Is there a point at which a State’s internal actions (or inactions) become so troublesome that it’s sovereignty and sovereign space may be violated by foreign States or international organization in an attempt to rectify the problem?

Types of states

Unitary States
Federal States
Regional States (?)
Confederacies

Their relevance to geography relates to the question, “Where is power located?”

Unitary State

- Emphasizes central authority and the oneness of the state.
- Most common in countries that are culturally homogeneous or dominated by a single political party or dictator.
- Some are undergoing devolution, in which the central government grants greater autonomy/authority to local government. (France, Canada, Pakistan)
Waziristan • Mountainous region in NW Pakistan that borders on Afghanistan • A Federally Administered Tribal Area considered separate from the country's four provinces. • Granted considerable self rule by central to help quell unrest. • Culturally conservative • Many residents considered sympathetic to Taliban.

Federal State • Emphasizes the sharing of power between a central authority and the principal civil divisions that constitute a country. • Typical of multi-party democracies. • Examples include the United States, Germany and Nigeria. • The degree of sharing may vary, but is much greater than what is typically seen in unitary states. • Prompts state’s rights arguments in U.S.

Confederacies • Emphasizes concentration of power at the local level. • Purposefully discourages strong central authority except as regards matters of obvious convenience such currency, postal and transportation systems, telecommunications, and possibly the military. • Best example: Switzerland. (Model for emerging mini-states?)

The Federal Republic of Germany and its states

Map of Swiss Cantons
Why do civil divisions matter?

Because in some countries, like the United States, they are granted considerable decision-making power regarding issues that deeply concern (and often divide) citizens.

Examples: Crime and punishment, taxation, abortion rights, marriage and divorce, gay rights, school curricula, health care, public transportation, college tuition (at public institutions), public housing . . .
Civil Divisions of Russia (2008) 
comprised of 83 federal subjects that have equal representation (2 delegates each) in the Federal Council but differ in their autonomy

- 46 oblasts (provinces) with a federally appointed governor and locally elected legislature
- 21 republics (nominally autonomous ethnic homelands)
- 9 krais (an historic designation of former frontier regions; basically means “territory”)
- 4 okrugs (autonomous regions within oblasts)
- 1 autonomous Jewish oblast
- 2 federal cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg) that function as separate regions

Civil Divisions of the PRC (2008)

- 23 provinces (including Taiwan)
- 5 autonomous regions
  - Basically ethnic homelands of non-Han citizens that have autonomy in cultural affairs
  - Includes Xizang Autonomous Region, formerly Tibet
- 2 special administrative regions, Hong Kong and Macau, that operate with a relatively high degree of autonomy
- 4 centrally administered metropolitan areas: Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai and Tianjin.

Civil Divisions of the United States in rough hierarchical order

The 50 states
Interstate compacts
counties (or parishes)
Municipalities
Townships
Villages
Unincorporated lands

(plus a host of units that include Native American reservations, national parks and monuments, military bases, school districts, and unique places like the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of the Virgin Islands.)
Prison population per 100,000 people
(source: Pew Research Center)

The Best Places to Die, Tax-Wise

Corporal punishment in public schools
### State expenditures per pupil (public schools)

![Map of state expenditures per pupil](image)

### Abortion laws by State

- **Red** = Illegal
- **Purple** = Legal in case of rape
- **Blue** = Legal in case of danger to woman’s health
- **Green** = Legal in case of danger to woman’s health, rape or incest, or likely damage to fetus
- **Yellow** = Legal on demand

![Abortion laws by State](image)

### Scenes from Puerto Rico

- ![Flag of Puerto Rico](image)
- ![Beach scene](image)

### Puerto Rico

- One of several territories acquired by the United States in 1898 as a result of the Spanish-American War (the Philippines, Guam, Cuba, Caroline Islands)
- Officially “The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico” (*Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico*)
- Rather like a colony until 1947, when the island was given the right to elect its own governor.
- Indefinite political status. Three plebiscites in recent years. Maintain status quo? Become a state? Seek independence?
- Not a state. Nevertheless, one “enters the United States” upon arriving in Puerto Rico from a foreign State or territory.

### Puerto Rico (Part 2)

- Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens and may carry a U.S. passport and serve in the military.
- Has a legislature like the U.S.
- U.S. President is head of state.
- Puerto Ricans cannot participate in a U.S. presidential election if they reside in Puerto Rico, but can if they live in one of the fifty states. (Islanders do, however, participate in national primary elections.)
- U.S. federal laws apply to Puerto Rico.
- Islanders do not pay federal income tax, but do contribute to Social Security and Medicaid.
- There is also local tax authority.