# GE1350:03

# Society, Space and Environment

Friday 3rd May 2002

## Essay Topic (C)

*Since World War 2, the United Nations estimates that at least 40% of the world's countries have been involved in some border dispute with neighbouring countries. Discuss the different types of border disputes that have occurred over the last fifty years and explain how such conflicts have had an impact upon the geography of borderlands.*

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PG

Avoid use of personal pronouns in essays

## INTRODUCTION

Boundary lines, or frontiers, can become the centre cause of disputes between neighbours as they create many possibilities and provocations for conflicts. Currently the earth's land is divided into over 150 sovereign political units, and worldwide, there are at least 100 officially recognised boundary disputes at any given time (Bhattarai, 2001). Prescott (1987, p. 100) states that the two most common circumstances that have promoted the occurrence of boundary disputes are the conclusions of wars and decolonisation. The two are inextricably linked to the amplification in the amount and extension of border disputes around the globe. Geographers have classified these conflicts into four main categories: namely territorial, positional, functional and resource-orientated disputes. This essay will explore fifty years of these disputes, together with their detrimental effect on the geography of the transition zones within which the boundary lies, the zone that geographers call a border or borderland. I will examine each variety of conflict, from territorial disputes to resource-orientated disputes, and give examples of each type of dispute to illustrate. This essay will also discuss how a boundary influences both the landscapes of which it is a part and the development of the policies of the states on either side.

good

Excellent introduction

## BOUNDARIES

According to Fellmann, Getis and Getis (1999, p.455), boundaries are essentially lines that ascertain the limit of each state's jurisdiction and authority. There are six major types of boundaries, and these include physical, ethnic, antecedent, subsequent, superimposed/discordant and relict boundaries (Fellmann et al 1999, p.455). Some brief examples of each of these types of frontiers include the Rhine River, the division between Northern Ireland and Eire, the United States- Canada boundary, the borders between France, Belgium and Germany, the borders between East and West Germany, and lastly, the North and South Vietnam boundary. Fundamentally, boundaries indicate where the sovereignty of one state ends and that of another begins (Fellmann et al 1999, p. 455). Ancel (in Prescott 1989, p. 10) espouses the notion that boundaries may also be seen as temporary lines where opposed power of neighbouring states is neutralised.

good

good

You need to review your understanding of the use of colon(:) & semi-colon(;)

## TERRITORIAL BORDER DISPUTES

Territorial border disputes are essentially conflicts between countries over the possession of a particular region. As the global population continues to grow and competition for natural resources increases, so too does the potential for territorial disputes. These conflicts arise when one government requests another to cede certain territory. Such disputes are rarely settled quickly and may last for a very long time (Prescott 1987, p. 152). Usually, when borders are superimposed upon the cultural landscape, ethnic groups become divided, and this can become major grounds for discord. Territorial disputes are considered to be one of the most widespread forms of border disputes. Some of the more significant territorial disputes over the last fifty years have ~~occurred~~ between Somalia and Ethiopia, which have had many disagreements over Somalis living in Ethiopia; Pakistan and India, who are both fighting for ownership of Kashmir; and perhaps the most prevalent example is the present (yet deep-rooted) conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslim Arabs (Bhattarai, 2001 ; Rabinovich, 1999).

excellent point

by whom?

included:

Excellent use of examples to illustrate your argument

The Arab-Israeli conflict has undeniably been one of the more complex international problems of the second half of the twentieth century. It is a classic conflict between two national movements claiming title to and vying for possession of the same land (Rabinovich, 1999). Since 1948, when the land of Palestine was carved up to facilitate the creation of the Jewish state of Israel, conflict has been rife between the Palestinians and the Israelis with on-going, and what seems interminable, territorial border dispute. Newman (2000) argues that, at a superficial level, the conflict is all about the tangible dimensions of territory—namely, the location of the border, the removal of Jewish settlements, the rights of refugee return, and the amount of territory to be controlled by the Israeli and Palestinian States respectively. While Fellmann, Getis and Getis (1999, p. 165) claim that the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was a fulfilment of the goal of Zionism, Rabinovich (1999) asserts that from the Arab perspective, Israel was an illegitimate state that threatened the Arab world culturally and geopolitically. Zalot (2001) affirms that the search for peace is no closer today than it has been for the last half a century.

Good comparing of sources

For these examples of territorial disputes, along with many others, the effects on the geography of their borderlands are fundamentally concurrent. They all have resulted in such tribulations as hunger, disease,

You have supplied nothing correct. What are the borderland impacts? too general

malnutrition, land mining, terrorist acts, ethnic destruction, economic collapse and much physical devastation. Prescott (1989, p. 131) contends, that a friction in a borderland, not controlled quickly, can spread widely and do much damage. The 1985 famine in Ethiopia and Somalia, a nuclear arms race between Pakistan and India, and three Arab-Israeli wars are all testaments to this. With regards to Israel/Palestine, the effects are made quite clear on figures 1 and 2, which show how the disputes have changed the geography quite substantially over the years.

excellent

good reference to figure

POSITIONAL BORDER DISPUTES

Positional border disputes occur when two states are both opposed to the interpretation of the documents that define their particular boundary. The most common cause is the presence of ambiguous phrases in the delimitation of a boundary that has never been demarcated (Prescott 1987, p. 152). Specifically, the boundary may have been drawn up when a diminution of tension was foremost on people's mind, above accuracy (Bhattarai, 2001). Positional disputes arise when the evolution of the boundary is incomplete, and conflicts emerge as the population augments, further resources are unearthed, and the boundary consequently becomes more significant. The current conflict between the two South American nations of Chile and Argentina has been classed as a positional border dispute (Fellmann et al, 1999 p.457). The border was drawn along the Andes to the tip of the continent. However, because at the time of the boundary's creation, this particular area had not been thoroughly explored, people did not realise that the two do not effectively concur (Fellman et al 1999, p. 457).

More examples of positional border disputes involve India and Pakistan, and also Turkey and the Kurdish nation. Rygiel (1998, p. 109) suggests that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent reformation of the nation of Turkey failed to recognise the Kurdish people as an independent minority with rights. These borderlands are considered as 'problem areas' and the Kurdish nation remains a state-less nation that is scattered over six various states (refer to figure 3). With regards to the impacts upon the borderlands of the above countries involved in these recent positional border disputes, the outcomes are much the ~~same~~ perhaps somewhat less severe as those for territorial disputes.

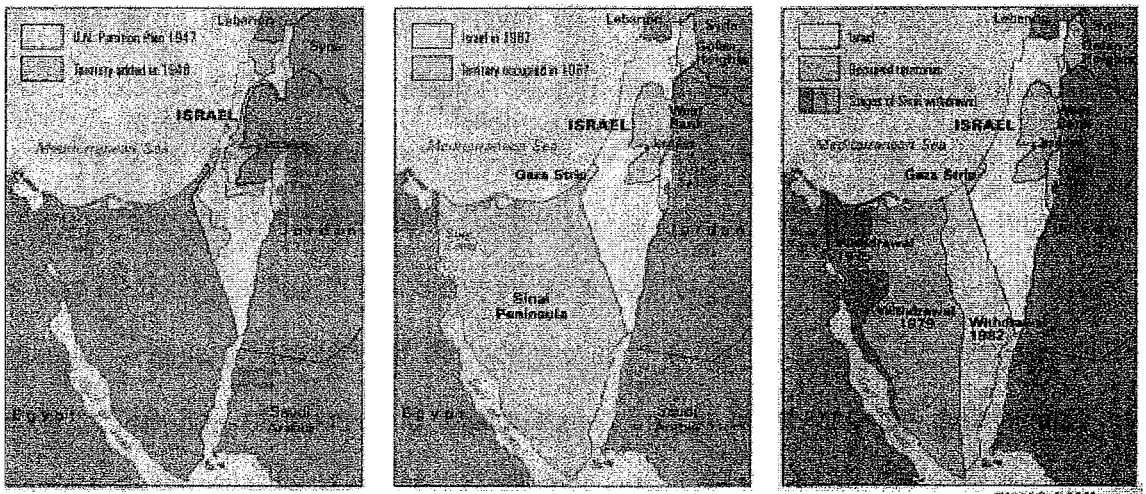
good critical comment — can you suggest why they might be less severe?



Too vague. What are the actual impacts.

Figure 1

The changing borders of Palestine/Israel




**In the 1948 War,** Israel gained much territory in addition to the area that had been given to it by the United Nations (UN) Partition Plan of 1947.

**The 1967 War** resulted in Israel's occupation of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip, Jordan's West Bank, and Syria's Golan Heights.

**Israel Withdrew from the Sinai** in three stages. It pulled back from parts of the peninsula in 1975 and 1979 and completed its withdrawal in 1982.

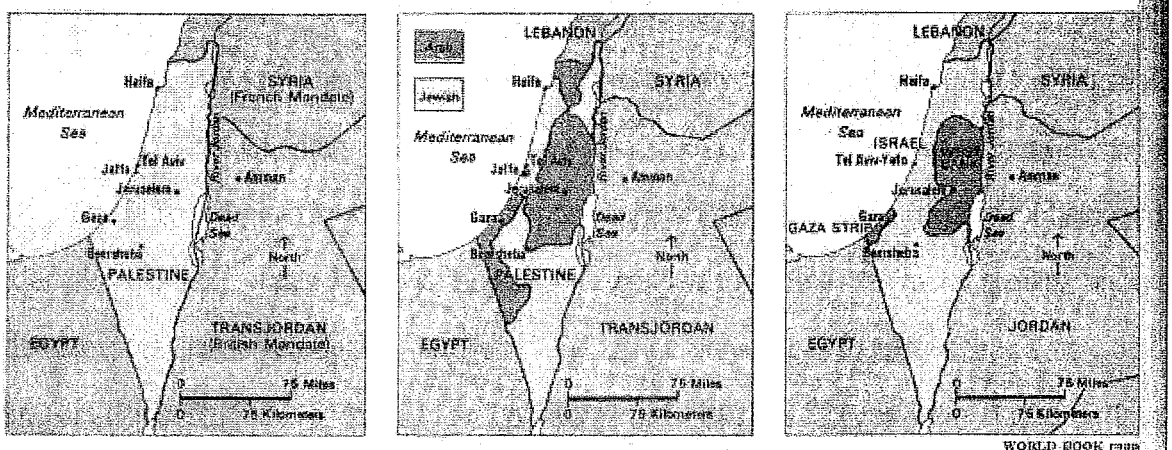
Source: World Book Encyclopedia 1987, volume 10, p.392 ✓

Figure 2

The changing territories of Palestine/Israel

**Palestine**

The maps below show important stages in Palestine since World War I (1914-1918). In 1920, Palestine—then a part of the Ottoman Empire—became a mandated territory of Great Britain. The establishment of Israel in 1948 increased the conflicts between Arabs and Jews in the area.




**The British Mandate of Palestine** is shown above as it existed in 1923. From 1920 to 1923, the mandate also included the Transjordan mandate to the east.

**The United Nations Partition Plan** of 1947 divided Palestine into Arab and Jewish areas. The Jewish area became the independent nation of Israel in 1948.

**Palestine Today** consists of the independent nation of Israel and two Arab areas occupied by Israel since 1967—Egypt's Gaza Strip and Jordan's West Bank.

Source: World Book Encyclopedia 1987, volume 15, p.86 ✓



Well done!

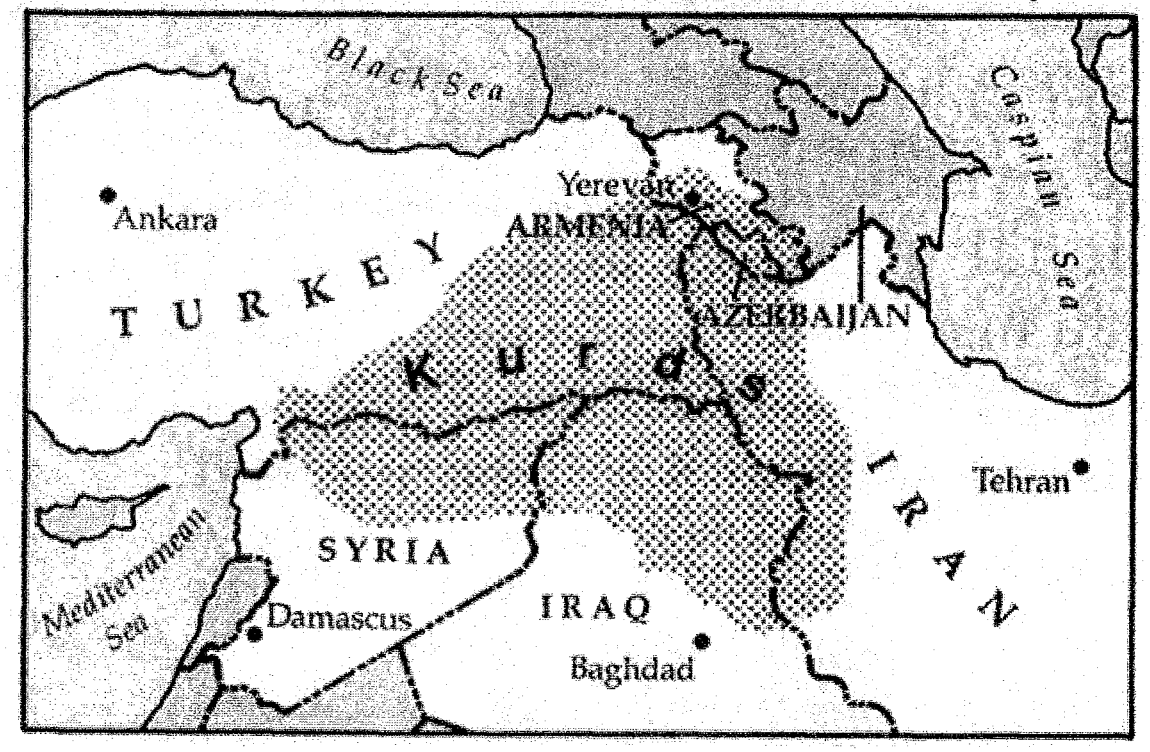
## FUNCTIONAL BORDER DISPUTES

Functional disputes occur when there is discord regarding the national policies that are pertained along a common border. Conflict can arise over land use, location policies, immigration, and custom regulations. Recent international functional border disputes include conflicts between Honduras and El Salvador -- which worsened in the late 1970s when Honduras expelled illegal Salvadorian farmers (Fellmann et all, 1999 p. 458), and also Turkey, Syria and Iraq, and USA and Mexico. United States' relations with Mexico have been severely affected by the increasing number of illegal aliens and the flow of drugs entering the United States from Mexico (Bhattarai, 2002). Slowe (1990, p. 127) suggests that the growth of the drugs trade was a trigger for a severe tightening of the administration of the boundary: the administration being the decisions on the flow of labour and capital across the boundary and the management of the local environment. As the administration of the boundary changed, so too did its character; the increased degree of difficulty in crossing the border, resulted in a less frequent exchange of people, therefore affecting the perceptions held by the those of one side towards those of the other (Slowe, 1990, p. 127).

## RESOURCE-ORIENTATED BORDER DISPUTES

Resource-orientated border disputes, which are closely related to territorial conflicts, involve dissent over a particular resource. Some recent examples include the oil disputes between Kuwait and Iraq, and the unrelenting skirmishing over the Spratly Islands' riches. The nations of Iraq and Kuwait are each fighting for the oil reserves embedded beneath their boundary; the boundary that was drawn up by the United Kingdom after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (~~Iraq Sanctions,~~ 2002). Iraq's justification of invasion in 1990 was that Kuwait had allegedly extracted oil from a deposit beneath the Iraq-Kuwait border that belonged to Iraq (Iraq Sanctions, 2002). Iraq's claim to Kuwait was connected to the desire to acquire an area with considerable potential for producing petroleum and at the same time to extend Iraq's coastline to the Persian Gulf (Prescott 1987, p. 102). After the invasion of Kuwait, sanctions were placed on Iraq, which have caused Iraq's poor to suffer immeasurably and Iraq's ecology to suffer greatly (Iraq ~~Sanctions,~~ 2002). The Spratly Islands, which are scattered over a UK-sized area of the South China Sea, also are the origin of much contention due to their extremely rich oil deposits (Dzurek, 2002). With claims being placed by

Figure 3
The concentration of Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan




Source: Fellmann, Getis, & Getis 1999 p.446

Excellent map.

such countries as Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam, the Spratly Islands certainly are, what Dzurek (2002) describes as, the most contested real estate in the world.

be careful with statements like this - Dzurek might think so, but do you agree? What about the suffering that has taken place for Kosovo? Bosnia? Croatia...?

## CONCLUSION

This essay has discussed the different types of border disputes and their consequent effects on the geography of the borderlands. Of all these disputes, it seems that territorial and resource-orientated disputes are the most common border conflict, and cause the most detrimental effects on the borderlands. Although border disputes have existed for many millennia, the last fifty years have witnessed a great deal of intensification in the extent of conflict regarding state boundaries. In fact, since World War II, almost half of the world's sovereign states have been involved in border disputes with neighbouring countries (Fellmann et al 1999, p. 456). According to Rumley & Minghi (1991, p. 9), after the Second World War, boundary changes exhibited an inconsistency between functional and ethnic considerations. Not only have the last fifty years seen a frighteningly substantial number of wars and immense decolonisation, but they have also witnessed the greatest promulgation of national borders in the history of human kind. The fact that the number of countries in the world has progressed from 70 in 1939, to 238 in 2001 is testament to this (Fellmann et al, 1999 pp. 447-448).

Good critical comment - such as...

excellent.

→ You have not completed this task effectively.

## REFERENCES

If you decide to reference this way: using 'Anonymous' as the author, then you have to use (Anonymous, 2002) in the text.


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*Israel,* in 'The World Book Encyclopedia', volume 15, pp. 85-87, World Book Inc., USA.


↑ alphabetical order in list.

## GE 1350:03 SOCIETY, SPACE & ENVIRONMENT

## ESSAY FEEDBACK FORM

This form aims to provide you with feedback on the effectiveness of the key components of your essay: argument; sources and their use; presentation and structure.

**Name**: _____

**Topic**: BORDER DISPUTES AND BORDERLANDS

1. Argument 20 — 14

- Address the assigned topic — well focused, but needs more consideration of borderlands
- Present a clear and logical line of argument which reaches a conclusion - clear and logical
- Presents a range of arguments (depth of coverage)
- Critical analysis — needs more critical comment
- Introduction sets the broader picture or background — extremely well

2. Overall readability and expression 15 — 14

- Free from errors of grammar, spelling & punctuation — extremely well written
- Written in a scholarly style, which demonstrates command of discipline vocabulary, clarity of expression, fluency & succinctness — excellent academic style
- Avoids colloquial expression
- Effective paragraphs — very effective

3. Sources and their use 10 — 8

- Utilised material from sources with academic standing including journals and professional periodicals — good use of academic books
- Demonstrates wide and varied reading on the topic — needs journals
- Cites all material used appropriately according to the Harvard system or footnote system — very wide reading — generally very good

4. Illustrative material 5 — 4

- Relevance of maps, tables of data or diagrams — three excellent maps
- Correctly labelled illustrative material (ie titles & source) — beautifully presented

TOTAL (50) 40 % 20/25 %

DISTINCTION