

Module 1: Government Foundations

Topic 2 Content: Organization of Power

Introduction



Glover Mint: Welcome to WUSG News. I am Glover Mint, here with Demi Tracy. Our foreign correspondent, Emily Airheart, joins us today with her segment, *Global Guide*.

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Global Guide Introduction



Emily Airheart: Hello viewers! This is Emily Airheart, with an exciting edition of *Global Guide*. On today's episode, we will examine the importance of power in government. There are important questions every nation must answer when deciding how to organize its power: how will decisions be made and carried out around the country? How much power will the government have on national and regional levels? To understand this, let's dive deeper into the organization of power in government.

Government systems are set up to organize power in various ways. The three primary ways are federal, unitary, and confederal.

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Federal System of Government

Federal System of Government

In a federal system of government, power is shared between the national government and the regional governments.

- The U.S. uses the federal system of government.
- Mexico uses a federal system of government.
- The Mexican national and state governments share the power.

The infographic features a map of North America with Mexico highlighted in yellow. A small airplane is shown flying over Mexico. The text is presented in a clean, modern font against a dark background.

Emily Airheart: Most nations around the world are divided into smaller regional areas. In a federal system of government, power is shared between the national government and regional governments.

The United States is an example of a nation that uses a federal system. In the U.S., the power to govern is shared between the national government and the regional government of each of the 50 states.

Mexico is another country with a federal system of government. Some of the powers shared by the Mexican national government and its 31 state governments are:

- the power to create and enforce laws;
- the power to establish courts; and
- the power to collect taxes.

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Unitary System of Government

Unitary System of Government

In a unitary system of government, the power to rule is concentrated at the national government level.

- The national government has unlimited power.
- China uses a unitary system.
- The U.K. is a democratic nation that uses a unitary system of government.
- The amount of power at the regional level varies, depending on the government.



Emily Airheart: Some countries choose to organize their power by using a unitary system of government. In a unitary system, power is concentrated at the national level. The national government may choose to relinquish some of its control, but the power ultimately resides at the national level.

China is an example of a nation that uses a unitary system. The regional governments of China are not given much power to govern themselves. Also, as China is a totalitarian dictatorship, the national government also places many restrictions on the rights of the people. For example, the people of China do not enjoy the freedom of speech, or of the press.

The United Kingdom is an example of a democratic nation that uses a unitary system of government. The members of the U.K.'s legislature, along with the leader of the executive branch, hold the power to govern the nation, which includes the countries of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Unlike China, the national government of the U.K. has delegated certain powers to the governments of its regions. Wales, for example, is permitted to have a legislative body, known as the National Assembly for Wales. Wales' legislature cannot enforce any laws however, without the approval of the U.K.'s legislative body.

As I mentioned, the national government may relinquish varying degrees of power to the regional governments. It all depends on that particular nation.


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Confederal System of Government

Confederal System of Government

In a confederal system of government, power resides with the regional governments, which delegate power to the national government.



- The U.S. was originally organized under a confederal system with the Articles of Confederation.
- The American South became a confederacy when it seceded from the Union during the Civil War.
- The states delegated certain rights to the national government.
- Each state completely governed itself and could leave the confederacy at any time.

Emily Airheart: In a confederal system, power resides primarily with the regional governments, which delegate power to the national government.

The United States was originally organized under a confederal system with the Articles of Confederation, which came before the current Constitution.

The term *confederate* may sound familiar to you, as the American South became a confederacy when it seceded during the Civil War.

The states delegated certain rights to their national government, such as maintaining a military force, and regulating trade among the states. However, each state completely governed itself, and could choose to leave the confederacy at any time.

In the modern world, there are very few confederal systems of government in existence.

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Ending of Episode



Demi Tracy: Thank you, Emily, for that very informative report on the organization of power within different governments. Until next time, this is Demi Tracy with Glover Mint. Have a nice day!