Power Sharing: Detailed notes

Visual notebook. Artwork is symbolic teaching illustration.

1. One country, different community balances

Majority status depends on the population being compared; language and religion can overlap.

LANGUAGE SHARES IN THE TEXTBOOK'S BELGIAN EXAMPLE

Same community. A different population.

Belgium — Whole country



Dutch **59%** French **40%** German **1%**

Dutch speakers are the national majority.

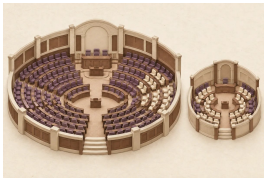
Brussels — Capital city



Dutch **20%** French **80%**

Dutch speakers are a minority in the capital.

> A majority is a relationship to a population. The national balance does not describe every city. These are textbook-context figures, not a current census.



Symbolic chambers suggest different scales; the labelled bars give the actual textbook figures.

Numbers do not tell the whole story

- Belgium's national Dutch-speaking majority becomes a minority in Brussels. A national percentage cannot be used as the city's percentage.
- French speakers were relatively rich and powerful. Dutch speakers gained the benefits of economic development and education later. Unequal opportunity helped create tensions during the 1950s and 1960s.
- The textbook places Dutch speakers mainly in the Flemish region and French speakers in Wallonia. Its maps show broad concentrations, not that every resident has the same identity.
- Belgium borders France, the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg. Its textbook comparison with Haryana describes a smaller area and a little over one crore people; it is not a current population estimate.

Sri Lanka: language is one classification

- Sri Lanka is an island off southern India. The textbook gives about two crore people, comparable to Haryana in that context.
- **Language shares:** Sinhala speakers are 74% and Tamil speakers 18% of the national population in the textbook.

- **Within the Tamil-speaking population:** Sri Lankan Tamils account for 13% of the national population. The remaining Tamil share is described as Indian Tamils, whose ancestors came as plantation workers during colonial rule.
- Sri Lankan Tamils are concentrated in the north and east on the source map. Concentration does not establish every individual's language.

Religion overlaps language

- Most Sinhala speakers are Buddhists. Most Tamils are Hindus or Muslims in the source account.
- About 7% of the population are Christians, including both Sinhala and Tamil speakers. This is a religious share across language categories, not a missing language group.
- Adding the Christian share to the language shares can double-count people. Use separate, clearly labelled comparisons rather than one combined pie chart.

Ethnic identity is not one fixed religious label

Ethnic identity involves shared culture and beliefs about common descent. It need not coincide with one religion or nationality. Political choices about recognition and authority help explain how diversity is handled.

Your notebook

Name the population before calling a community a majority. Explain why language and religion need separate displays.

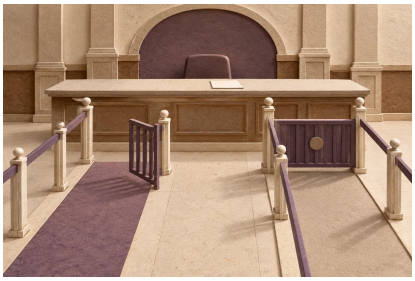
2. When majority rule becomes domination

A majority's electoral strength does not justify unequal recognition or opportunity.

SRI LANKA: HISTORICAL POLICIES AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Follow the policy, then the grievance

1956 **Sinhala-only official recognition**	Tamil was disregarded in official-language recognition.	Unequal recognition
Access to opportunity **Education and job preferences**	Policies favoured Sinhala applicants for universities and government jobs.	Unequal opportunity
Constitutional religious preference **Protection and promotion of Buddhism**	The state privileged the majority religion in a diverse society.	Unequal state recognition



The unequal service lanes are symbolic. The policy labels name the historical choices in the textbook.

1. **Exclusion**

   Policies deny equal recognition or opportunity.

2. **Alienation and demands**

   Tamil parties seek equality, language recognition and autonomy.

3. **Denied accommodation**

   Distrust deepens and conflict escalates.

> This is a political explanation. Different languages do not themselves make war inevitable, and majority votes do not legitimise exclusion.

A vote does not remove democratic obligations

- Sri Lanka became independent in 1948. Elected governments then adopted policies that privileged the Sinhala majority.
- Majority decision-making is a way to choose among alternatives. Decisions must still respect rights, equal opportunity and the participation of affected people.
- Majoritarianism goes further: it claims that a majority community may rule as it wants while disregarding minority needs. An electoral victory does not justify that disregard.

Demands changed as accommodation was denied

- Sri Lankan Tamil parties sought official recognition of Tamil, equality in education and jobs and greater regional autonomy.

- Autonomy means authority within the country. Repeated denial of provincial autonomy deepened alienation and distrust.
- By the 1980s, several organisations demanded an independent Tamil Eelam in the north and east. A separate state differs from autonomy; do not assign every organisation one unchanging demand.

An end to war is not an answer to every grievance

- Distrust escalated into widespread conflict and civil war. Thousands from both communities died; families became refugees and many lost their livelihoods.
- The war damaged social, cultural and economic life. The textbook states that it ended in 2009.
- That ending does not by itself establish equal opportunity or resolve every grievance. Neither language difference nor one policy makes every later outcome inevitable.

Your notebook Connect a policy to its effect, the response and a limit on the conclusion.

3. Belgium: safeguards at several scales

Different safeguards prevent domination in the cabinet, regions, capital and language communities.

BELGIUM: AUTHORITY IS SHARED THROUGH SEVERAL ARRANGEMENTS

A safeguard for each scale of concern

Equal Dutch- and French-speaking ministers

Central cabinet

Prevents the national majority from monopolising the cabinet.

Meaningful assigned powers

Regional governments

State governments receive powers and are not subordinate in this arrangement.

Equal representation of both communities

Brussels government

Protects the Dutch-speaking minority in the French-majority capital.

Elected by language members wherever they live

Community government

Dutch, French and German communities have cultural, educational and language authority.

Language-community members across places — elect → **Community government**

Community government — has specified powers in → **Culture, education and language**

> Equal central ministers do not mean proportional representation everywhere. Some special laws need each linguistic group's majority; the scope is not every decision.



Connected learning spaces symbolise language membership across places. They are not actual Belgian buildings or a map.

A negotiated arrangement

- Between 1970 and 1993, Belgium amended its constitution four times. Leaders recognised regional differences and cultural diversity rather than relying only on the national majority.
- Dutch speakers accepted equal central representation; French speakers accepted equal representation in Brussels. Reciprocal safeguards answered different majority/minority balances.
- Some special laws need a majority among members of each linguistic group. This requirement concerns specified laws, not a blanket veto over every government decision.

Territory and community are different bases

Government	Who or what defines its scope?	Why it matters
Regional state government	A territory with assigned powers.	Regional authority is meaningful; these governments are not subordinate to the centre in the arrangement.
Community government	Dutch-, French- or German-language membership, wherever members live.	The community elects a body for cultural, educational and language matters across places.

School language makes the distinction concrete

- The textbook compares French-medium requests in a Belgian school with Tamil-medium requests under Sri Lanka's historical policies.
- Belgium's community arrangements offer an institutional route for language interests. This helps explain why the Belgian request has a more responsive setting; it does not promise approval of every request.
- Bilingual street signs illustrate public recognition. The European Parliament photograph shows an EU institution in Brussels, not the community government.

A useful example, not a universal recipe

The textbook reports that accommodation helped avoid civic strife and a possible linguistic division. Every country need not copy Belgium's cabinet formula, and power sharing cannot guarantee peace.

Your notebook Match each safeguard to the specific problem it answers. Distinguish territory from language membership.

4. Two reasons, one democratic commitment

Sharing power can improve outcomes and is also valuable because participation is a democratic right.

A FICTIONAL COUNCIL CONSULTS PEOPLE ABOUT A WATER PLAN

One measure can have two justifications

What practical benefit might follow ?

Prudential

Local knowledge may improve the plan and reduce unresolved disputes.

Judge expected outcomes, gains and costs.

Why should people have a voice ?

Moral

Residents live with the decision's effects and deserve a role in shaping it.

Participation is valuable in itself.

> Possible efficiency does not make domination morally acceptable. Participation can remain a right even when consultation takes time or produces no immediate saving.



Two symbolic paths meet at a shared table: expected practical gains and participation as a right.

Judge the justification, not just the policy

- Prudential reasoning weighs expected gains and losses. Sharing power can reduce the possibility of social conflict and political instability.
- Majority domination may look convenient in the short run yet damage national unity over time. Its costs can harm the majority as well as minorities.
- Moral reasoning values democratic participation itself. People affected by a decision have a right to be consulted about how they are governed.
- These reasons can support the same policy. A missing cost saving does not automatically defeat a participation-rights argument.

One passage can contain both reasons

- The panchayat exercise values returning power to people: a democratic principle.
- It also claims that local oversight can reduce corruption and improve administration: expected practical gains.
- Keep the justifications separate when explaining them. The passage argues for benefits; it does not prove that every local decision is efficient or free from corruption.

Sharing also matters beyond divided societies

- Small societies and societies without strong linguistic division still need participation and checks on concentrated authority.

- The German coalition cartoon concerns the 2005 election. Neither major rival secured a clear majority alone, so they governed together despite policy differences.
- Negotiation can take time. Disagreement does not automatically mean sharing has failed, just as cooperation does not guarantee unanimous decisions.

Your notebook

Give two reasons for one measure: an expected benefit and a participation right. Keep a cost or uncertainty visible.

5. Different functions, visible checks

Separate institutions limit unlimited authority through distinct functions and checks.

HORIZONTAL SHARING: ORGANS AT THE SAME GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL

Different jobs. Limits on each other's power.

Make laws

Legislature

Debates and passes laws through representative institutions.

Ministers answer to Parliament or State Assemblies.

Administer

Executive

Ministers and officials put policies and laws into effect.

Executive action remains open to accountability and legal checks.

Review legality

Judiciary

Interprets law and can check executive action and legislation.

A legal check does not make the court the author of every policy.

Executive	answers to →	**Parliament / State Assembly**
Judiciary	can review →	**Executive action and laws**

> Checks and balances limit unlimited authority. Appointment of judges by the executive does not erase their checking role.



Symbolic civic buildings. Their equal position shows one level, not identical functions or an actual institutional layout.

A worked judicial check

- The Bombay High Court example concerns an order to Maharashtra officials to improve conditions in children's homes.
- The actors are judiciary and executive. A state name does not turn this into a national-versus-regional relationship.

- The court checks official action through its legal role. This does not make it responsible for running every government programme.

Accountability is different from taking over

- Fictional example: an assembly asks an agency to explain spending. Scrutinising a budget holds the executive accountable; it is not the same as administering the programme.
- Different functions make responsibility clearer. Checks matter because separate institutions should not be able to exercise unlimited authority.
- The 2005 Russia cartoon questions the concentration of presidential power. A critical cartoon is an argument to interpret, not statistical proof about every result of a government.

Horizontal describes a relationship

The organs operate at the same governmental level. They need not have equal numbers of members, identical powers or agreement on every issue. Their different functions and checks are what matter.

Your notebook Name two organs, explain the checking relationship and state what the checking organ does not take over.

6. Authority across country, region and locality

Governments at different territorial levels need defined powers and meaningful accountability.

VERTICAL SHARING: GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS, RATHER THAN ORGANS AT ONE LEVEL

Different territories. Defined authority.

Country-wide level in India

Union / Central Government

Government for the whole country.

Regional level in India

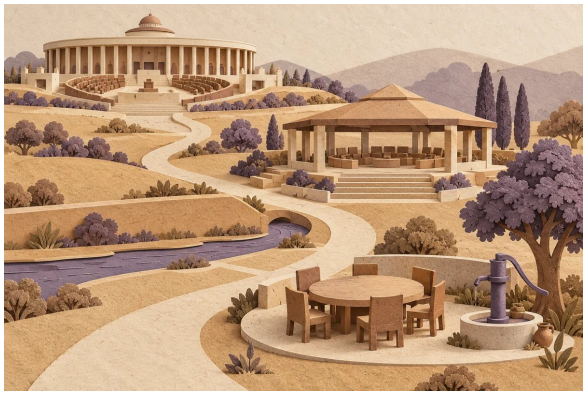
State Governments

Governments for regions, with powers defined in the constitutional arrangement.

Local levels

Municipalities / panchayats

The same sharing principle can extend to towns and villages.



Connected civic spaces are symbolic. Distance and size do not measure legal superiority.

> The constitution defines powers across levels. Coordination is compatible with distinct authority; vertical sharing is more than a central office giving routine instructions.

Defined authority is more than a regional name

- A constitution can lay down powers for governments at different levels. This is a federal division of power.

- A branch that merely carries out centrally assigned tasks has not necessarily received an established share of authority. Ask what rule assigns powers and limits interference.
- Not every country has provincial or state governments. Different countries use different terms and arrangements.

Resources help make powers meaningful

- The Nigerian example describes state finance ministers asking about federal income and the formula for distributing revenue to states.
- The relationship is between governmental levels, so it is vertical. Information and resources help governments plan and hold one another accountable.
- The example does not supply the actual formula, show that the demand succeeded or establish current Nigerian practice.

Coordination does not erase different powers

Union, State and local bodies can cooperate while exercising distinct responsibilities. A court checking state officials is a different relationship, usually horizontal. Regional autonomy within a country also differs from independence as a separate state.

Your notebook Explain how a level has meaningful authority, then connect that authority to resources and accountability.

7. Representation, competition and public influence

Groups may gain representation, parties may share office and organised interests may influence decisions.

SEVERAL ROUTES CONNECT PEOPLE TO PUBLIC DECISIONS

Representation, office and influence are different

Social-group safeguards

Community institutions or representation arrangements include groups that might otherwise be excluded. → **Representative space**

Party competition

Citizens choose among contenders with different programmes and social bases. → **Electoral choice**

Coalition government

Two or more parties govern together while retaining differences. → **Shared governing office**

Pressure groups and movements

Organised interests use committees or public action to affect policy. → **Influence without necessarily holding office**

> An electoral alliance proposes cooperation in contesting. A governing coalition shares office. Influence on a decision is not a reserved ministry or guaranteed control.



The negotiation table and public petition are symbolic. They do not depict real party identities or an official voting procedure.

Representation can address exclusion

- Religious and linguistic groups may receive institutional space. Belgium's community government is one example.
- Legal and constitutional arrangements can represent socially weaker sections and women in legislatures and administration. The textbook recalls reserved constituencies in Indian assemblies and Parliament.
- The Ontario land-claim settlement concerns accommodation of an aboriginal community. Its central relationship is government and a social community, rather than two countries.

Competition and cooperation are different routes

- Party competition lets citizens choose among contenders with different ideologies and social bases. It prevents one holder of power from being the only available choice.
- Parties may form an alliance to contest together. The Russian example proposes a common candidate list; it does not establish that the parties already shared ministries.
- A coalition government shares governing office between parties. The parties can negotiate policy while retaining their differences. Not every party system always produces a coalition.

Influence does not require a ministry

- Traders, business groups, farmers and industrial workers can organise interests, take part in committees or influence policy through public action.
- A pressure group can be heard without holding government office. Influence does not give it guaranteed control over the final decision.
- Changing the class monitor each month may distribute opportunities. To judge meaningful sharing, also examine who sets rules, whose voice counts and how authority is checked.

Your notebook Compare representation, an electoral alliance, a governing coalition and influence without office.

8. Design a democracy that can hold together

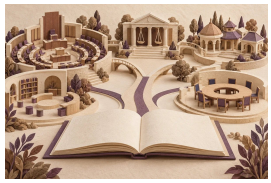
A democratic design needs several mechanisms, evidence and honest attention to trade-offs.

A CIVIC JUDGEMENT EXPLAINS MORE THAN THE CATEGORY NAME

Compare the case, mechanism, reason and limit

Case	Mechanism and reason	Limit to consider
Khalil's dilemma	**Social-group safeguards** Community-linked offices can protect trust after conflict.	**Limit:** A safeguard can restrict individual eligibility and chosen identity.
Merchtem school-language ban	**Recognition and participation** An integration aim must be assessed alongside the effect on language recognition.	**Limit:** A stated common purpose does not justify every exclusion.
Fictional town design	**Several complementary mechanisms** Use lawful checks, defined district powers and meaningful language access.	**Limit:** Negotiation takes time; no design guarantees every demand.

> Explain who gains voice or authority, why the mechanism matters and which limit remains. Weigh practical effects and participation rights rather than assume one perfect rule.



The civic modules are symbolic design materials. No single complete or perfect constitution is pictured.

Khalil's dilemma: protection and opportunity

- The textbook's Lebanon discussion story describes community-linked offices: a Maronite Christian president, Sunni Muslim prime minister, Orthodox Christian deputy prime minister and Shi'a Muslim speaker.
- The settlement also includes commitments against seeking French protection or unification with Syria. The story says the original demographic balance later changed.
- Khalil has an Orthodox Christian father and a Sunni Muslim mother, but does not wish to adopt either identity. Community-based eligibility restricts his ambition for the top office.
- His elders fear a return to civil-war losses. A reasoned reform must consider credible group protections alongside wider individual opportunity. Their assurance of peace is an attributed claim, not a guarantee.

Assess a rule by its effect as well as its aim

- The Merchtem school exercise describes a mayor defending a ban on speaking French as integration.
- A common-purpose claim does not settle whether a rule respects language recognition and participation. The effect of the ban can conflict with accommodation.
- Fictional town example: language access, defined district powers, lawful checks on a mayor and open public consultation can address different problems together. Each needs a clear purpose and limit.

Make a qualified civic judgement

Name who shares or influences power, explain the mechanism and connect evidence to a reason. Slower negotiation is a real trade-off, but efficiency alone does not justify excluding people. No single arrangement guarantees peace, equality or acceptance of every demand.

Your notebook Use a case: identify actors, explain a mechanism, give a reason and acknowledge a remaining limit.