

Human Geography, AP Edition Chapter 10

Appendix 1: AP Human Geography Topic IV.C.3. Supranationalism and International Alliances

While states are generally considered to be the basic building blocks of the international system, very few truly go it alone. Even the hermit kingdom of North Korea has a few alliances, most notably with the People's Republic of China. Alliances are often formalized agreements and can serve many functions. The most common would be a military alliance where one country would pledge to assist another in case of attack. An economic alliance promises to facilitate trade with another country through minimizing tariffs and other impediments. The establishment of these alliances in a multi-state framework has resulted in several *international organizations*. For example, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was developed after World War II to counter the threat of the Soviet Union and its allies, which in turn were organized under the umbrella of the Warsaw Pact.



NATO is composed of the United States, Canada, and most European countries [see map right]. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO expanded to include many Warsaw Pact countries and even three former Soviet Republics. Another example is the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) which is an economic alliance composed of the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Networks of alliances mark what might be described as *supranationalism*, where three or more states come together to work towards a common goal. NATO and NAFTA define more limited forms of supranationalism, based around a single objective (defense and economic trade respectively). The European Union (EU) constitutes the best example of supranationalism today in that it brings together many separate countries to achieve several goals.



The EU began as a free trade grouping and a common market that freely moved goods across member borders. It has since expanded to encompass a political, monetary and cultural union and it has enlarged to include most countries in Europe [see map]. Two of the hallmarks of the EU are the common currency of the Euro and the free border-crossing of the Schengen agreement. These are not shared by all members of the EU but show what a truly supranational organization can accomplish.

Appendix 2: AP Human Geography Topic IV.C.6. Armed Conflicts, War, and Terrorism

Political and military geographers are keenly interested in the geography of armed conflict, war, and terrorism, but defining and mapping these can be difficult. When does a conflict become a war? How many people need to be killed before something can be classified as a conflict? What defines a terrorist group? A group might be considered freedom fighters by one government and terrorists by another. So, geographers working on the spatial pattern of these issues have to clearly define what they are investigating at the outset. Because conflict may be sparked by ethnic, social, economic, environmental, or political stressors, understanding war and its geography is extremely complicated. Recently, many scholars have looked more closely at the issue of environmental security, or how environmental problems may lead to conflict. Desertification, deforestation, climate change, and water scarcity can all push societies to war.

Several organizations maintain databases of conflict that geographers may access. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) defines an active conflict as 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year between two groups. They also record instances of “one-sided violence” in which a group unilaterally kills at least 25 civilians in a year. The UCDP database is available at <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/search.php>. Even a cursory exploration of the data shows that nearly all regions of the world have experienced conflict in recent decades. The IISS Armed Conflict Database at <https://acd.iiss.org/> is also publically viewable.

Terrorist groups are generally defined by individual countries as well as supranational organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union. Because of this, not all countries will agree on which groups or states are terrorists. Designation of a group or state as a terrorist group by a country or other organization may trigger sanctions or other adverse actions. In the United States, a list of foreign terrorist organizations is maintained by the Department of State and can be viewed at <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>.