

Democratization and Containing Ethnic Conflicts in Transitional Myanmar: A Study through Federalism Typologies and Models

**Dulyapak Preecharush
Lecturer in Southeast Asian Studies
Thammasat University**

&

**PhD Candidate in Comparative Politics
Department of Politics and Public Administration
The University of Hong Kong**

Keywords: Federalism, Typology, Model, Democratization, Ethnic Conflict Management and Hybrid

Introduction

This paper aims to conceptualize Myanmar's current political system in federalism context by viewing relevant typologies, and models. It also intends to produce a new federalism typology/model that can be applicable to analyzing and predicting Myanmar's political architecture. The paper argues that transitional Myanmar is considered as a presidential-devolutionary federation with hybrid characteristics, combining various unitary and federal elements. More specifically and in dimensions relating to democratization and ethnic conflict management, which are significant in viewing the country's current politics, Myanmar is an oscillating state, pivoting on two different extreme poles (strong unity and strong autonomy or highly centralized unitarianism and highly decentralized federalism); thus making the state dependent much on uncertain-unstable circumstances and the country's federalization tends to be closely related to the fluctuation of power negotiations/competitions between two dominant stakeholders, composing of central government and ethnic opposition groups.

The paper begins by drawing a fundamental connection between Myanmar and federalism context. Then, it employs existing federalism typologies to check and capture Myanmar's political system as well as produce a new typology that may be useful for understanding Myanmar's transitional situation. After that, the paper seeks to produce another new analytical framework to capture the dynamism of federalization in Myanmar. The content in this part borrows a game theory model in political science to predict the rational strategic decisions on federal reform between central government and ethnic resistance groups. Moreover, it aims to integrate a game model into a new systematic federal typology in order to provide a deeper explanation about Myanmar federal politics. Finally, the paper ends with a short concluding remark on the significance of Myanmar federalism in comparative political studies.

Myanmar and Its Significance in Federalism Context

Myanmar is an interesting case that can provide basic complicated components which reflect the importance of federalism in political architectural design. The character of federation is determined by the country's complex physical and demographic conditions (Furnivall 1960: 3-4). The mountainous chains that constitute a horseshoe around the plains geographically splits the country's landmass into two main geo-historical bodies, composing of the great river valleys of Myanmar/Burma Proper and the hill frontier areas (Aung Thwin 2012: 37-43). The population is made up of a large number of ethnic tribes with unique indigenous identities (Scott 1911). The eight main ethnic groups in the country are Burman, Shan, Kayin (Karen), Kachin, Arakanese, Mon, Chin and Kayah (Karenni). Among these, the Burman or Bamar constitutes about two-thirds of the whole population, while the remaining ethnic groups, including their sub-clans and other fragmentary minority tribes (such as the Wa, Pao, Kokang, etc.), number around one-thirds (Gilbert 2009: 13 ; Scott 1911).

These ethnic-geographical separation has been a protracted cause of conflicts throughout Myanmar's political development. The majority-Burman-dominated state is involved in a kind of civil war against the country's ethnic indigenous armed forces demanding political autonomy, social equality, and genuine-federalism (Smith 1997). And yet, Myanmar represents the classic case of a political union, influenced by the collision between centrifugal force and centripetal force, which has enormously impacted on the power management between central and constituent entities.

The significant discussion on federalism turns back to the transitional period when Myanmar's modern statehood emerged from the late British colonial administration, with the formation of Panglong accord and the 1947 draft constitution that laid down the basic federal principles of governance integration between the Burman heartland and non-Burman ethnic frontier areas (Cady 1958: 545 ; Yawnghwe 2002: 60 ; Silverstein 1981: 50-52). However, after gaining an independence on January 4 (1948), neither genuine federalism nor highly decentralizing governance system has been established or implemented firmly in Myanmar's political structure. As a result, several indigenous people and political power groups have been divided over how to achieve the balance condition between state integrity and local autonomy and when this condition has not been received, there have been continuous warfares and political struggles for secession and autonomy throughout the country's political contour (see Silverstein 1960, 1980).

For the contemporary situations, especially since the official proclamation of the country's new constitution in 2008, which brought about the general election in 2010 and the dissolution of the

former military authoritarian regime in early 2011, Myanmar has been moving forwards to a more democratic and decentralized regime although some chronic problems have still remained, such as ethnic conflicts and authoritarian political practices. Obvious examples are the formations of many new political institutions (governments, legislative assemblies, and judicial organs in both national and regional levels), some progressive political and governance reforms (a higher degree of democratic development, intergovernmental collaboration, and regional decentralization), and the widespread peace negotiations for containing ethnic conflicts and relieving long military fightings between central government and ethnic opposition groups (see Myanmar's current political situations in newspapers and media reports, such as the Irrawaddy, Mizzima, New Lights of Myanmar, Shan Herald, etc.).

Meanwhile, federalism concepts have also been reconsidered in attempts to design a new government architecture in which authoritarian and democratic principles or centralized unitarianism and decentralized federalism can coexist together in a peaceful and appropriate way (Shan Herald, March 7 2012). As a result, the debating issues on federalism have reemerged and have increasingly played a crucial role in the democratization process as well as in the peace process for containing ethnic conflicts in current Myanmar.

In such a condition, it is quite interesting for this paper to conceptualize Myanmar's current political system in federalism context. Is Myanmar's political system considered a federation or not? If yes, what types and features of it? And which federal models would be appropriate to Myanmar, especially in the context of democratization and ethnic conflict management, which have been becoming popular in contemporary Myanmar politics? From these questions, it seems necessary for this paper to investigate the existing concepts and typologies in federalism literature or even produce a new typology that have a sufficient capability for both checking Myanmar's transitional political system and predicting the most likely suitable federal model for Myanmar.

Existing Federalism Typologies and Their Usefulness for Understanding Myanmar

Federalism is the concept of governance grouping that integrates various ethnic nationalities and geographical territories into a federal polity, with an appropriate power arrangement between central and constituent units (Duchacek 1970 ; Riker 1964 ; Elazar 1995). In federal political systems, a general government and constituent governments are combined together, each possessing powers delegated to it by the people through a supreme constitution, each empowered to deal directly with the citizens in the exercise of its legislative, administrative, judicial, and taxing powers, and each with its major institutions directly elected by the citizens (Elazar : 1-2).

The study of federalism has created several typologies that have attempted to make some order in the complexity and manifold variation among federal systems. Some of the more traditional typologies have been those based on the executive-legislative institutions, distinguishing between presidential and parliamentary federations (Colino 2010 : 2). Other usual criterion has been the historical formation, with a typical distinction between evolutionary or union federalism that Stephen (2001) has termed coming-together federalism that emerged for the common defense or economic reasons, and devolutionary or holding-together federalism that often respond to the quest to avoid the disintegration of a state by the dangers of secession from dissenting regions within a unitary state.

Other usual classification have been the pattern of predominant intergovernmental interactions or the degree of cooperation between levels of government. The most frequent separation has been that between dual federalism and cooperative federalism. The first category is a federation in which the constitution allows for the establishment of two separate and independent orders of government with their own clearly defined areas of responsibility. On the other hand, the second simply refers to making federalism work through cooperation between various levels of government as well as emphasizes the partnership between the different tiers of government providing effective public service for the country (Scharpf 1995 ; Simeon 1998, etc.).

Another criterion deals with the degree of power distribution among constituent units and thus, there are two federal types, composing of symmetric and asymmetric federalism (Watts 1999). The first one refers to a federal system of government in which the constituent states to the federal arrangement possess equal powers while the second refers to an unequal status among constituent units, with a high degree of power concentration to some particular dominant regions or ethnic groups. According to the degree of ethnic diversity and its relation to ethnic conflict management, it has been common to distinguish between mononational and multinational federalism or between ethnic federations (or multiethnic federalism) and non ethnic federations (or territorial federalism), based on whether constituent units reflect or not ethnic, religious or linguistic cleavages (Kymlicka 2006 ; Roeder 2007).

From these typologies that are based on many relevant variations, transitional Myanmar relatively reflects a combination of federal features, ranging from the pure types of federations to the hybrid oscillation between two extremely federal-unitary characteristics.

A presidential system where a head of government functions as head of state and leads an executive branch that is separate from the legislative branch is prominent in Myanmar's current

government system. The president of Myanmar serves not only a ceremonial function but also represents the sovereignty of the state as the public figure who commands the unity of state and is the chief decision-maker on all government affairs. Moreover, the president and the legislators have a fixed term of office (five years) and there is separation of power between the executive and legislative branches, thus the membership of the two branches do not overlap (see chapter 3 in the 2008 constitution for further details about the head of Myanmar state).

The national and constituent units inside current Myanmar are held together by keeping an already existing union through the negotiation of the central government with constituent governments for the degree of their autonomy and the central government tends to be more powerful than subnational governments. This specific federal system is based on the intention of maintaining the unity of the nation and must posit a special and overriding authority to the centre in order to consolidate the country. Moreover, no part of Myanmar's territory constituted in the union, such as regions, states, and self-administered areas shall ever secede from the union (article 10 in the constitution). So, the central state of Myanmar has kept a devolutionary federal character to avoid the disintegration of the union.

For the degree and pattern of intergovernmental interactions, Myanmar has hybrid dual-cooperative federal characters. A political arrangement in which power is divided between the federal and state/region governments is rather clear and it seems to be that each government remains supreme within their own sphere of authority. Moreover, the region or state has the scope of authority to collect taxes and revenues rather independently from the union. However, in some public policy spheres, especially political, security, and macro economic policy, the constituent governments have to interact with central government cooperatively and collectively and the budget allocation or policy planning is mostly dominated by the centre (for details about executive sector and intergovernmental collaboration, see chapter 5 in the constitution).

Although the current constitution defines the formation of seven regions and seven states in an equal status in terms of executive, legislative, and judicial authority, and no distinction is made between these constituent units, the Burman population has concentrated and inhabited largely throughout the whole seven regions, thus making the Burman easier to dominate the parliamentary structure in both central and region level. Despite the fact that members of the house of nationalities are elected equally from regions and states, but in turn, members of the house of representatives are elected on basis of township and population and the military representatives in multi-level government/legislative structures are also dominated mostly by the Burman officials (see chapter 4-5 in the constitution). Therefore, it is likely to say that Myanmar has a hybrid feature

between symmetric federation and asymmetric federation.

For ethnic-territorial management, Myanmar has a hybrid character of territorial and multinational federalism. Inside the whole seven regions and seven states, every citizens have the basic protection of their individual rights and each nationality can freely relocate or settle their communities throughout the territory. Despite the name of each state that comes from ethnic connotation, such as Shan state and Mon state, which refer to the Shan and the Mon, respectively, the name for each region is based on regional origin, for example, Yangon region and Mandalay region.

Interestingly, in some specific areas, the rights of multi-nationalities, including language communications and religious practices, are partly respected. In such a condition, the central state has tried to accommodate concentrated ethnic groups and an internal boundary is drawn to enable some specific minorities to exercise minority rights and self-determination, as well as to achieve their ethnonational homelands. Obvious examples are the formation of six self-administered areas for the Wa, Pao, Palaung, Danu, and Kokang inside the Shan state and the Naga in the Sagaing region (see chapter 2 in the constitution for details about ethnic-territorial administration in the state structure). However, it should be noted that the Burmanization policy, emphasizing on the Burman cultural domination over non-Burman several ethnic groups, has still been activated in many states and self-administered areas. So, the concept of multinationalism has still been overshadowed by Burman centric nationalism (for the root and classical pattern of Burmanization, see Holmes 1967 : 188-197).

According to some typologies above, contemporary Myanmar is a presidential and devolutionary or holding-together federalism, with complicated hybridity ranging from dual-cooperative, asymmetric-symmetric, to territorial-multinational characteristics. These federal types partly reflect the significant attempts to accommodate the diversities of ethnicities and territories and to design an appropriate power management between central and constituent governments. However, it is the president, the Burman people, or even the Commander-in-Chief (in emergency cases), who have powerful authorities over many state affairs in order to keep the state from national disintegration problems. Thus, although Myanmar has moved from a highly centralized to a more decentralized and devolved governance system, with some federal characteristics, the central governing organ has continually played significant roles in the country's federal politics.

Building New Typology and Model for Better Understanding Transitional Myanmar

Beyond earlier mentioned analysis, which is rather static and mainly based on constitutional essences and structural features, another dimension for considering federalism in transitional Myanmar should be viewed in a dynamic or in a procedural perspective, emphasizing on federalization. There are two main reasons for raising this significance. First, during the time of regime change in Myanmar, from a highly centralized authoritarianism to a more decentralized democracy, the federal institutions tend to be important in accommodating the various demands of political groups and ethnic territories as well as to prevent or manage transitional conflicts. Second, as a result of the fluctuation of power bargainings among several interest groups and the flexibility of the federalism reforms that often oscillate between two extreme different advocacies, proposed by major competing groups, the federalization process in current Myanmar tends to be unstable and may depend on the dynamic compromise outcomes between powerful competing actors; central government/armed forces and ethnic resistant groups.

In the same vein, a hybridity in making an equilibrium between two extreme different ideas or characters can be found in most transitional states, especially in current Myanmar, which is a country in regime change and has continually faced both collisions and combinations between the legacies from the old regime and the partial progressive reforms in the new regime. Related to this condition, Chan (2015), a political philosopher from the University of Hong Kong, provides some interesting explanations about hybridity. From his view, a hybrid is a transitional phenomenon, with unstable and fragmented characters. It can be viewed as a systematic model, with fusion characters, or in contrast, as only a loose collection of different elements. Moreover, in some risk circumstances, in which various different demands have confronted and collided dramatically, a hybrid may become only an ad hoc unfortunate compromise. So, Chan's perspective provides an interesting angle to view Myanmar's hybrid federal characters through a transitional phenomenon, with a development of fusion models under a fluctuation of dynamic compromises (personal conversation between the author and Professor Joseph C.W. Chan, Department of Politics and Public Administration, the University of Hong Kong, 28 May 2015).

According to the above significances, it is meaningful for this essay to produce a new typology in order to capture the hybrid federal characters in Myanmar, based on a dynamic and transformative perspective. However, due to various variations in building typologies, basic questions still remain; which dimensions can offer a comprehensive explanation for viewing Myanmar's dynamic federal system and how to create a new typology, based on such a criteria.

In this paper, two major dimensions and three major features will be employed, comprising political regime (authoritarianism, democracy, and hybrid between both) and ethnic conflict management (territorial approach, multinational approach, and hybrid between both). The main reasons for selecting these dimensions are first, Myanmar is explicitly considered as a democratizing state – a state in the process of the transition from authoritarianism to democracy and this state tends to bear elements which are attributed to either democracies or autocracies (elections, the rule of law, the freedoms of speech and assembly or electoral fraud, fragile judicial systems, and tutelary rulers). Thus, drawing a relationship between federalization and democratization, which is a normal trend in third world developing countries, is important to analysis and moreover, classifying the political regime into authoritarian, democratic, and hybrid character may be sufficient to cover other issues relating to federalism, such as the pattern of public policy formulation and implementation, natural resource allocation, and the trend of intergovernmental collaboration between central and constituent governments.

Second, Myanmar is currently under the peace process between central government and numerous ethnic armed forces and political organizations. The military fightings have still occurred in parallel with the peace negotiations and the situations on ethnic conflicts have been explicitly fluctuated and unstable. Significantly, designing federalism for containing ethnic conflicts and reducing social cleavages is the top agenda for Myanmar's national reconciliation program but there have been many different perspectives over how to settle such a protracted problem through federalism approach, for examples, the attempts to adopt a territorial model in diluting the concentration of any ethnic minority groups in order to reduce the power of secessionist politics and the consideration on multinational model for keeping local ethnic identities by having regional state boundaries coincide with ethnic fault lines and state institutions represent distinctive ethnic homelands. Therefore, viewing federalization in the context of ethnic conflict, which is both a classical and current problem in the evolution of nation-building, state-building, and peace-building in Myanmar is very significant. In addition, viewing ethnic conflict in this category (territorial, multinational, and hybrid) is broad enough to touch upon other relating federal features, such as symmetric and asymmetric or coming together and holding together federalism patterns.

In the same manner, these two dimensions are closely related to the two debating poles between central government and ethnic resistant groups which have played significant roles in national peace process and contemporary federal politics and before going to deeper details about making a new typology, it is still important to provide a brief information on different federalism arguments between central government and ethnic resistant groups in Myanmar.

Inside central government sector, some conservative elites, particularly politico-military hard liners, have still perceived federalism as a main cause for complicated political turmoils. Most of them have believed that federalism may provide the ethnic nationalities opportunities to mobilize their resources and the break away from the federal center. Obvious examples are Yugoslavia, the USSR, and Czechoslovakia which are currently broken up into scattered independent states (Sen 2002 : 35). Some also argue that federalism will lead to crumbly chiefdoms and warlordism by empowering ethnic leaders and thus, federalism would serve as a recipe for deeper divisions amongst diverse ethnic groups (Sen : 35-36). From these security perceptions, an authoritarian-territorial based models are suitable for unstable Myanmar rather than democratic or multinational based models and thus, the military should have a leadership role in governance system by exercising its command and control influence through some patterns of centralization and unitary power arrangement.

Nevertheless, due to the continuous strength of centrifugal force led by several ethnic nationalist armies as well as some usefulness from democratization and federalization reform in solving ethnic cleavages, the Burman leaders and their political architects, especially some politico-military soft liners, may see a creation of the unitary state system, with the adoption of federal arrangement in some degree as an appropriate model for governance structure. As a result, the military have talked about the creation of a “multiparty democratic system” as a goal for the new governance and attempted to produce a new administrative formula in which a centralized command structure can coexist with local and regional decentralization reform process. Under this belief system, a quasi-federalism, with hybrid federal-unitary elements is the most appropriate political system for Myanmar.

For ethnic resistance groups, there is an alternative format of governance principles for the organization of state and society proposed by the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB). This is an enlarged coalition of the National Democratic Front (NDF, a main political organization of the minorities) and other individuals, civil societies or some minority forces which opposed the domination by Burman military authoritarianism (Silverstein 2002: 7-8). At the heart of the DAB proposals is the idea that the source of power resides in the people. The people in Myanmar must be free, equal, and enjoy the rights of autonomy. They must have rights and freedoms as determined in the constitution and the political process must be democratic. The society must be formed as a federal union in which the constituent units are based on the principles of equality and self-determination.¹

¹ For further details about these federal proposals, see supplementary documents such as Federal Constitution Drafting and Coordinating Committee, *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of the Union of Burma* (Second Draft) (Mae Sot, Thailand Federal Constitution Drafting and Coordinating Committee, 2008), Chao-Tzang Yawngghwe and Lian H. Sakhong, *The New Panglong Initiative: Rebuilding the Union of Burma* (Chaing Mai: UNLD Press, 2004)

The geographic territory of Myanmar will be divided into national states and nationalities states. Under circumstances set forth in the proposal, the states will be subdivided further into national autonomous regions and special national territories. National states will be based on the existence of a large national group, representing two thirds of the population and recognized as a historical ethnic group, with a common geographic domain, language, customs, culture, and a viable economy. Nationalities states will be composed of two or more ethnic nationalities, none of which have two thirds of the population, a common territory and a viable economy. National autonomous regions will be established inside states among nationalities, making up one fourth of the state population, living on historic homelands, each having a separate and unique language, literature and culture. Moreover, special national territories will be formed in some ethnic areas where the nationalities have a majority in the territory, a separate language, culture, and customs (Silverstein 2002 : 8-9). Therefore, from the ethnic resistance groups' standpoint, it is very obvious to see the principles of democracy and multinationalism in deigning the state and society in Myanmar.

From the different ideas on federalism between the two main power groups, the essences explicitly relate to political regime, ethnic conflict management or even the continuing trends of fusion processes (occurring under the political regime and the ethnic conflict dimension) between the two extreme different components, such as a hybrid political system of democratic and authoritarian elements or a hybrid territorial-multinational management. As such, it is necessary to make a new typology in order to demonstrate this interesting specific relationship.

For building the new typology, the basic template is proposed for constructing systematic framework and the building blocks of typology is created by four basic components. These are an overarching concepts (the overall concept measured by the typology), row and column variables (the two or more dimensions that form a typology and capture the salient elements of variation in the concept), matrix (cross-tabulation of the element categories of the dimensions, such as the 2 x 2 or 3 x 3 array), and cell types (concepts or associated terms located in the cells of a typology and are 'a kind or model of' in relation to the overarching concepts) (See Collier, Laporte, and Seawright in 2012 for the inventory of typologies).

From this framework, a new typology of federalism is constructed by drawing an interconnection between political regime and ethnic conflict management, which are the two major dimensions in the study. In such a way, an overarching concept is federalism in transitional Myanmar while political regime (democratic/authoritarian/hybrid) and ethnic conflict management (multinational/territorial/hybrid) become a row and column variables, respectively. In addition, a matrix is explained via the 3 x 3 array and the cell types compose of totally nine new federal

models. The diagram for this typology is as follow;

Federalism in Transitional Myanmar

Political Regime	Ethnic Conflict Management		
	Territorial	Multinational	Hybrid
Authoritarian	Authoritarian and Territorial Federalism (1)	Authoritarian and Multinational Federalism (2)	Authoritarian and Hybrid Federalism (3)
Democratic	Democratic and Territorial Federalism (4)	Democratic and Multinational Federalism (5)	Democratic and Hybrid Federalism (6)
Hybrid	Hybrid and Territorial Federalism (7)	Hybrid and Multinational Federalism (8)	Hybrid and Hybrid Federalism (9)

The above typology is useful in many aspects. It can offer the nine systematic federal models emerging from the co-formation of the pure types of the same or different dimensions on the one hand (authoritarianism, democracy, authoritarianism and territorialism, democracy and multinationalism, etc.) and the fuzzy types of the same or different dimensions on the other hand (hybridity in political regime or the co-existence of hybrid political regime with hybrid ethnic conflict management). Furthermore, it can be applicable to capture the structural picture of Myanmar's federalism, based on the constitutional evolution, as well as can capture the dynamism of Myanmar's federalization, based on an unstable compromise of various federal concepts/approaches, proposed by two powerful political groups; central government and ethnic resistant groups.

Although, generally speaking, Myanmar's current political system may fall under the co-formation between hybrid political regime and hybrid ethnic conflict management (the ninth model in the typology), due to the regime transition from authoritarianism to democracy and the mixture of territorial based and multinational based management approach that occur both in the constitution and some governance practices in particular areas, the central government and other politico-military ethnic organizations have still advocated their extreme government demands through different federal proposals, making the federal features in transitional Myanmar unstable,

vulnerable, and highly depend on the strengths (specially political tactics and military might) of each advocator in the national peace process. As such, in order to see a more dynamic competition between dominant players in Myanmar's federal politics, it is valuable for this essay to provide another new analytical model to capture the strategic interactions between these two main stakeholders and then incorporate this model into a new produced typology in a deeper perspective.

One such way to examine this strategic interaction is to use game theory, which specified a simple set of choices available to the individual (players) and then models their interaction given their preferences². This game can involve many players with many choices; however, in order to reduce the complexity associated with a game with various players, it is common in political science to specify a two-player game, each with two choices, yielding a 2 x 2 matrix of possible outcomes (Landman 2008 : 208-209).

In relation with Myanmar case, the central government, including the armed forces is at the top of the figure (see the diagram below) and ethnic minority opposition is on the left-hand side of the figure. The four cells represent the strategic interaction or game between these two actors. Each cell represents a particular outcome, which either actor ranks from least-preferred to most-preferred³.

Cell 1 illustrates the situation where the government choose continued hard line rule (authoritarian-territorial federalism or centralized unitary state) and the opposition openly confronts the government with their most-preferred political system (democratic-multinational federalism or even secession). Cell 2 shows the situation where the government choose federalism reform and the opposition a radical break. This outcome is considered worse for the government since it means that it has caved in to the opposition. Potential example is while the government has proposed some hybrid or loosen models, such as democratic-hybrid federalism or hybrid-multinational federalism, the opposition has still stucked on democratic-multinational federalism or secessionist

2 A game theory has been widely used by political scientists in identifying the political actors in the game and specify their choices as well as their preferences so as to model their strategic interaction. The most important feature of the game theory is that none of the outcomes is certain, but contingent upon the actions of players. The basic pattern of the 'Prisoner's Dilemma' and many other types of games has been used throughout political science, including the modeling of trench warfare (Axelrod 1984), the reform of bureaucracies in Latin America (Gautier 1986), and transitions to democracy (Colomer 1991).

3 The model in this essay is partly adapted from another influential model, created by Colomer and Pascual in 1994, which classifies the key political actors under the Polish democratic transition into two main actors; the Polish government and the solidarity movement (opposition) and then utilizes the model to explain the strategic interaction between them during the 1980s by using a game theory. For another basic work (in comparative politics literature) that tries to demonstrate the strategic interaction's patterns in transitional period through the adaptation from Colomer and Pascual's original model, please see Todd Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*. (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 208-211.

ideology.

Myanmar Central Government			
		Continue System/Regime	Federalism Reform
Politico-Military Ethnic Movement (Opposition)	Radical Break	Continue vs. Break Open Confrontation (1)	Reform vs. Break Worst for the Government (2)
	Federalism Reform	Continue vs. Reform Worst for Opposition (3)	Reform vs. Reform Agreement (4)

Cell 3 reflects the situation where the government chooses to continue with the status quo while the opposition seeks to reform. The outcome is considered worse for the opposition since it means that it has caved in to the government. Potential example is while the opposition has decided to select hybrid and territorial federalism or authoritarian and hybrid federalism, the government has kept authoritarian and territorial federalism or has preferred to turn the existing quasi federal system back to the former centralized unitary system. Finally, cell 4 demonstrates the situation where both the government and the opposition select reform collectively. This outcome is considered acceptable for the two players and the mutual agreement may lead to a more progressive stable reform. Obvious instance is a co-formation of hybrid political regime and hybrid ethnic conflict management in which each player has a clear commitment to decrease their

extreme demands and then compromise to establish a more systematic cooperative framework for developing their common federal goals.

These four outcomes are not predetermined but are logical combination resulting from the different choices available to the two actors. This strategic interaction model helps to identify that each of these two actors (Myanmar government and ethnic opposition group) have faced two choices concerning the current political transition. The government either wants to continue with the status quo (i.e. the maintenance of authoritarian and centralized unitary culture) or reform the politico-government system (i.e. hybrid federal arrangement). In contrast, the opposition group either wants to foment a radical break from the past (i.e. democratic-multinational federalism or secessionist campaigns) or implement similar reforms envisaged by the government. As such, the resulting combination of these two actors with two choices is depicted in four strategic interactive patterns (continue vs. break. reform vs. break, continue vs. reform and reform vs. reform).

This game model is useful for analyzing Myanmar federalization in a dynamic manner. It can explain the oscillation between centripetal force and centrifugal force logically, based on the power elites' decision making pattern. Furthermore, it helps to predict which federal types/models, based on unstable peace negotiations, would most likely suitable to transitional Myanmar in the power politics context. And by integrating this strategic model with mentioned federalism typology that comprises nine federal patterns, we can classify the whole federal patterns into four systematic categories.

In this way, if the government decides to continue authoritarianism and unitarianism while the opposition chooses to reform its federal demands (category 1), there will be three possible federal models, composing of authoritarian-territorial federalism (model 1), authoritarian-hybrid federalism (model 3), and hybrid-territorial federalism (model 7). But if the government decides to reform and the opposition still sticks on its original demands (category 2), three possible models will be occurred; democratic-multinational federalism (model 5), democratic-hybrid federalism (model 6), and hybrid-multinational federalism (model 8). In addition, if both sides choose to reform collectively (category 3), a hybrid political regime and hybrid ethnic conflict management (model 9) or even authoritarian-multinational federalism (model 2), and democratic-territorial federalism (model 4) will occur and may become the most suitable models for developing federalism in transitional Myanmar because of their hybrid integrations between the two extreme different elements in an equal proportion. However, supposing that the government chooses to continue its original intention and the opposition decides to break away from the centre, leading to open conflicts and confrontations (category 4), model 10 (a new one) will emerge and expand. This is,

relating to Chan's definition, an ad hoc unfortunate compromise, which may lead to the political turmoils and widespread military warfares or even the failed federalization in Myanmar.

Concluding Remark: Myanmar Federalism and Comparative Political Studies

Viewing federalism in Myanmar through the combination of macro-static and micro-dynamic approaches, with a new creative production of typology and model that are valuable for analyzing or predicting the country's political transformation, especially in the context of democratization and ethnic conflict management, clearly provides very useful insights and deeper understandings about Myanmar's transitional politics and comparative federalism.

Although this single-case study has its primary analytical focus on current Myanmar, the study results can offer several merits in many comparative political studies. First, it gives a contextual description that allows Myanmar scholars and political scientists to know what Myanmar is like in federalism political world, especially its quasi-federal features with various hybrid elements. Second, it provides new classifications and types that may become essential for further comparative research across a range of topic, for example, the studies on strategic interactive types in connection with ethnic conflicts and political reforms.

Third, it presents new research puzzles for wider debates in the field and gives the generated hypothesis that may be tested in a larger selection of countries. The essay argues that federalization in transitional Myanmar, particularly in the dimensions of democratization and ethnic conflict management, is closely related to the fluctuation of power negotiations/competitions between central government and ethnic opposition groups. This hypothesis can subsequently be tested in other Southeast Asian countries or in other transitional developing states that have continually faced protracted problems in political development and ethnic cleavages, for examples, Russia, Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia in transitional period. Finally, it allows prediction about the likely outcomes of federalization in other countries beyond Myanmar or outcomes in the future given the presence of similar conditions and circumstances.

References

- Aung-Thwin, M. and Aung Thwin M.V. 2012. *A History of Myanmar since Ancient Times: Traditions and Transformation*. London: Reaktion Book/University of Chicago Press.
- Barth, F. (ed.). 1998. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland.
- Bhattacharyya, H. 2010. *Federalism in Asia: India, Pakistan and Malaysia*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Brand, M. 2014. "Towards 'genuine federalism'? - Myanmar's Inexorable Path Towards Constitutional Devolution and Decentralized Governance". *Constitutionalism and Legal Change in Myanmar Workshop*, 13-14 February, Singapore.
- Cady, J. F. 1954. *Political Institutions of Old Burma*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- _____. 1960. *A History of Modern Burma*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Callahan, M. P. 2007. *Political Authority in Burma's Ethnic Minority States: Devolution, Occupation, and Coexistence*. Washington D.C.: East-West Center.
- Cheesman, N., Skidmore, M. and Wilson, T. (eds.). 2010. *Ruling Myanmar: From Cyclone Nargis to National Elections*. Singapore: Institution of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Collier, D., LaPorte, J. and Seawright, J. 2012. "Putting Typologies to Work: Concept Formation, Measurement, and Analytic Rigor". *University of Utah: Political Research Quarterly*, No. 65: 217-232.
- Colino, C. 2010. "Varieties of Federalism and Propensities for Change: Theorizing the Effect of Long Term and Institutional Factors on System Change", presented at the workshop 2: "Democracy, the State and the State of Democracy in Comparative Perspective", 82nd Annual Conference, Canadian Political Science Association, Concordia University, Montreal.
- Daw Myint Kyi and Naw Angiline. 2007. *Myanmar Politics 1958-1962*. Yangon: Myanmar Historical Research Centre.
- Duchacek, I. D. 1970. *Comparative Federalism: The Territorial Dimension of Politics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Elazar, D. J. 1987. *Exploring Federalism*. Alabama: University of Alabama Press.
- _____. 1994. *Federal Systems of the World: A Handbook of Federal, Confederal and Autonomy Arrangements*. Essex: Longman.
- _____. 1995. *Federalism: An Overview*. Pretori: HSRC Publishers.
- Federal Constitution Drafting and Coordinating Committee, 2008. *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of the Union of Burma (Second Draft)*. Mae Sot, Thailand Federal Constitution Drafting and Coordinating Committee.

- Furnivall, J. S. 1956. *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*. New York.
- _____. 1960. *The Governance of Modern Burma*. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations.
- Gilbert, D. F. 2009. *From Kings, Colonies and Nations: Lessons from Ethiopia in Building Multination Federalism in Burma*. BA Dissertation in Political Studies, the University of Auckland, Auckland.
- Gravers, M. (ed.). 2007. *Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Burma*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
- Griffiths, A. L. (ed). 2005. *Handbook of Federal Countries, 2005*. Montreal: Forum of Federations/McGill University Press.
- Harmish, N. Et al. 2013. *State and Region Governments in Myanmar*. The Asia Foundation, MDRI-CESD.
- He, B., Galligan, B and Takashi Inoguchi. 2007. *Federalism in Asia*. Gheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Holmes, R.A. 1967. "Burmese Domestic Polity: The Politics of Burmanization." In *Asian Survey*, Vol.7, No.3: 188-197.
- Kymlicka, W. 2006. "Emerging Models of Multination Federalism: Are They Relevant for Africa?": in D. Turton ed, *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, Oxford: James Currey.
- Lam, J.T.M. 2009. *Politics and Government: An Introduction*. Hong Kong: Writers' & Publishers' Cooperative.
- Landman, T. 2013. *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Lange, M. 2013. *Comparative-Historical Methods*. London: Sage Publication.
- Leach, E.R. 1954. *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lijphart, A. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method". In *American Political Science Review*, Vol.65: 682-693.
- _____. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Martin, M.F. 2010. *Burma's 2010 Elections: Implications of the New Constitution and Election Laws*. Congressional Research Service.
- Meritt, R. L. 1971. *Systematic Approaches to Comparative Politics*. Chicago: Rand Mc. Nally & Company.
- Ministry of Information. 2008. *Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar 2008*, Nay Pyi Taw: Printing & Publishing Enterprise.
- Nakanishi, Y. 2013. *Strong Soldiers, Failed Revolution: The State and Military in Burma, 1962-88*. Singapore: NUS Press.

- Nordlinger, Eric A. 1972. *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center for International Affairs.
- Oo Zaw and Min Win. 2007. *Assessing Burma's Ceasefire Accords*, Policy Studies, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Riker, W. H. 1964. *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Roeder, P.G. 2007. *Where Nation-States Come From: Institutional Change in the Age of Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Scharf, F.W. 1996. "Federal Arrangements and Multi-Party Systems". In *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.30, Special Issue: 27-39.
- Scott, J. C. 1911. *Burma: A Handbook of Practical Information*. London: Alexander Moring.
- Seekins, D. M. 2002. *The Disorder into Order: The Army State in Burma since 1962*. Bangkok: White Lotus.
- Sen, B.K. 2002. "Federalism with A New Twist: Burma's Only Option." In *Federalism in Burma*, In *Legal Issues on Burma Journal*, no.11: 31-40.
- Simeon, R. 1998. "Considerations on the Design of Federations: the South African Constitution in Comparative Perspective", Working Paper (2), Institution of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University.
- Silverstein, J. 1960. *The Struggle for National Unity in the Union of Burma*. PhD Dissertation in Political Science, Graduate School, Cornell University, Ithaca.
- _____ 1980. *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- _____ 1980. *Burma Politics*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- _____ 2002. "Federalism as a Solution to the Ethnic Problem in Burma." In *Federalism in Burma*, In *Legal Issues on Burma Journal*, no.11: 3-12.
- Smith, A. 1997. "Ethnic Conflict and Federalism: The Case of Burma," In Gunther Bachler (ed.). *Federalism against Ethnicity? Institutional, Legal and Democratic Instruments to Prevent Violent Minority Conflicts*. Zurich: Verlag Ruegger: 231-259.
- Stephen, A. 2001. "Toward a New Comparative Politics of Federalism, (Multi)Nationalism, and Democracy: Beyond Rikerian Federalism", in A. Stephen *Arguing Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- South, A. 2008. *Ethnic Politics in Burma: States of Conflicts*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, R. 2009. *The State in Myanmar*, Singapore: NUS Press.
- Watts, R.L. 1996. *Comparing Federal Systems in the 1990s*. Kington, Ontario: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University.
- _____ 2006. *Models of Federal Power-sharing*. Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute.
- Wheare, K.C. 1963. *Federal Government*. London: Oxford University Press.

- Yawnghwe, C.T. 2010. *The Shan of Burma: Memoirs of a Shan Exile*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- _____. 2003. "State Constitutions, Federalism and Ethnic Self-Determination," In
- Yawnghwe, C.T. and Lian H. Sakhong (eds) *Federalism, State Constitutions and Self-Determination in Burma*. Chiang Mai: UNLD Press.
- Yawnghwe, C.T. and Lian H. Sakhong, 2004. *The New Panglong Initiative: Rebuilding the Union of Burma*. Chaing Mai: UNLD Press.
- Yawnghwe. S. 2013. *Maintaining The Union of Burma 1946-1962: The Role of the Ethnic Nationalities in A Shan Perspective*. Bangkok: Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, .