

STRUCTURE OF STATES

8.4 Shapes of States

- A state has one of five basic shapes.
- States that have no water boundary are landlocked.

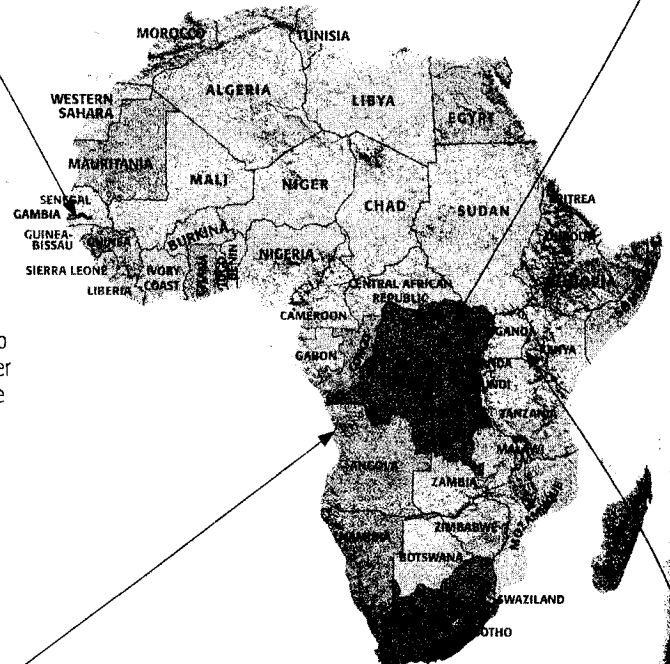
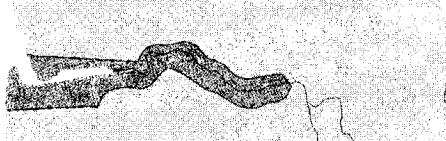
The physical shape of a state, such as the outline of the United States or Canada, is part of its unique identity. The shape of a state can influence the ease or difficulty of internal administration and can affect social unity. The shape affects the potential for communication and conflict with neighbors.

Countries have one of five basic shapes—compact, prorupted, elongated, fragmented, and perforated. Examples of each can be seen in southern Africa. Each shape displays distinctive characteristics and challenges.

8.4.1 GAMBIA: AN ELONGATED STATE

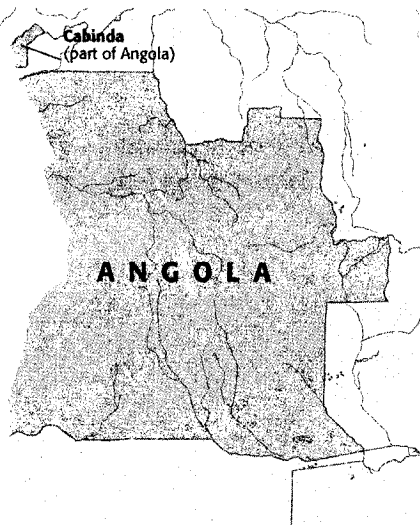
There are a handful of **elongated states**, or states with a long and narrow shape. In West Africa, Gambia is an elongated state extending along the banks of the Gambia River about 500 kilometers (300 miles) east–west but only about 25 kilometers (15 miles) north–south. Except for its short coastline along the Atlantic Ocean, Gambia is otherwise completely surrounded by Senegal. The shape of the two countries is a legacy of competition among European countries to establish colonies during the nineteenth century. Gambia became a British colony, whereas Senegal was French. The border between the two countries divided families and ethnic groups but was never precisely delineated, so people trade and move across the border with little concern for its location.

GAMBIA



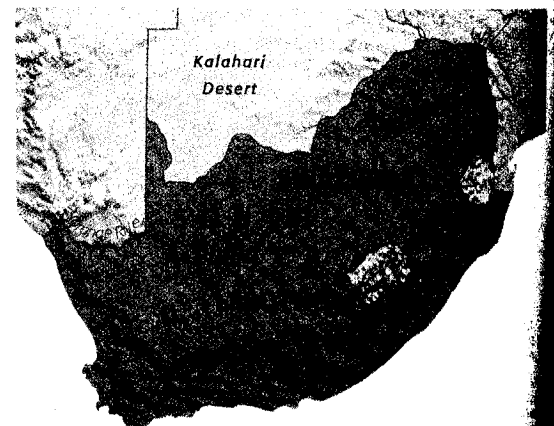
8.4.2 ANGOLA: A FRAGMENTED STATE

A **fragmented state** includes several discontinuous pieces of territory. Technically, all states that have offshore islands as part of their territory are fragmented. However, fragmentation is particularly significant for some states. There are two kinds of fragmented states—those with areas separated by water, and those separated by an intervening state. A difficult type of fragmentation occurs if the two pieces of territory are separated by another state. Picture the difficulty of communicating between Alaska and the lower 48 states if Canada were not a friendly neighbor. All land connections between Alaska and the rest of the United States must pass through a long expanse of Canada. The division of Angola into two pieces by Congo's proruption creates a fragmented state.



8.4.3 SOUTH AFRICA: A PERFORATED STATE

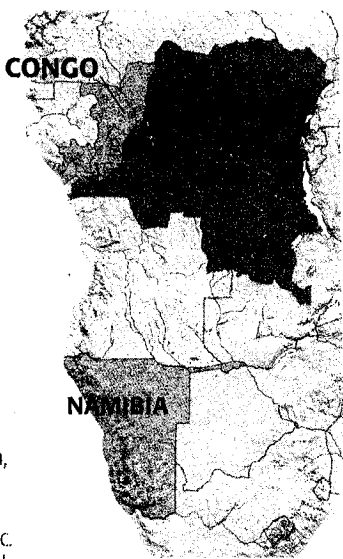
A state that completely surrounds another one is a **perforated state**. The one good example of a perforated state is South Africa, which completely surrounds the state of Lesotho. Lesotho must depend entirely on South Africa for the import and export of goods. Dependency on South Africa was especially difficult for Lesotho when South Africa had a government controlled by whites who discriminated against the black majority population.



8.4.4 CONGO AND NAMIBIA: PRORUPTED STATES

An otherwise compact state with a large projecting extension is a **prorupted state**. Prorptions are created for two principal reasons. First, a prorruption can provide a state with access to a resource, such as water. When the Belgians gained control of the Congo, they carved out a westward prorruption about 500 kilometers (300 miles) long. The prorruption, which followed the Zaire (Congo) River, gave the colony access to the Atlantic. The prorruption also divided the Portuguese colony of Angola (now an independent state) into two discontinuous fragments 50 kilometers (30 miles) apart. The northern fragment, called Cabinda, constitutes less than 1 percent of Angola's total land area.

In their former colony of South West Africa (now Namibia), the Germans in 1890 carved out a 500-kilometer (300-mile) prorruption to the east. This prorruption, known as the Caprivi Strip, provided the Germans with access to one of Africa's most important rivers, the Zambezi. The Caprivi Strip also disrupted communications among the British colonies of southern Africa. South Africa, which controlled Namibia from the 1910s until its independence in 1990, stationed troops in the Caprivi Strip to fight enemies in Angola, Zambia, and Botswana.

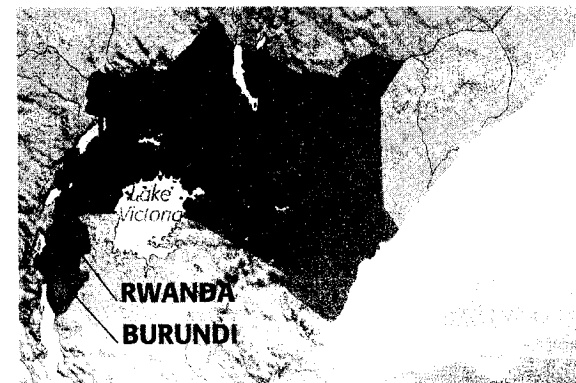


LANDLOCKED STATES

A landlocked state lacks a direct outlet to the sea because it is completely surrounded by several other countries. Landlocked states are most common in Africa, where 14 of the continent's 54 states have no direct ocean access. The prevalence of landlocked states in Africa is a remnant of the colonial era, when Britain and France controlled extensive regions.

The European powers built railroads, mostly in the early twentieth century, to connect the interior of Africa with seaports. Railroads moved minerals from interior mines to seaports, and in the opposite direction, rail lines carried mining equipment and supplies from seaports to the interior. Now that the British and French empires are gone and former colonies have become independent states, some important colonial railroad lines pass through several independent countries. This has created new landlocked states, which must cooperate with neighboring states that have seaports.

Direct access to an ocean is critical to states because it facilitates international trade. Bulky goods, such as petroleum, grain, ore, and vehicles, are normally transported long distances by ship. This means that a country needs a seaport where goods can be transferred between land and sea. To send and receive goods by sea, a landlocked state must arrange to use another country's seaport.



8.4.5 SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: SEVERAL COMPACT STATES

In a **compact state**, the distance from the center to any boundary does not vary significantly. The ideal theoretical compact state would be shaped like a circle, with the capital at the center and the shortest possible boundaries to defend. Compactness is a beneficial characteristic for most smaller states, because good communications can be more easily established to all regions, especially if the capital is located near the center. Examples of compact states in southern African include Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. However, compactness does not necessarily mean peacefulness, as compact states are just as likely as others to experience civil wars and ethnic rivalries.

