

Federalism and Democracy

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- Principles of federalism and democracy
 - Different variations of democracy
 - Different variations of federalism
 - Similarities and differences between Federalism and Democracy

None-democratic regimes

- Democratic regimes-----semi-democratic regimes-----totalitarian regime
- From transitional democracy to consolidating democracy to well-established democracy

Federalism: Territorial arrangements

Relations between union and state

- Unitary (power is concentrated under central/union government)
China, current Myanmar
- Federal (union and states share power) e.g. Australia, Canada, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Brazil, India, Mexico
- Confederate (states have greater power authority) US (1777-1787)
- Secession----separation from existing state

Secession -----Confederate----Federal-----
---unitary

Principles of Federalism and Democracy

- Democracy is a political system based on the rule of people (representatives elected by majority rule)
- Federalism refers to territorial arrangement and power-sharing; check and balance of power between federal and regional governments
- Democracy is rule by majority, not necessarily on the minority rights
- Federalism addresses minority rights
- Both oppose power concentration in the hands of one person/group or unelected individuals; focuses on responsiveness and accountability to citizens



There are different kinds of democracy and federalism in the world

There are different definitions for democracy, ranging from minimum definition (competitive elections) to maximum (rule of law, freedom of speech/assembly)

That's why some countries are referred to as “semi-democracy”, “quasi-democracy”, “illiberal democracy”, “Asian-style democracy”, “

Democracy

Minimum level definition (illiberal democracy)

- Competitive (multiparty, free and fair) elections
- Rule by the people, by the majority of the people,

Liberal democracy (liberal democracy)

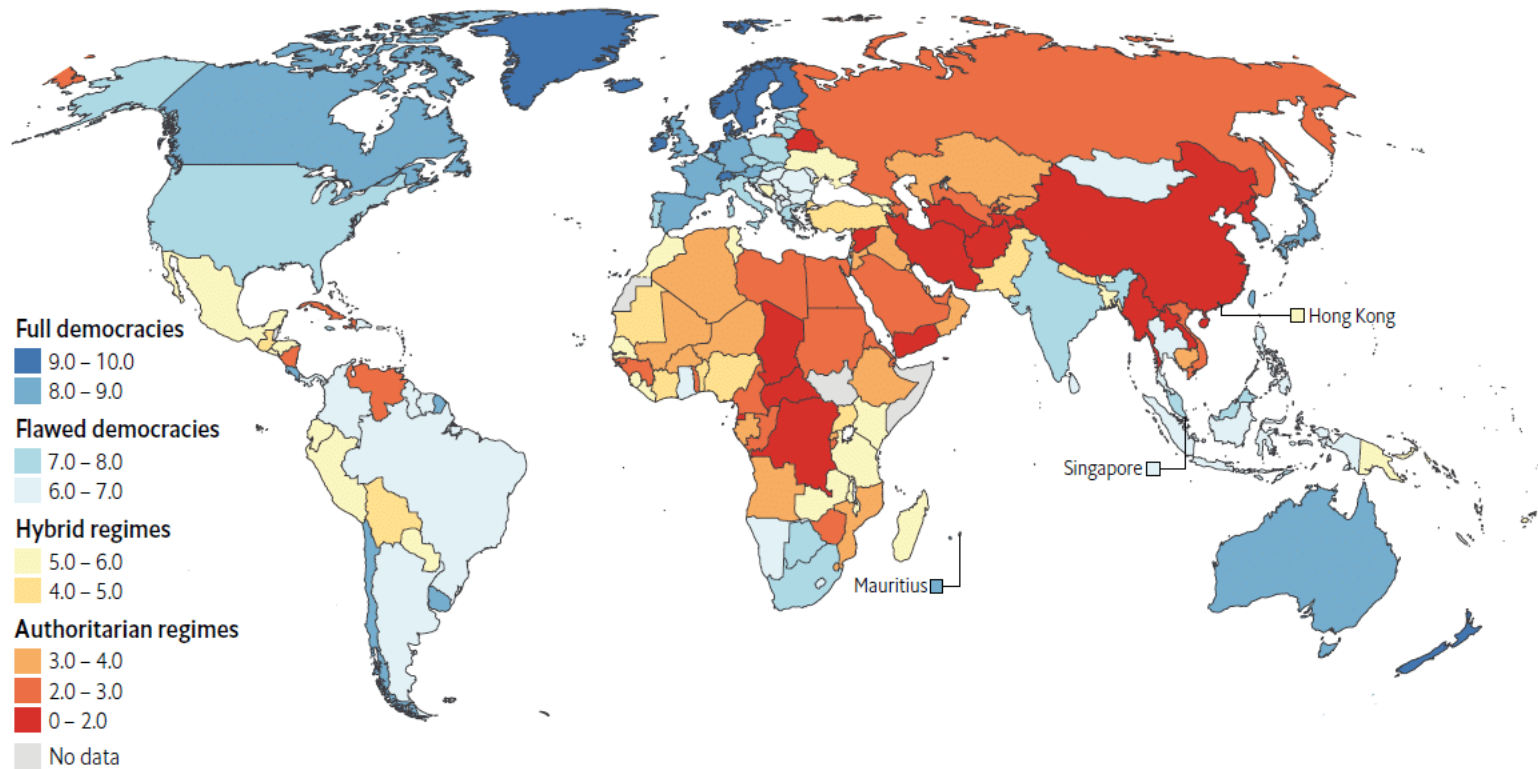
- Rule of law (not by whims of individuals)
- Freedom of speech/assembly; freedom of media
- Individual rights
- Check and balance of power (executive, judiciary, legislature)
- Inclusivity and tolerance for diversity (women, ethnic and religious minorities)
- Equality of rights
- Peaceful transition of power

Non-Democratic regions

- A person or group in control of power (no term limit); leadership passes down generation
- No elections or limited elections
- Separation of three branches
- Restrictions on media, political parties, freedom of expression
- Rule by repression; no rule of law
- Military, monarchy, theocracy, one party dictatorship,

The Economic Intelligence unit

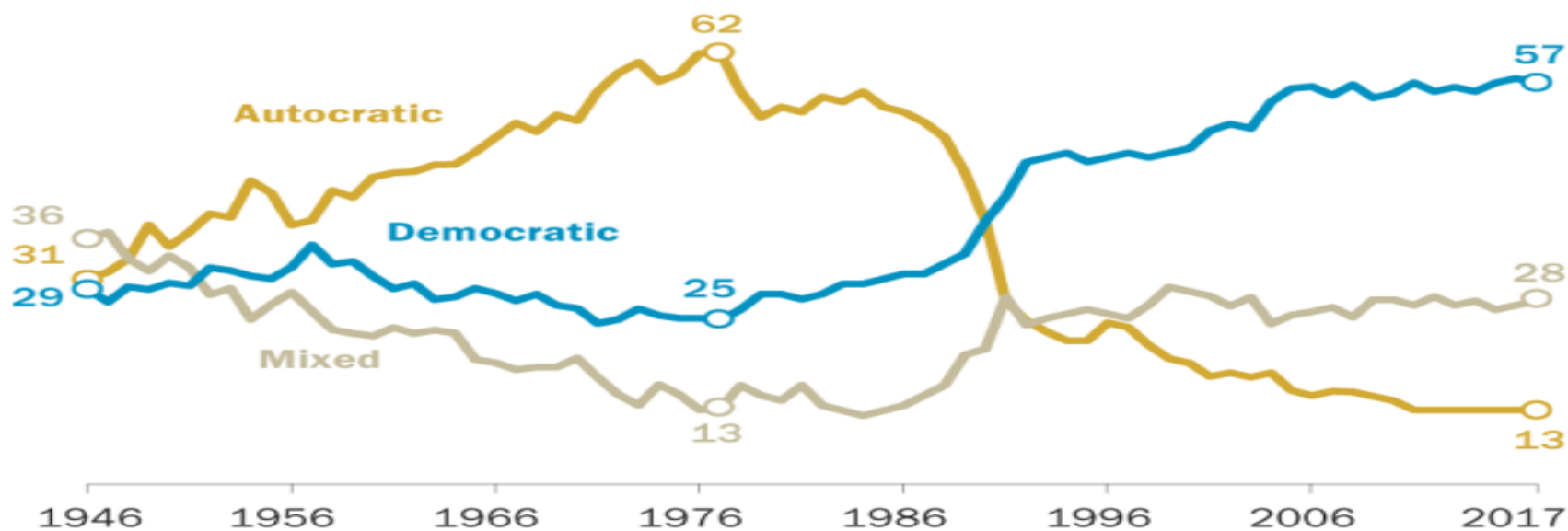
Democracy Index 2022, global map by regime type



Source: EIU.

More than half of governments are democracies

% of countries under each regime type, 1946-2017



Note: Data available only for 167 countries included in the Polity IV database. Countries labeled "mixed" have a blend of democratic and autocratic regime characteristics.

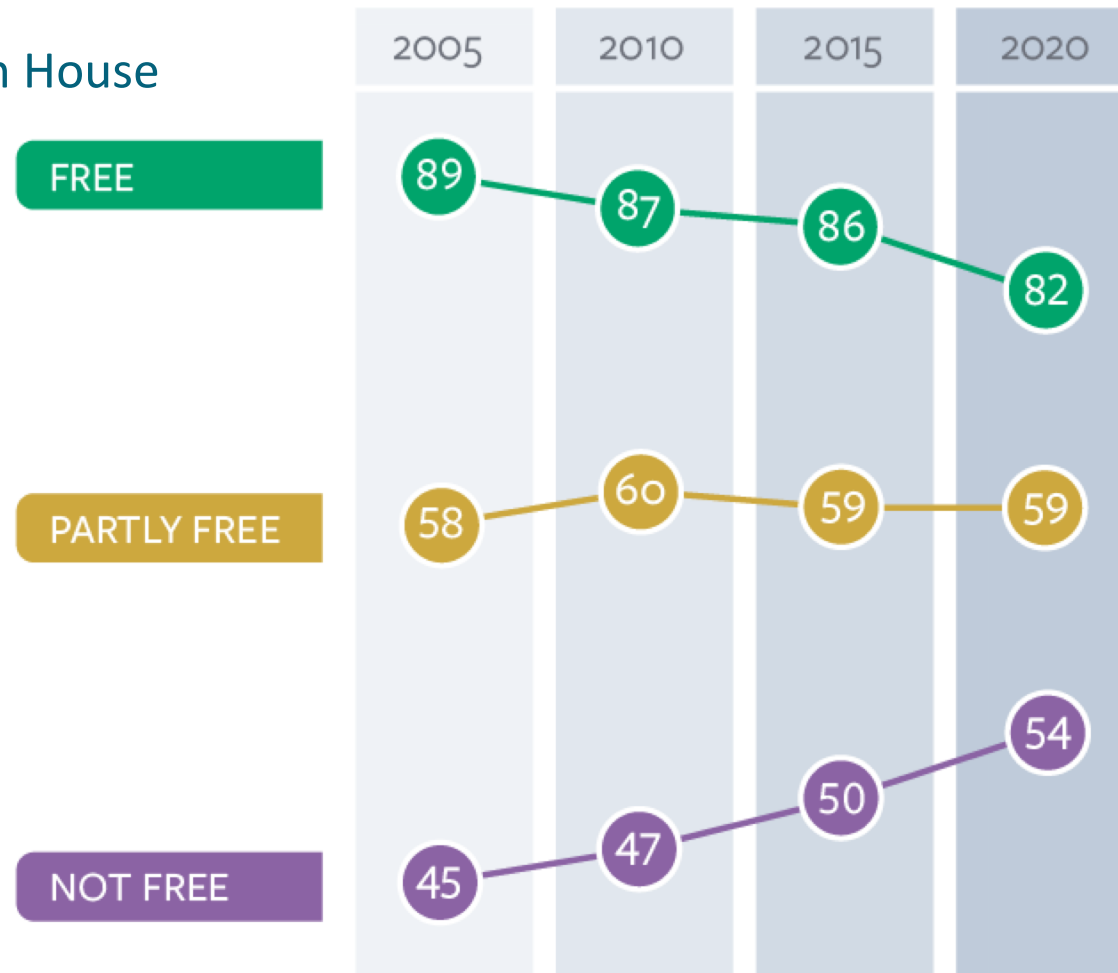
Source: Center for Systemic Peace's Polity IV Project.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A Shifting International Balance

In 2020, the number of Free countries in the world reached its lowest level since the beginning of a 15-year period of global democratic decline, while the number of Not Free countries reached its highest level.

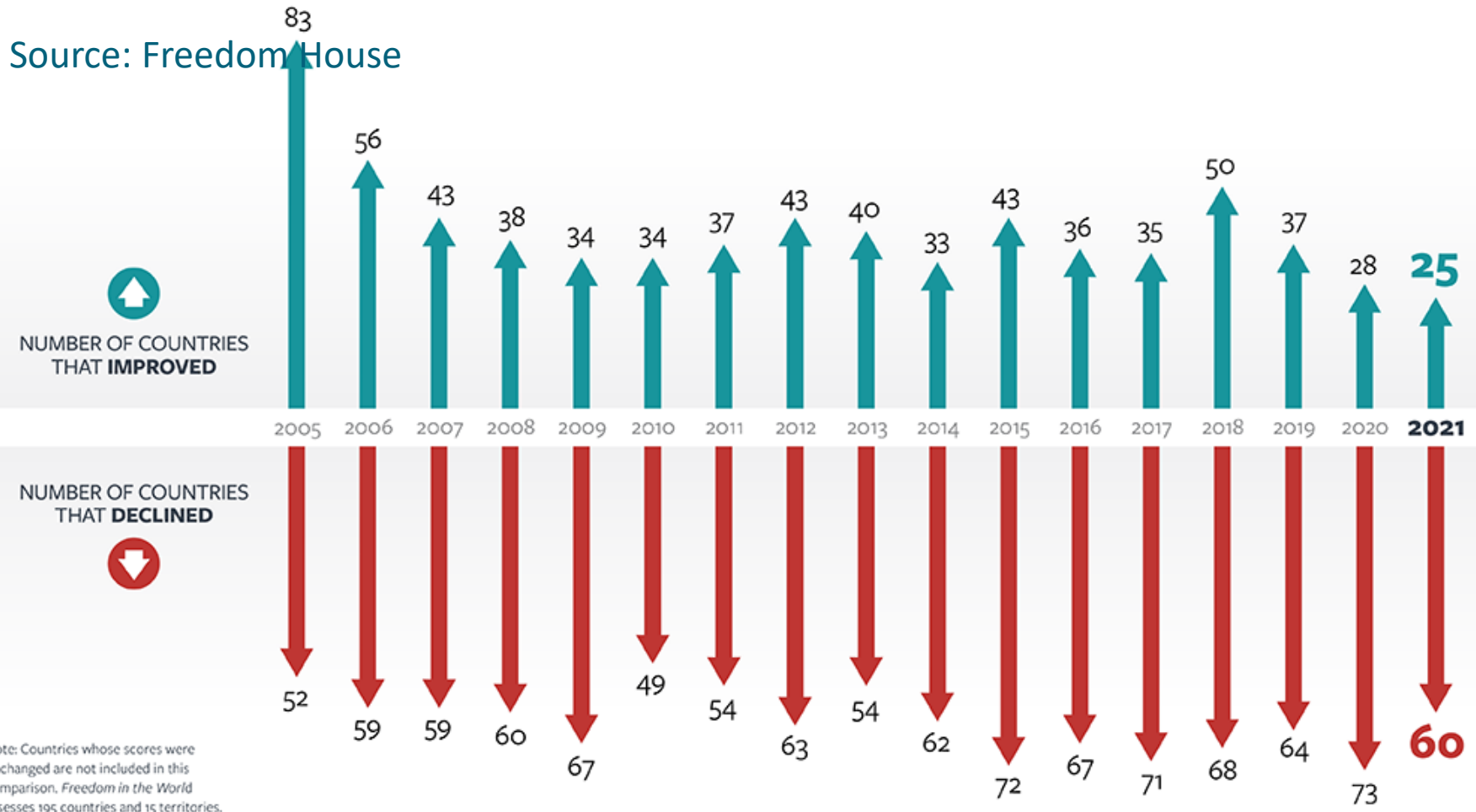
Source: Freedom House



16 Years of Democratic Decline

Countries with aggregate score declines in *Freedom in the World* have outnumbered those with gains every year for the past 16 years.

Source: Freedom House



Accountability

- **Vertical accountability**- ability of individuals and groups in a society to hold state institutions or politicians accountable
- Democracy offers opportunities for public to influence government and policy (voting, protest, reaching out to media, writing to and contacting representatives)
- **Horizontal accountability**- ability of state's institutions to hold each other accountable; Executive – Administer the country; Legislature- Make Laws (one or two houses); Judiciary- interprets and settles dispute

Key issues for consideration

- Elected or appointed?
- How do they check and balance each other? Who has too much of power
- (e.g. In the US constitution, the legislative branch makes laws, but the President in the executive branch can veto those laws with a Presidential Veto, but a two-thirds vote in Congress can override the veto. The legislative branch makes laws, but the judicial branch can declare those laws unconstitutional)

	election	Relation between executive and legislature		Cabinet members
Presidential (USA)	President elected separately from legislature	Can be contentious	More separation of power, but deadlock situation	Professional, political appointees
Parliamentary (UK)	Prime minister elected from the winning party	Good	More effective decision making	Elected politicians
Myanmar 2008 constitution	President elected by legislature	Depends		mixed

Electoral system

- How votes are translated into seats
- *First-past-the-post or plurality*: Winners take all
- *Proportionality*- seats in proportion to votes/
minimum threshold (3-4% of the vote)

Electoral system

	District 1 Percentage of vote receives	District 2	District 3	Total seats in 3 districts FPTP	Total seats in 3 districts Proportional representation
Party A	30%	30%	30%	3	30%
Party B	28%	28%	28%	0	28%
Party C	19%	19%	19%	0	19%

First past the post/single member district	Proportional Representation/ multi member district Close/open
2 party system	Multi party system Coalition government
Lower participation/ votes are wasted	Higher participation
stable	More instability and less effective
Candidates from established families	Candidates from more diverse backgrounds

Political Parties

- Ideology based (USA Democrat vs Republican)
- ethnicity based (Myanmar)
- Multi-alliance (Malaysia)
- Religion based (Indonesia)

Different types of democratic ideologies

- Liberal democracy- government helps protect and preserve the life, liberty, property of individuals; freedom and equality of citizens (USA)
- Social democracy- greater provision of social rights and public control of economy (Europe)
- Participatory democracy- Decentralization of decision making to local communities (as opposed to through elected officials)

Federal features (constitutionally recognized rights for union and states)

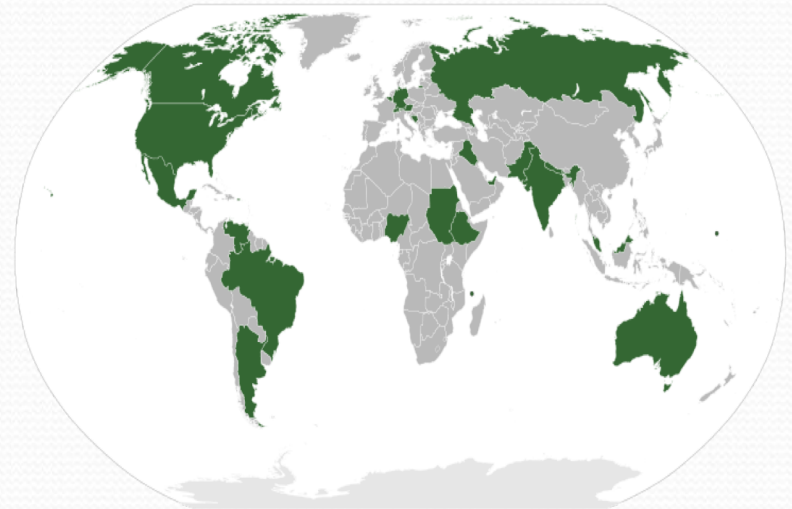
- Only 1/10 states are federal, but account for 1/3 of the populations and 41 percent of its total land area.

may help protect ethnic, linguistic, or religious minorities (esp geographically concentrated areas)

Check on concentration of power

Subunit may experiment with different policies

Autonomy can be given to town and township levels



Territorial arrangements can be based on

- Ethnicity (Myanmar- demography changes, how to define ethnicity??? Minorities within minorities)
- Non-ethnicity (USA)
- Symmetry relationship (USA)
- Asymmetry relationship (Canada)

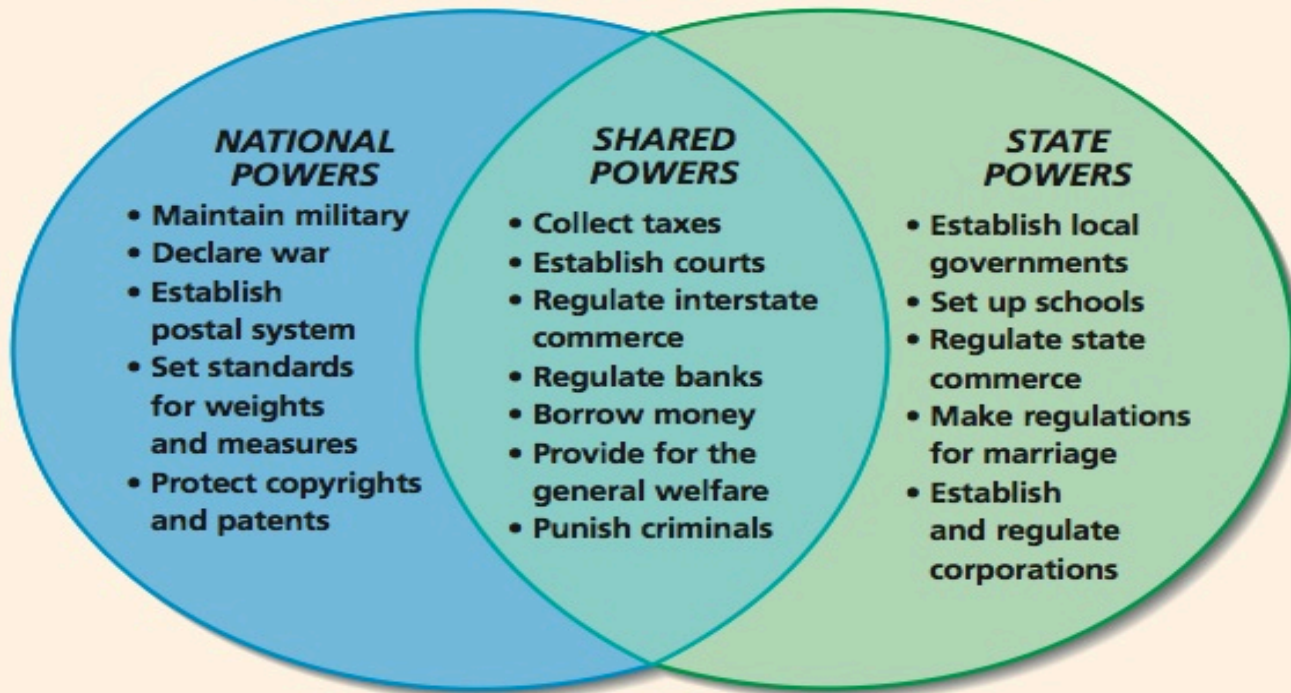
Federal Model In the US

Federal government or union is endowed with power to declare war, make treaties with foreign nations, coin money, and regulate commerce between states

States have power over education, marriage, divorce, intrastate commerce and regulations of motor vehicles (Federal government often grants money to the states to help them build and operate schools, repair highways, make welfare payments to the poor and the sick, etc)



Americans live under both national and state governments.



State power

Minorities within minorities (e.g. Pao/Wa within Shan; Rohingyas within Rakhine, Bamar in Karen State)

Resource sharing

Taxation

Language- Medium of communication in government and public spaces e.g. US-English, Canada-English/French, Indonesia-Bahasa (neutral), Singapore/India (official plus mother tongue or state language)



- **Healthcare**

Universal healthcare or private healthcare

- **Education**

- Types of school (religious, private, government- and recognition); segregated versus integrated schools; Language of instruction; Curriculum (subjects, history, teaching of religion, teaching methods). In 2021 in US- (85% public schools; 8.2% private schools; and 6% or 3.7-5 millions home schooled)



- **Culture**

Dress code, eating habits, practices, customs, cultural celebration and preservation, recognition of holidays, permission to allow distinct dressing code and style; The role of religion in private and political life:

Concluding remarks

- Note that there are variations in democratic political system and federal arrangements
- Models are useful but should not be imposed without considering unique features and needs of Myanmar situation
- Every country adjust/change their approaches depending on evolving situations