of migration between former colonies and the imperial core country are still evident and important in changing the ethnic composition and cultural heterogeneity of those countries. Amongst its former colonies, the UK is still seen as a strong and powerful nation, with the potential of bettering the lives of migrants.



Globalisation Impacts

- Globalisation has caused a growth of low-tax state regimes which provide havens for the profits of TNCs and wealthy citizens. This is a classic example of "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer".
- Most governments have accepted the emergence of these tax-havens albeit some NGOs raising objections.
- Growing global inequalities are threatening to the sustainability of the global economic system which, if not regulated, could collapse entirely. Some governments, such as Ecuador, have thus created alternative models.



Global Organisations



- The United Nations was the first post-war IGO to be established and has grown in importance since. It has a role in global governance and peacekeeping but members of the Security Council have different geopolitical visions.
- The UN tries to ensure human rights and freedom from discrimination and abuse by supporting international justice. The UN also have a role in managing global environmental, socio-economic and political problems.
- Interventions by the UN involve economic sanctions and direct military intervention which is made to defend human rights. These interventions have a mixed record of success.

- For example, the UN forces in Congo have been accused of not providing aid after peacekeepers failed to provide assistance in Mavivi after attacks.
- In a report of 2014, Human Rights Watch accused peacekeepers of failing to respond to repeated calls for help during an attack which killed 30 people. The peacekeepers were only 9km away but arrived two day later.
- It is however reported that the UN has placed the toughest sanctions in the world on Iran which has been beneficial in driving forward peace.
- Some member states, such as the US and Russia, have worked independently from the UN in intervening in 'failed states' which impacts geopolitical relations and global stability.



The Role of IGOs

- The IMF, WB and WTO were created by world war two allied nations and have been vital in maintaining the dominance of western capitalism, global economic management and trade policy (free trade).
- Global borrowing rules and trade policies have been effective in delivering growth to the developed world, but the impact of Structural Adjustment and HIPC policies on the developing world's economies and economic sovereignty is disputed.
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- Jamaica, for example, is under massive debts and loans from the IMF and World Bank exacerbate the situation whilst preventing the nation from growing efficiently. Jamaica spends twice as much on debt repayments as it does on education and health combined. Structural adjustment programmes have not been beneficial in Jamaica. During the 1980s, the number of registered nurses fell by 60% whilst food prices increased whilst the IMF held down wages.
- Membership of global trade and financial IGOs is almost universal but regional groups have also emerged, such as NAFTA and SEATO.



IGOs Managing Environmental Problems

- Some IGOs aim to improve environmental issues such as the quality of the atmosphere and biosphere. IGOs have been involved in developing laws for managing oceans, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and international rivers, such as the Helsinki Rules. These agreements promote security, sustainability and peace.
- IGO responsibility also includes management of Antarctica as a continent of peace and security. The Antarctic Treaty System was created to prevent nations from exploiting resources and spoiling the pristine Antarctica. This helps promote biodiversity and sustainability.



National Identity

- National identity is the sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, represented by distinctive traditions, cultures and language. Each nation has an identity unique to them.
- Nationalism remains a powerful force which is reinforced through education, sport and by political parties stressing the importance of loyalty to both the institutions and the ideas of nation states.
- Education is perhaps the most powerful aspect of reinforcing nationalism as it provides a history and reasoning behind a country's success and previous triumphs. For instance, we are taught about the British Empire which, accordingly, reinforces the previous ideologies of the Britain's power and success, creating an identity.
- Identity and loyalty may be tied to distinctive legal systems, methods of governance, national 'character' or a landscape, such as The English Countryside or The Taj Mahal.



- For example, North Korea has a national identity based upon their political communist regime whilst Russia is identified by its previous political ideologies before the cold war.
- Most countries are multi-national, made of contrasting ethnic groups which poses questions on national identity and loyalty. Understanding national identity is thus a complex concept, especially in an era of globalisation. Since the world has become interconnected, is there such a thing as traditional national identity?

Challenges to National Identity

- Many UK based companies are foreign owned, such as Jaguar Land Rover, making 'Made in Britain' an increasingly complex idea. Additionally, globalisation has meant that manufacturing is now more commonly done in the east, such as within China, meaning less is actually made in the UK.
- 'Westernisation' is dominated by US cultural values through the operation of large TNCS, international organisations, retailing and entertainment. This, consequently, promotes a distinctive view of the benefits of the dominant capitalist model.
- Ownership of property, land and businesses in countries is increasingly non-national. For instance, properties in London are now being owned by wealthy citizens of Russia and Qatar. This impacts on national identity.



Consequences of Disunity within Nations

- As nations begin to disintegrate, there are strong nationalist movements seeking to create independent, smaller states whilst remaining within larger trading groups. For example, after BREXIT, Scotland deliberated on leaving the UK so that they could remain part of the European Union. Further news of this is yet to follow.
- There are significant political tensions in the BRICs and other emerging nations resulting from the uneven pattern of the costs and benefits of globalisation. For instance, China is becoming increasingly dominant on the world stage but some argue that the politics of China are showing signs of change and becoming more capitalist. This hinders their national identity as they are known for their communist principles.
- The role of the state varies and national identity is not always strong. For instance, in failed states there are differences between the political and economically powerful elites, foreign investment groups and the wider population.



Characteristics of Superpowers

→ Superpowers are states or organisations with a dominant position in the international system. They have the ability to influence events in their own interest and project power on a worldwide scale to protect these interests. The term 'superpower' was first used by T.R. Fox in 1944 in his book which examined the role of the USA, UK and the Soviet Union.



→ Superpowers primarily have economic and military power. Emerging superpowers, such as India and Brazil, have power based on their increasing economic importance and resources. Regional powers, such as Germany, have a continental influence rather than a global reach.

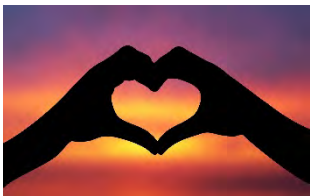


→ Power can be maintained using soft power through the spread of culture and ideology. For this, media is vital for promoting the beliefs and messages of superpowers. The current global superpower, America, uses soft power to maintain a global influence through McDonaldisation and 'Americanisation'. Soft power, though not violent, causes the erosion of traditional cultures and ideologies.

→ Hard power involves military action which is the most threatening mechanism. The USA has a military presence on every continent apart from Antarctica, with the NATO membership strengthening its military. This type of power can be seen as aggressive and hostile whilst inviting violence globally but it protects the superpower.



→ The importance of these characteristics and mechanisms for maintaining power have changed over time. Mackinder's 'Heartland Theory' states that whoever controls Europe and Asia, the largest landmasses, will gain control over the world.



→ Mackinder believed that the 'heartland' extended from Eastern Europe into Russia with there being a 'pivot' in the centre. By controlling the 'pivot', the heartland could be controlled which would ultimately lead to global power.

→ Mackinder supposed it should be Russia who controlled because of their location and resources but, since they had poor governance and many borders, they were considered weak. Instead, Britain ruled the heartland because of its economic power, industrial revolution and military power. Today however, control is less violent and more influential.

Patterns of Power

→ During the imperial era, power was maintained by colonial rule. Colonialism involved one nation carrying out:

- Ethnic cleansing
- Direct military conquest/occupation of territory
- Cultural imperialism through art, religion or language (Britain spread English, Cricket and Tea drinking)
- Economic Imperialism (e.g. exporting trade to home country)
- Challenging ownership rights



→ Colonialism finished between 1945 and 1980 when countries began gaining independence from the ruler.

→ A unipolar world is where there is only one dominant power, such as during the British Empire. A multipolar world involves three or more superpowers; a phenomenon that has been evolving since 2010 with the rise of the EU, China and USA.

→ A bipolar world involves two opposing superpowers. For instance, during the cold war, the USA challenged the USSR for global domination. This predominantly involved a clash of cultures between capitalism and communism political ideologies.



- The emergence of China and the Cold War era saw multi-faceted indirect control. Despite, political, economic and military control, neo-colonial mechanisms became more important.
- For example, both the USA and USSR refused to participate in the Olympics, began an arms race and race to launch space craft.

- Today, China has evolved as a potential rival to the USA's hegemony. China has grown significantly in economic potential, has a powerful resource base, a large population and market, increasing global outreach (member of international committees) and powerful military potential.
- Different patterns of power bring varying degrees of geopolitical stability and risk. Superpowers will face threats from emerging powers which may hinder their economy and global influence.



- Development theories can be used to explain patterns of power:

- **World Systems Theory:** This treats the world as a single unit and divides countries into cores, peripheries and semi-peripheries. This recognises that some countries are more developed (core) than others (periphery) whilst some are emerging (semi-periphery).
- **Dependency Theory:** Developing countries remain dependent on wealthier developed nations for trade.
- **Modernisation Theory:** Countries move from underdevelopment to high mass consumption.
- **Development Theory:** Colonialism is responsible for poverty's persistence as rulers exploit their subjects.



Superpower Influence on the Global Economy



- Superpowers influence the global economy by promoting free trade and capitalism, as the USA has done. This is achieved through a variety of International Governmental Organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, WTO and the World Economic Forum.
- Organski argued that superpowers set up these international organisations for their own interests. Perhaps this is supported by these organisations, particularly the World Bank and IMF, being located in the USA; the USA thus have the easiest access to their services.
- TNCs, whether public like 'Coca-Cola' or state owned such as Russia's 'Gazprom', are dominant economic forces in the global economy as they encourage economic and cultural diffusion through globalisation.
- These companies generate huge profits through trade patterns and patents, protecting their technology, which provides a boost for superpowers who can afford them. This however creates deep inequality in the world as some nations, for instance Ghana, cannot afford patented products such as medicines, impacting their health.
- TNCs have a strong role in maintaining power and wealth as they spread the ideologies of the superpower. The more TNCs a superpower owns, the wealthier and stronger the nation.
- Global culture influences are an important aspect of power as they link to economic influence and technology, for a superpower must have the means to project their beliefs and assets. Global culture is influenced through arts, food and media with their being a spread of 'westernisation' as eastern nations adopt western ideologies such as fast food, industry working and movies/television.



International Decision Making

- ➔ Superpowers play a key role in global action, such as sending aid, responding to crises, tackling climate change and resolving conflicts. It is these powerful nations that act as 'global police', working to create peace internationally.
- ➔ Alliances can be either:
 - Military based: such as NATO and ANZUS (The Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty)
 - Economically based: such as The EU, NAFTA and ASEAN
 - Environmentally based: such as the IPCC
- ➔ These alliances increase interdependence and are important in geostrategy and global influence, creating an integrated panel with a leading superpower.
- ➔ The United Nations (involving the Security Council and International Court of Justice) are important to global geopolitical stability as they carry out peacekeeping missions and hold climate change conferences.



Superpower Influence on the Physical Environment

- ➔ Superpowers consume an abundance of resources including food, fossil fuels and minerals, which exacerbates environmental degradation and contributes to global warming. Although they promote international conferences on environmental sustainability, they nonetheless consume the greatest.



- ➔ There are differences in the willingness to act to reduce carbon emissions and reach global agreements on environmental issues. The USA for instance refused to sign the

Kyoto Protocol whereas the EU have set regulations on packaging and resource consumption, trying to control their carbon footprint.

- ➔ Future growth in middle-class consumption in emerging superpowers has implications for the availability and cost of key resources such as rare earth metals, oil, staple grains and water. This could cause future competition and conflict.

