

# Territorial Morphology

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### ➤ Territorial Morphology

- Relationship between a state's geographic shape, size, relative location, and its political situation

- 5 basic shapes

- Compact
- Elongated
- Prorupted
- Perforated
- Fragmented

### ➤ Shape of states

- Controls the length of its boundaries with other states
  - Shape affects potential for communication and conflict with neighbors
- Shape is part of its identity
- Shape can determine the difficulty or ease of internal administration and social unity

# Compact States

- **Definition:**

- the distance from the center to any boundary does not vary significantly
  - Theoretically would be shaped in a circle or square
- Capital at center and shortest boundaries to defend
- Often the political ideal
- Compactness is a beneficial characteristic for most smaller states
  - Good for communications
  - Does not necessarily means peace



# Elongated States

## ➤ Definition:

- states with long and narrow shape

## ➤ Problems:

- May suffer from poor internal communications and transportation
- Region at north or south end may be isolated
- Capital may lose influence over one end of the elongation

## ➤ Examples:

- Chile, Malawi, Italy, Gambia



# Prorupted States

- **Definition:**

- Also called protruded
  - compact state with large protruding extension
- Prorptions created for two reasons
  - Can provide access to a resource
  - Separate two states that would otherwise share a boundary

- **Problems**

- Protruding piece might be separated from core

- **Examples:**

- Congo, Namibia, Afghanistan, Thailand



# Perforated States

- Definition:

- A state that completely surrounds another one
  - “has a hole punched out”

- Problems

- Relationship between the perforated state and perforating state can cause tension

- Example

- South Africa
  - Completely surrounds state of Lesotho
    - Depends entirely on South Africa for import and export of goods





# Landlocked States

- Lacks a direct route to the sea because it is completely surrounded by several other countries
  - Direct access to ocean is critical for trading
    - Must use another country's seaport
- Most common in Africa
  - 14 countries landlocked
  - Remnant of colonial era
    - Built railroads, but now they run through several independent countries



# Internal Political Organization of States

- A state's size and cultural composition are also factors in its political situation and internal organization
- States are smaller in geographic size and population may be more politically unified, but not always
  - Microstate is a very small state
    - Such as Singapore
  - Often have a unitary government structure
- The governments of states are organized according to one of two approaches
  - Unitary state
    - Power is concentrated in the central government
  - Federal state
    - Allocates strong power to units of local government within the country



# Unitary vs. Federal

## • Unitary state

- Works best in nation-states with few cultural differences
  - Strong sense of unity
- Requires effective communications
  - Smaller states more likely to adopt it
    - Common in Europe
- Some multinational states have adopted it
  - Can impose value of nationality
    - Kenya, Rwanda

## • Federal state

- Federal states have local governments that adopt their own laws
  - Can empower nationalities in multinational states
  - Different names
    - States, provinces, estados
- Suitable for larger states
  - United States, Russia, Canada, Brazil, India
  - Where capital is far away
- Size doesn't matter though
  - Belgium= federal
  - China= unitary

# Confederation Structure

- Definition

- Structure in which a weak central government exists with regional governments holding the majority of power
- Or a group of states united for a common purpose
  - Articles of Confederation was the first document binding together the 13 American colonies
  - Confederacy during Civil War



# Trend toward Federal Government

➤ In recent years there has been a strong global trend toward Federal government.

## ➤ France

- Good example of nation-state
  - Long tradition of Unitary government
- Recently giving more authority to departments and communes

## • Poland

- Switched from Unitary to Federal government after fall of Communist rule
  - Lack of local government led to breakdown of infrastructure
- 1999 adopted a three-tier system of local government
- Transition difficult
  - Lack of experience
  - Thousands of positions

# Political Enclaves and Exclaves

## Enclaves

- Territorial enclave is a state, or part of a state, surrounded completely by another state
  - Lesotho is an enclave surrounded by South Africa
  - West Berlin was an enclave within the state of East Germany



## Exclaves

- When an enclave is land that is a political extension of another state, then it is called an exclave
  - Alaska is an exclave of the United States because it is cut off from the rest of the country by Canada

