

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## Volume I

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restrained; the national government is stable; there is good public security; citizens have been socialized to the modern system of government; resources are scarce and the centre cannot meet people's expectations and, in consequence, has to seek local support and resources; and traditional authority has an important place in the system. In short, decentralization requires political strength and economic weakness, an inherently unstable combination.

IGR in developing countries approximates the command or agency model of relationship: the centre proposes and the locality disposes. Local government has been undermined and replaced by local administration. However, even systems of field administration have complex sets of organizational relationships and there is nothing automatic about the transmission of central plans into action on the ground: for example, local bureaucrats often have a high degree of discretion and the status hierarchy of a bureaucracy impairs accurate reporting.

If the history of IGR has been bleak, the future is hardly rosy. The conditions supporting effective decentralization are exacting and, as Wallis observes, 'autonomy looks very much an unattainable idea in view of the political and economic considerations prevailing in most countries' (Wallis 1989:134). None the less, he continues, 'Scope for a limited form of the "bottom-up" approach probably exists'. Just as central governments in developed countries off-loaded functions to cope with resource squeeze, so grass-roots involvement has been part of the response in developing countries to probably even more intractable financial and economic problems. Thus, Mawhood (1987:21) concludes that local government as the agent of social and economic change has taken the back seat to a more traditional role of providing orderly, rational administration and value for money in services. The romantic view of local self-government has taken a dreadful hammering in developing countries.

## TRENDS

The year 2000 will arrive in only a few years. The resurgence of local autonomy, like miracles, will take a little longer. IGR seems to be characterized, for the near future at least, by centralization, control and declining accountability. Such a bleak scenario, however, requires some qualification.

Commentators agree that there is a clear trend towards greater centralization in both developed and developing countries. However, at the same time, central government becomes more fragmented: centralization and differentiation coexist. It is claimed that the 1980s witnessed an ideological challenge to the role of government. Its boundaries were rolled back. The rejection of central planning and the return of markets can be interpreted as an exercise in decentralization. Privatization is an oft-cited and widespread example of this process (Vickers and Wright 1988; Cook and Kirkpatrick 1988). However, privatization is an

ambiguous example. It substitutes indirect control through regulation for direct control by ownership. It changes the form of government intervention but it does not abolish either intervention or the monopoly position of the industry, nor does it necessarily resolve the problem of the industry's relationship with government (Heald 1985). However, it does change the policy network, introducing new actors and relationships, and giving a fresh twist to long-standing problems of control and accountability. Above all it illustrates that governments increasingly resort to a variety of instruments for pursuing their policies. Functions are not allocated to general purpose governments (such as local government) but to special purpose authorities. Institutional 'ad-hocracy' is the order of the day, a process which generates conflicts between agencies competing for 'turf' and between central government and local authorities which resent being bypassed. Government has not been rolled back but splintered and politicized, a process which can only frustrate the attempt to control through centralization.

Such fragmentation not only thwarts control and fuels policy slippage (or deviation from central expectations) but it also increases governmental complexity. Elgin and Bushnell identify the following consequences arising from complexity:

- 1 Diminishing relative capacity of a given individual to comprehend the overall system.
- 2 Diminishing level of public participation in decision-making.
- 3 Declining public access to decision-makers.
- 4 Growing participation of experts in decision-making.
- 5 Disproportionate growth in costs of co-ordination and control....
- 9 Increasing levels of unexpected and counter-intuitive consequences of policy action....
- 15 Declining overall performance of the system.
- 16 Growing deterioration of the overall system unlikely to be perceived by most participants in that system.

(Elgin and Bushnell 1977:37)

In turn, complexity undermines both control and accountability.

The reaction to centralization and control will be political decentralization. As Sharpe argues:

the decentralist tendencies in the politics of the West are, paradoxically, also a product of the centralization of society and the state machine. That is to say, they are a *reaction* to centralization and not a mere epiphenomenon of it.

(Sharpe 1979a:20)

Similarly, in developing countries, Wallis argues that 'there is optimism in the air' with experiments to foster effective village councils, in, for example, Kenya and Sri Lanka (Wallis 1989:141). The crucial point is that political decentralization is

a challenge to institutional centralization. It should not be equated with the revival of local government for the latter can be bastions of reaction and conservatism (Fesler 1965:543). Rather, it can be a challenge to the vested interests entrenched in local government. The micro-politics of the city and the rise of ethnic-nationalism may have receded in the 1980s but they did not disappear. They will be the second element in the politicization of IGR in the 1990s.

This wave of politicization will highlight the inadequacies of conventional mechanisms of parliamentary accountability. In governmental systems with a high degree of differentiation, accountability cannot be defined in institutional terms but must encompass the policy networks, their relationships and the policies. The system of accountability must be designed to fit policies; to assess their effectiveness, not their procedural correctness. The search for new forms of local accountability will intensify.

IGR is on the threshold of an era of turbulence. The 1980s saw old patterns of relationship disrupted but no agreement on what should take their place. The resulting proliferation of institutional forms and increase in complexity does not augur well for any improvement in either functional effectiveness or political accountability.

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## FURTHER READING

There are no authoritative surveys of IGR, although Smith (1985) provides the best general account of decentralization. Consequently, this guide to further reading has three sections: theory, developed countries and developing countries.

### Theory

The post-war classics on decentralization are Fesler (1949, 1965) and Maass (1959). Most theoretical contributors on IGR are country-specific and cover federal systems. None the less the following deserve attention: Beer (1978), USA; Crozier and Thoenig (1976), France, Kaufman *et al.* (1986), primarily the Federal Republic of Germany; Rhodes (1988), UK; and Wright (1978), USA. The collection edited by Hanf and Scharpf (1978) is noteworthy for Scharpf's theoretical essay and his analysis of the Federal Republic of Germany. There is a paucity of material on unitary states, although Tilly (1975) provides several excellent essays on the origins of unitary states in Western Europe.

### Developed countries

There are several useful collections of essays, although the essays on individual countries tend to be better than the comparative analyses. The best collections are Hanf and Scharpf (1978); Page and Goldsmith (1987c); Rhodes and Wright (1987b); and Tarrow *et al.* (1978). On the comparative study of local government reorganization see Dente and Kjellberg (1988); Gunlicks (1981); and Rowat (1980). Sharpe (1979b, 1981) provides studies of political decentralization and resource squeeze, respectively. More restricted in

scope but still comparative are Ashford (1982) and Tarrow (1977). Any listing on IGR in individual countries would be prohibitively long.

### Developing countries

An introductory survey is provided by Smith (1985), who also provides an extensive bibliography. More briefly, see Wallis (1989). Useful collections of essays are Mawhood (1983b), which focuses on Africa; Rondinelli and Cheema (1983b), which encompasses Asia; and Rowat (1980), which focuses on reorganization. On local government in the immediate post-colonial era see Maddick (1963). On developments in the 1980s see Mawhood (1987). Again a listing on individual countries would be prohibitively long.



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# INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS: FEDERAL SYSTEMS

GRANT HARMAN

Federal political systems are based on political and social theories about federalism, a concept whose origins go back to the ancient world and biblical times. Federal systems have existed in various forms from the loose linking together by treaty of sovereign states for specific military or economic purposes in the Hellenic world. But their popularity increased greatly following final agreement on the United States constitution in 1787, the use of federal ideas as a guide for the Swiss, Canadian and Australian federations, and immediately after the Second World War in various experiments of nation building, particular in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean.

In essence, federalism provides an organizational mechanism to achieve a degree of political unity within a population whose characteristics demonstrate diversity and variety. Under this arrangement, separate regional political units (often referred to as states or provinces) are combined for limited, specified purposes under an overarching administration, but in such a way that the government of each separate regional unit maintains its integrity and substantial autonomy. This is achieved by distributing powers and responsibilities in such a manner to protect the existence and authority of both levels of government. Both levels of government can pass laws, levy taxes and relate directly to the people. Usually there is an explicit constitutional demarcation of powers and functions between central and regional governments, and generally there are specified mechanisms and procedures for resolving conflicts and disputes between central and regional governments, and also between two or more regional governments.

In all types of societies where federal systems have been established, such systems demand some degree of co-operation between central and regional governments. However, in modern societies with federal systems and a much higher degree of interdependence between all levels of government (including

local government), intergovernmental relations are of crucial importance. Hence political scientists today are interested not only in theories of federalism and their application in constitutions and legislation, but also with how federal systems actually work in practice. Of particular importance is how central and regional levels of government relate to one another, how powers and responsibilities are shared, how conflict and disputes are resolved, and to what extent central and regional governmental bodies can work together effectively in the national interest in tackling problems.

### CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS

Discussions of federal systems and of intergovernmental relations within such systems are often plagued with problems of definition. This is particularly so in the case of the terms 'federalism', 'federal' and 'federation'.

In its broadest sense, the word federalism refers to the linking of people and institutions by mutual consent for a specified purpose, without the sacrifice of their individual identities. The term federal was coined by Bible-centred federal theologians of seventeenth-century Britain and New England to refer to a system of holy and enduring covenants between God and human beings, which lay at the foundations of their world view (Elazar 1968:353–4). The word federal was derived from the Latin word *foedus*, meaning covenant. This conception of federal was taken up by nineteenth-century social theorists and used in the development of various ideas of social contract. As a political device, however, federalism can be viewed more narrowly as a form of organization in which power is dispersed as a means of safeguarding individual and local liberties. In federal political systems, political organizations generally take on a distinctive character. This applies to the interest groups and political parties as well as to the formal institutions of government (see, for example, Truman 1951).

Federalism also has been conceptualized as a means to achieve different political and social purposes. Two particular purposes stand out. First, federalism has been seen by many as a means to unite people already linked together by bonds of nationality. In such cases, the political units brought together are seen as a part of a national whole. Essentially, this is the American view of federalism, which today has become the generally accepted one. An alternative view is that federalism is a means to unify diverse peoples for important but limited purposes, without disrupting their primary ties to their existing governments. Within this latter arrangement, the federal government is much more limited in scope and powers and the particular structure is often referred to as a confederation. However, a degree of confusion remains because the terms federation and confederation are often used interchangeably. Today the confederation idea has also been used for such supra-national political

organizations as the European Economic Community (EEC) and the National Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Federal systems differ from other related forms of political organization. True federal systems are different in conception from dual or multiple monarchies, where union between political units exists only through the sovereign and the exercise of his or her executive power. The dual monarchy of England and Scotland was finally eliminated through legislative union of the two nations in 1707. Such legislative unions are closely similar to federal systems, except that the terms of the union allow retention of particular non-centralizing elements. Thus, in the United Kingdom, within the framework of cabinet government, Scotland has a national ministry of its own with a separate administrative structure. Federal systems also are different from decentralized unitary states, in which local administration is usually limited in nature and subject to supervision and overall control by central authorities. In such polities local autonomy can be reduced by the central government. Many of the governments of South America which purport to be federal have in practice combined devolution of power to regional governments with an overriding authority exercised by the central governments (Watts 1966).

The word federal generally has been used loosely in political discussions. As a rule, the adjective federal has been applied to constitutions and to forms of government, although some writers (Laski 1941; Livingston 1956) have talked of federal societies and others of federal ideologies (King 1982). Livingston sees federal government as 'a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and presented.... If [the diversities] are grouped territorially, i.e. geographically, then the result may be a society that is federal. If they are not grouped territorially, then the society cannot be said to be federal' (Livingston 1956:2).

Federalism and federal systems need to be distinguished from 'intergovernmental relations' in such systems. Federalism is more than the relationships between governmental units in a federal system, since it involves principles about those relationships as well as the actual distribution of power. Federalism also is concerned with how federal principles influence political arrangements generally, including political party and electoral systems.

### ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FEDERAL SYSTEMS

Federal systems differ considerably in terms of their formal constitutions and division of powers, how they operate, and which federal principles they emphasize. Nevertheless, political theorists and researchers involved in empirical studies have found it useful to try to specify those characteristics which are essential to a truly federal system.

Watts (1966:10-11) thus emphasized the notion of dual sovereignty, with central and regional governments acting side by side, each separate and virtually

independent of the other in its own sphere. Each relates directly to the people. There must be an explicit constitutional demarcation of powers and functions for government at each level; each must be independent within its own sphere. Generally, although not necessarily, the division of authority must be specified in a written constitution, and an independent judiciary must be created to interpret the supreme constitution and to act as a guardian of the constitutional division of powers.

Two decades earlier, K.C.Wheare (1946), whose writings had a major influence on the post-Second World War experiments with new federal systems in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean, especially in the British Commonwealth, discussed at some length what federal government is. He saw the division of powers between central and regional government as a central element. But the central government is not subordinate to regional governments, as it was with the post-revolutionary association of American colonies, but rather each level within its sphere is independent and autonomous. 'By the federal principle', he wrote, 'I mean the method of dividing powers so that the general and regional governments are each, within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent' (Wheare 1946:11). This condition seems unnecessarily rigid and at variance with practice, for in many federal systems, including that of the United States and Australia, federal laws and treaties according to the constitution override those of state governments.

About a decade after Wheare, A.W.Macmahon listed the essential attributes of federalism as follows:

- (a) a federal system distributes power between a common and constituent governments under an arrangement that cannot be changed by the ordinary process of central legislation...
- (b) the matters entrusted to the constituent units...must be substantial and not merely trivial;
- (c) [the] central organs are to some extent directly in contact with individuals, both to draw authority from them through elections and also for the purpose of exacting taxes and compliance with regulations...
- (d) the member states have considerable leeway in devising and changing their forms of government and their procedures...
- (e) A further essential is the equality of the constituent states, absolute as to legal status but at best relative as to such matters as size, population and wealth.

(Macmahon 1955:4-5)

More recently, Daniel J.Elazar, a leading American scholar of federalism, defined the essential elements of federalism as a written constitution (the federal relationships must be established through a perpetual covenant of union embodied in a constitution which specifies the terms by which power is divided), non-centralization (the authority for state and federal governments to exercise powers cannot be withdrawn without mutual consent), a real division of power (the area of authority of the constituent units is territorially based), direct contact with the people (thus providing a powerful mechanism to maintain the union)

and mechanisms to maintain non-centralization (such as permanent boundaries of constituent units, and effective ways of combining units of different size), and the federal principle (such as both the central governments and state governments having a substantially complete set of governing institutions). According to Elazar, viewed theoretically,

these patterns of behavior and the arguments advanced to justify them serve to reaffirm the fundamental principles that (1) the strength of a federal polity does not stem from the power of the national government but from the authority vested in the nation as a whole; (2) both the national government and the governments of the constituent polities are possessed of delegated powers only; and (3) all governments are limited by the common national constitution.

(Elazar 1968:361)

### FEDERALISM AND FEDERAL SYSTEMS

Generations before the invention of the term federal, political systems and political organizations were developed embodying elements of federal principles. In the ancient Greek world, federal arrangements were first articulated in religious, tribal and city-state alliances. The classic example was the Achaean League (251–146 BC), which was an alliance or super polis to provide military protection. The League attracted the attention of scholars in the nineteenth century as being the first federal polity. About the same time, the Israelite political system provides an example of a union of constituent polities, based on a sense of common nationality. Several of the great ancient empires, notably under Persian, Hellenic and Roman control, structured their political arrangements under the principle of cultural home rule, which was an example of a measure of contractual devolution of political power.

In medieval times, elements of federalism were seen in feudalism and in the leagues of self-protection established by the commercial towns of central Europe. Later quasi-federal arrangements developed in Spain and Italy under a system of multiple monarchy. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, biblical scholars of the Reformation began to apply federal principles to state-building; such ideas provided an organizational basis for the federation of the United Provinces in the Netherlands in the late sixteenth century, while the Swiss created a loose confederation of cantons.

The first modern formulations of federal ideas were associated with the rise of the nation-state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Forsyth 1981). In this situation, federalism provided an attractive means of dealing with problems of national unity. The potential of federalism was seen in the early seventeenth century by Johannes Althusius, who, in analysing the Dutch and Swiss constitutions, saw federalism as a vehicle to achieve national unity. He was the first

to connect federalism with popular sovereignty and to distinguish between leagues, multiple monarchies and confederations. But it was not until immediately following the American revolution that the ideas of British and continental thinkers combined with biblical thinking to create the first modern federal system—that of the United States in 1787. This development and its success has had a major influence on ideas about federalism internationally since then.

The founders of the United States had distinct advantages over others who had experimented earlier with federal ideas. Theirs was a post-feudal society with a relatively short history. Once established, the United States was a relatively isolated nation, with only minor external pressures until the twentieth century. Moreover, Americans were concerned above all else with the practical aspects of making federalism work. The creation of a theoretical framework for the American experiment took place in the debates over ratification of the constitution and in the formulations in *The Federalist*. The end result was a compromise between those who wished the federal government to be supreme and those who wished for the states to have the leading role. In essence, the model adopted was

that the business of State is 'divided' between two popularly elected governments, a national government embracing the whole territory of the nation and a regional government for each of the lesser territories; that each government will possess the basic facilities to make, manage, and enforce its laws 'like any ordinary government'; that subject to the provisions of the constitution, each government is 'free' to act 'independently' of, or in concert with, the other, as it chooses; that jurisdictional disputes between the national government and the governments of the lesser territories will be settled by judicial arbitration; that the principle of national supremacy will prevail where two valid actions, national and regional, are in conflict; that the instruments of national government, but not necessarily the lesser territories, are set forth in a written constitution; that the national legislature is a bicameral system in which one house, the 'first branch', is composed according to the size of the population in each territory, while each territory has equal representation in the 'second branch'; lastly that the constitution is fundamental law, changeable only by a special plebiscitary process.

(Davis 1978:121–2)

The United States constitution and the experiment which followed had a major influence in federal thinking for the next two centuries. It provided key ideas for other federal experiments that followed, notably the federal constitutions for Canada and Australia. It also provided the popular archetype to which scholars continued to turn. Writing immediately after the Second World War, Wheare asserted that 'since the United States is universally regarded as an example of federal government, it justifies us in describing the principle, which distinguishes it so markedly and so significantly, as the *federal principle*' (Wheare 1946:11). Similarly, in 1969 Geoffrey Sawer commented:

'Federal Government, as that expression is now usually understood, was devised by the Founders of the Constitution of the United States of America in 1787-8' (Sawer 1969:1).

Prior to the Second World War, apart from Canada, Switzerland and Australia, a number of new nations were influenced by federal principles. For example, in Latin America, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico adopted federal structures, while federal principles were included in the constitutions of a number of other countries including Colombia and Venezuela. There were also European experiments, such as with the Weimar constitution in Germany, while federal principles were used in the United Kingdom to accommodate the Irish. But the big push towards federal systems was a post-Second World War phenomenon, as a part of post-war reconstruction in Europe and the decolonization movement in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean. Britain was the most prolific creator of post-colonial federations. Some of these post-war federal attempts soon collapsed, such as the attempt to build an All-Indian federation (1947); others lasted for a period before other arrangements took their place, such as Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953). But many federal systems established by Britain remain to this day; examples include Malaysia, Nigeria, India and Pakistan.

The lasting popularity of the federal form of government has surprised many. Scholars such as Harold Laski fifty years ago had concluded that federalism was obsolete, and outmoded for the modern world. Writing in 1939, he declared: 'I infer in a word that the epoch of federalism is over' (Watts 1966:5). But, especially in the process of building new nations in North America and Australia, and in decolonization, federalism provided a convenient model for creating political systems of reasonably large size, for achieving some degree of transcending unity in geographic areas of ethnic diversity, and as means of power sharing between major ethnic groups. In such situations, where the forces for integration and for separation have been at odds with each other, the federal solution proved a popular formula. But over the last two decades, enthusiasm for federalism has waned somewhat, especially in Africa, particularly as a number of new nations in the developing world have been plagued with economic problems. On the other hand, in modern federal systems such as the United States, Canada and Australia, the federal form of government appears remarkably durable and also adaptable to the changing requirements of modern industrial societies. Such political systems face problems of organizational complexity and in the multiplicity of power relationships; however, according to two Canadian scholars, in such systems 'there is greater opportunity for, and likelihood of, the devolution of power to lower and more manageable levels' (Bakvis and Chandler 1987:3).

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

One current major concern of political scientists and other scholars interested in federalism is how well and how efficiently modern political systems actually operate, and how central and regional governments, as well as local government bodies, attempt to work together to solve shared problems. In modern federal systems, such as the United States, Canada and Australia, a particularly complex set of machinery and relationships have developed and there is ongoing debate about how well these structures cope with the current needs of citizens and the functions of government. From time to time, federal governments and intergovernment commissions suggest major structural reform, or other ways of rationalization or achieving greater efficiency and simplicity, but substantial changes have proved difficult to achieve. There is ongoing concern, too, about the strong tendency of federal government bodies and initiatives to dominate in their relations with state and local government.

Within such federal systems, central and regional governments were able to operate in their very early years with a large measure of independence. Each had separate agreed areas of responsibility, and the main policy areas for a considerable time remained largely the sole responsibility of government at one level or another. This situation, however, did not last long, though it is a matter of debate about how much shared responsibility actually operated in the early years of these systems. Elazar, for example, with respect to the American system, argues passionately that American federalism was always marked by co-operation between governments at different levels and that 'virtually all the activities of government in the nineteenth century were shared activities, involving federal, state and local government in their planning, financing and execution' (Elazar 1969:84). But this argument needs to be seen in the context of his defence of the role of the states in the American system, and his belief that effective federalism means a real partnership and balance of power between central and regional levels of government.

Whatever the merits of the debates about the precise nature of federal arrangements in their formative stages, it is clear that today in such federal systems as the United States, Canada and Australia a highly complex set of machinery and of linkages in intergovernmental relations has developed. O'Toole (1985) sees the distinguishing features as complexity and interdependence—complexity in the sense that the intergovernmental network is large and highly differentiated, and interdependence in the sense that intergovernmental relations exhibit an amalgamated pluralism, with power and responsibility being shared among the branches and layers of government even within a single policy domain. This situation developed in response to various external pressures, such as major wars and international incidents, recessions and depressions, but also to internal problems related to areas such as social welfare, crime, education, transport and the needs of cities. In addition, there



have been special problems such as racial segregation in the United States and ethnic and cultural diversity in Canada. The extent of the current network of interrelating units of government is vast: in the United States it includes approximately 80,000 separate governmental units, comprising federal, state, county, municipal and special-district jurisdictions. Their powers and responsibilities overlap and there is a considerable degree of competition in providing services to the public (O'Toole 1985:2).

In each of these modern federal systems, complex additional political structures have been developed to enable governments at various levels to communicate and bargain, to resolve differences, and to undertake joint activities. In Australia, for instance, these structures include Premiers' Conferences, the Loan Council, and a range of separate ministerial councils covering a wide range of policy domains from agriculture and education to regulation of companies and transport. Accompanying these political structures bringing heads of government and ministers together are various administrative structures which provide for regular meetings of officials and for joint activities. Take, for example, the case of education in Australia which, at the time the federal constitution was drawn up at the beginning of the twentieth century, was to be exclusively a state matter. The Federal Government, however, gradually became involved in the education sector to the extent that today it contributes the total operating and capital funds for all public higher education (even though most institutions are legally state government institutions, responsible to a state minister) and a substantial amount of the costs of technical and further education and of both government and non-government schools. Federal and state education ministers meet regularly in the Australian Education Council, which has its own separate secretariat (located in Melbourne, a state capital) and officers, while the Council is supported by a large number of permanent and *ad hoc* committees and working groups, made up of federal and state officials (Harman and Smart 1983). Sometimes it is agreed that particular initiatives will be undertaken by either federal or state governments, but in other cases, such as with the new Curriculum Corporation, federal and state governments combine to work through a new public company structure, legally owned by the ministers.

Fiscal relations are of great concern in federal systems, especially on matters such as how income is raised through taxation and charges and by whom, and how such resources are shared and distributed. Federal governments use a number of different strategies to allocate resources to regional and local governments and to the public. These include intergovernmental transfers by block grants, and by tied or special purposes grants, shared funding between governments on an agreed formula, and direct allocations to individuals and groups (Grewal *et al.* 1980). Various mechanisms operate to try to make the resource base of each regional unit more equitable; for example, in Australia for

many years a proportion of federal taxation revenue has been allocated to the less well-off states, through the Commonwealth Grants Commission established in 1933 (May 1971).

### THE STUDY OF FEDERALISM

With the development of political science as a discipline in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the study of federalism shifted from being concerned with normative theory to empirical research. Such scholars as Bryce and Dicey studied federalism as part of an interest in political systems. Yet, with a few exceptions, the study of federalism was generally neglected for many years.

Renewed interest in federalism developed in the late 1930s and 1940s, stimulated by problems in intergovernmental relations within the United States and by a period of very active nation building which followed the Second World War. Beginning in the 1930s, a new generation of political scientists began to raise questions about the particular characteristics of federal systems and how federal structures influenced the development and operation of other components of political systems, such as interest groups and political parties. By the 1960s, federalism was attracting the attention of students of comparative politics and the politics of developing countries, as well as scholars interested in public administration.

Since the 1970s the main thrust internationally has been from students of intergovernmental relations, attempting to understand better the dynamics of interaction between government at different levels in complex federal systems such as the United States, Canada and Australia. This work has attracted the interest of economists and students of public finance as well as political scientists and students of public administration, and has been given considerable stimulus by the work of various commissions and committees of inquiry appointed by governments to consider ways of modifying existing arrangements.

Over the past two decades, students of federalism have concentrated attention on a variety of specialized problems. Three deserve mention here. The first concerns the reasons for establishing federations, or why people who achieve a federal union actually come together. On the face of it, one would speculate that people join together to form a federation for a variety of reasons, and that it would be unlikely that any common set of factors operated. However, there has been considerable debate on these questions and two different hypotheses will be considered here, outlined in two important books—W.H. Riker's *Federalism: Origins, Operation and Significance* (Riker 1964) and R.L. Watts's *New Federations: Experiments in the Commonwealth* (Watts 1966). Riker's study is in the quasi-scientific style of the 'behavioural movement' attempting

to develop testable generalizations, while Watt's work is in the tradition of the historically oriented comparative study of Wheare, concerned with the search for significant patterns.

Riker's argument is that federalism is 'a bargain between prospective national leaders and officials of constituent governments for the purpose of aggregating territory, the better to lay taxes and raise armies'. The parties are predisposed to favour such a bargain by the existence of two circumstances, which he names as the expansion condition and the military condition. The expansion condition refers to the politicians who offer the bargain desiring to expand their territorial control to meet an external military or diplomatic threat, or to prepare for military or diplomatic aggression or aggrandizement, but who, for various reasons, are unable to use force. The military condition refers to the politicians who accept the bargain giving up some independence for the sake of union, and doing so because of some military-diplomatic threat or opportunity. Riker examines numerous examples of the establishment of federations and concludes that 'the hypothesis is confirmed that the military and the expansion conditions are necessary to the occurrence of federalism' (Riker 1964). Watts examines six new federal experiments (India, Pakistan, Malaya and Malaysia, Nigeria, Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and the West Indies) and identifies a number of social factors and motives which operated, with each being potentially either unifying or separating. He concludes that, while dominant motives varied in each case,

two features stand out in common to them all. First, there was a geographical distribution, at least to some degree, of the diversities within each of these societies, with the results that demands for political autonomy were made on a regional basis. Secondly, in each of the recent federations, as in the older ones, there existed at one and the same time powerful desires to be united for certain purposes, because of a community of outlook or the expectation of common benefits of union, and deep rooted desires to be organized under autonomous regional governments for others, because of contrasting ways of life or the desire to protect divergent interests. The result in each was a tension between the conflicting demands for territorial integration and for Balkanization.

(Watts 1966:93)

Neither of these hypotheses have been found totally satisfactory. Davis (1978) comments that, irrespective of these two approaches, what is common to all cases of the establishment of federal systems is a discussion of what kind of political structure is to result, and a process of hammering out an agreement to accommodate different interests.

A second debate among scholars relates to how federal systems change over time, and the operation of conflicting trends towards integration and decentralization. An international comparative study undertaken by the

Comparative Federalism Research Committee of the International Political Science Association (Brown-John 1988) concludes that most federal systems appear to be centralizing legislative powers, while in a small number of cases the opposite trend operates. Other recent studies have observed the same phenomenon. What factors promote integration and decentralization? Will the trend towards integration lead to the eventual modification of federal systems in favour of unitary structures, and will the trend towards decentralization lead to eventual disintegration? Debate on these topics has not been conclusive. Davis, for example, rejects the notion that the answer lies either in the factors of institutional ability or political predisposition alone, and sees a centralizing trend being dominant in federal systems in all complex societies. In such societies, he argues, to talk of independent action by either federal or regional governments is meaningless 'when two governments, whether from love or necessity, become so wedded to each other in the common bed of nationalized politics that neither can turn, talk, or breathe without immediately affecting the other (Davis 1978:148). In such situations, there is a strong tendency for central governments to take a commanding role, especially in terms of fiscal relations. The precise way that fiscal resources are divided between different levels of government in turn affects critically the political and administrative relations between the central government and the states.

Livingston takes a different approach. His argument, in summary, is that the legal/formal or jurisprudential approach to understanding federalism is only one approach. An alternative is to concentrate on the social configuration of society—the types of interests which compose it, their diversity, their geographic distribution, etc. The degree that social diversity is distributed on a territorial basis determines the federal qualities of the society. He explains:

Every society, every nation if you will, is more or less closely integrated in accordance with its own peculiar historical, cultural, economic, political and other determinants. Each is composed of elements that feel themselves to be different from the other elements in varying degrees.... Furthermore, these diversities may be distributed among the members of a society in such a fashion that certain attitudes are found in particular territorial areas, or they may be scattered widely throughout the whole of the society. If they are grouped territorially, that is geographically, then the result may be a society that is federal. If they are not grouped territorially, then the society cannot be said to be federal.

(Livingston 1967:37)

Thus the answer to integration or decentralization lies, as does understanding the dynamics of a federal system, with understanding the federal qualities of a society.

A somewhat similar theoretical approach comes from Friedrich, who sees federation essentially as a process. His argument is that in the process of federalizing

an emergent federal order may be operating in the direction of both integration and differentiation; federalizing being *either* the process by which a number of separate political units...enter into and develop arrangements for working out solutions together...*or* the reverse process through which a hitherto unitary political community, as it becomes differentiated into a number of separate and distinct political subcommunities, achieves a new order in which the differentiated communities become capable of working out separately and on their own decisions and policies on problems they no longer have in common. Federalism refers to this process, as it does to the structures and patterns this process creates.

(Friedrich 1968:176-7)

Friedrich's work, like Livingston's approach, is full of ambiguity and difficulties. It is difficult, for example, to recognize which processes are federal and which are not. Further, he does not provide any real indication of the link between the process and structure. However, he leads us to expect that federal systems generally are not static but changing in response to various pressures.

Other scholars have approached the problem of change in federal systems, and of integrating and decentralizing trends, from other perspectives. Brown-John (1988) argues that recently in federal systems there is less use of constitutional amendments to achieve change, and more use of agreements between governments, often negotiated by public officials. This facilitates changing relations. Earlier another Canadian scholar, Donald V.Smiley (1980), drew attention to the importance of executive elite interaction as one of the particular characteristics of Canadian federalism.

Finally, especially in the United States, there has been a lively debate about intergovernmental relations and how best to conceptualize the structure of a modern federal system and the complex linkages between different levels of government and between different agencies. Grodzins emphasizes the importance of government at three levels in the United States, and, while the structure is chaotic, it works. He sees the American federal system as a structure of sharing and integration, and uses the metaphor of a marble cake:

the American system of government as it operates is not a layer cake at all. It is not three layers of government, separated by a sticky substance or anything else. Operationally, it is a marble cake, or what the British call a rainbow cake. No important activity of government in the United States is the exclusive province of one of the levels, not even what may be regarded as the most national functions, such as foreign relations, not even the most local of functions, such as police protection or park maintenance.

(Grodzins 1966:18)

Elazar, who was a research student of Grodzins, takes a similar view, emphasizing the importance of partnership and shared responsibility. But in their work there is a certain ambiguity about the precise extent of powers at different levels, and what happens when there is a major conflict and the partners disagree.

### FEDERALISM: THEORY AND EXPERIENCE

Federalism is a set of political principles and values deeply rooted in Western history, but it was not until the nineteenth century that it was successfully applied as a basis for structuring modern political systems. Since then numerous attempts have been made to establish polities based on federal principles. While some attempts have not survived in the longer term, many federal political systems have proved most durable and adaptable. In such systems—for example, the United States, Canada and Australia—there is a reasonably strong popular commitment to federal principles and arrangements.

Despite theories about federalism being a transition stage to unitary government, no truly federal system has evolved into a unitary one. On the contrary, federalism as a principle has worked well to combine diverse interests into one polity and at the same time produce some of the most stable and long-lasting political systems.

Elazar (1968:365) argues that federalism does not suit all political cultures, but that it appears to fit particularly well with Anglo-American societies, with their strong commitment to constitutionalism and a distinct preference for non-centralization. This proposition is open to debate, but certainly the successful operation of a federal system requires a particular kind of political environment, conducive to popular democratic government and with strong traditions of political co-operation and self-restraint that minimize the need for coercion. Apart from this, federal systems appear to work best in societies with sufficient overriding shared interests to provide continuing reason for federal combination and an willingness to rely on a large measure of voluntary co-operation.

On the other hand, federal systems are not without their problems and intergovernmental relations invariably involve frustrations, tensions, conflicts and a certain degree of managerial inefficiency. In most modern federal systems, there are ongoing discussions about ways in which to improve or change the existing division of constitutional powers, and to overcome perceived problems. Still, defenders of federal systems argue that despite the costs involved, federalism provides net advantages, especially compared with alternatives such as micro-nationalism among small neighbouring countries. Within federal systems there are ongoing debates about whether federalism is a force of conservatism, or whether federal structures facilitate social and political change.

Such debates vary over time even in one society, and significantly in some federal systems left-wing parties favour more central power while in others the reverse is true. However, federalism does allow simultaneous electoral success for different parties at central and state levels.

In the short-term future, existing federal systems seem likely to continue along existing lines, with even greater interest in reviewing and improving problems in intergovernmental relations. Whether federal principles will be used in any rearrangement of political systems as a result of major current changes in Eastern Europe is difficult to know, but possibly federal principles will be adopted increasingly as a convenient means of linking sovereign states for limited economic purposes (Norrie *et al.* 1986).

In terms of scholarship, there is probably more uncertainty about federalism than ever, despite the significant contributions of scholars over the past two or three decades. There are so many different perspectives, so many approaches. But it seems reasonable to expect that in the future there will be less interest in defining federalism and in discussing the extent to which different polities exhibit federal characteristics and more interest in the changing nature of federal systems, in their adaptability to meet new needs, and in the complexities of intergovernmental relations in modern federal systems.

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**PART VI**

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**POLITICAL FORCES AND  
POLITICAL PROCESSES**



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# PERSONALITY AND POLITICS

FRED I. GREENSTEIN

The personalities of political actors impinge on political affairs in countless ways, often with great consequences. Political life regularly generates such contrary-to-fact conditionals as 'If Kennedy had lived, such-and-such would or would not have happened'. Counterfactual propositions are not directly testable, but many of them are so compelling that even the most cautious historian would find them persuasive. Most historians would agree, for example, that if the assassin's bullet aimed at President elect Franklin D. Roosevelt in February 1933 had found its mark, there would have been no New Deal, or if the Politburo had chosen another Leonid Brezhnev, Konstantin Chernenko or Yuri Andropov rather than Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, the epochal changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s would not have occurred, at least not at the same time and in the same way.

The seemingly self-evident effects of many changes in leadership, including changes of a much lesser order in lesser entities than the national governments of the United States and the Soviet Union, along with the innumerable other events in the political world that are difficult to account for without taking cognizance of the actors' personal peculiarities, lead the bulk of non-academic observers of politics, including journalists, to take it for granted that personality is an important determinant of political behaviour. Yet political scientists typically do not make personality and politics a principal focus of investigation. They tend instead to focus on impersonal determinants of political events and outcomes, even those in which the participants themselves believe personality to have been significant. Or, if they do treat individual action as important, they posit rationality, defining away personal characteristics and presuming that the behaviour of actors can be deduced from the logic of their situations (compare Simon 1985).

Personality and politics as a field of academic study is controversial and poses formidable methodological challenges, but many of the controversies can be

turned to constructive intellectual purposes and important phenomena demand study, even if they pose methodological difficulties. There is controversy among scholars even about such a seemingly simple matter as the definition of the terms 'personality' and 'politics', and there are more fundamental disagreements about the extent to which personality can, in principle, be expected to influence political behaviour. Reservations have been expressed about the utility of studying the personalities of political actors on the grounds that:

- 1 political actors are randomly distributed in roles and therefore their personalities 'cancel out';
- 2 political action is determined more by the actors' political environments than by their own characteristics;
- 3 the particular stratum of the psyche many political scientists equate with *personality*, psychodynamics and the ego defences, does not have much of a political impact;
- 4 the social characteristics of political actors are more important than their psychological characteristics; and
- 5 individuals are typically unable to have much effect on political outcomes.

On analysis, each of these reservations or disagreements proves to have interesting substantive ramifications for the study of personality and politics.

### DEFINITIONAL QUESTIONS

Narrowly construed, the term *politics* in *personality and politics* refers to the politics most often studied by political scientists—that of civil government and of the extra-governmental processes that more or less directly impinge upon government, such as political parties and interest groups. Broadly construed, it refers to politics in all of its manifestations, whether in government or any other institution, including many that are rarely studied by political scientists—for example, the family, school and workplace. By this broader construction, the common denominator is the various referents of *politics*, including the exercise of influence and authority and the diverse arts of interpersonal manoeuvre such as bargaining and persuasion connoted by the word 'politicking', none of which are monopolized by government.

*Personality* also admits of narrow and broad definitions. In the narrow usage typical of political science, it excludes political attitudes and opinions and often other kinds of political subjective states as well (for example, the ideational content associated with political skill) and applies only to non-political personal differences, or even to the subset of psychopathological differences that are the preoccupation of clinical psychology. In psychology, on the other hand, the term has a much broader definition—in the phrase of the personality theorist Henry

Murray (1968), it 'is the most comprehensive term we have in psychology'. Thus, in their influential study of *Opinions and Personality*, the psychologists M. Brewster Smith, Jerome Bruner and Robert White (1956:1) use an expression one would not expect from political scientists, describing opinions as 'an integral part of personality'.

Although usage is a matter of convention and both the narrow and the broad definitions encompass phenomena worthy of study, this seemingly semantic controversy has a significant bearing on what scholars study. As Lasswell (1930:42-4) argued long ago, there are distinct advantages to adopting the broader definition. A perspective that transcends governmental politics encourages the study of comparable phenomena, some of which may happen to be part of the formal institutions of governance and some of which may not. Browning and Jacobs (1964), for example, compared the needs for power, achievement and affiliation (friendship) of business people and public officials in highly diverse positions that imposed sharply divergent demands. They found that the public officials were by no means all cut from the same psychological cloth, but that there were important similarities between certain of the public officials and business people. The underlying principle appears to be that personality tends to be consistent with the specific demands of roles, whether because of preselection of the role incumbents or because of in-role socialization.

### THE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS IN ROLES

If the first of the reservations sometimes expressed about the value of studying personality and politics—the claim that individuals are randomly distributed in political roles and therefore their impact is somehow neutralized—is empirically sound, that is by no means a reason not to study personality and politics. If one visualizes political processes as analogous to intricately wired computers, political actors can be viewed as key junctures in the wiring, such as circuit breakers, for example. If anything it would be *more*, not less, urgent to know the performance characteristics of the circuit breakers if their operating properties were random, with some capable of tripping at inappropriate times, losing valuable information, and others failing to trip, exposing the system to the danger of meltdown.

In the real political world, events sometimes do more or less randomly assign individuals with unanticipated personal styles and proclivities to political roles, often with significant consequences. This was the case of two of the national leaders referred to in the opening of this chapter: neither Franklin Roosevelt's nor Mikhail Gorbachev's contemporaries anticipated the innovative leadership they displayed in office. As the Browning and Jacobs (1964) study suggests, however, people do not appear to be randomly distributed in political roles,

though the patterns of their distribution appear to be complex and elusive. Ascertaining them and examining their political consequences is an important part of the intellectual agenda for the study of personality and politics.

### PERSONALITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The second reservation about the study of personality and politics—that environment has more impact than personality on behaviour—and the other three reservations need to be considered in the context of a general clarification of the types of variables that in principle can affect personality and politics and their possible interconnections. An important example of such a clarification is M.Brewster Smith's well-known 'map for the study of personality and politics' (Brewster Smith 1968). (See also Stone and Schaffner's (1988:33) depiction of 'political life space'.) The representation that I will employ (Greenstein 1975) is introduced in segments in Figures 1 and 2 and set forth in its entirety in Figure 3.

The most fundamental distinction in the map is the rudimentary one that, as Kurt Lewin put it, 'behaviour or any kind of mental event...depends on the state of the person and at the same time on the environment (Lewin 1936:11–12). Figure 1 shows the links between the two broad classes of behavioural antecedent Lewin refers to and behaviour itself, using the terminology of Lasswell and Kaplan (1950:4–6), who ground an entire conceptual framework for the analysis of politics on the equation that human response (R) is a function of the respondent's environment (E) and predispositions (P):  $E \rightarrow P \rightarrow R$ . Here again, terminology is a matter of convenience. Instead of *predispositions*, it would have been possible to use many other of the eighty terms Donald Campbell (1963) enumerates in his account of the logic of studying 'acquired behavioural dispositions'. Such terms as *situation*, *context* and *stimulus* are common alternative labels for all or part of the environment of human action.

The  $E \rightarrow P \rightarrow R$  formula provides a convenient way of visualizing the fallacy in the claim that behaviour is so much a function of environments that individuals' predispositions need not be studied (reservation two). In fact, environments

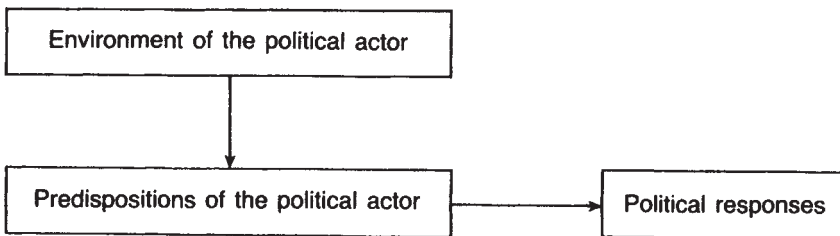


Figure 1 Basic antecedents of political behaviour:  $E \rightarrow P \rightarrow R$

are always mediated by the individuals on whom they act; environments cannot shape behaviour directly, and much politically important action is not reactive to immediate stimuli. Indeed, the capacity to be *proactive* (Murray 1968) and transcend existing perceptions of what the environment dictates is at the core of effective leadership. But the debate about whether environments determine political behaviour is a reminder of the endless interplay of individuals and the political contexts in which they find or place themselves.

Some contexts are indeed associated with the kind of behaviour that leads social determinists to be sceptical about the need to study personality. Informed of the impending collapse of a building, everyone—irrespective of temperament and personality type—will seek to leave it. Other contexts illustrate Gordon Allport's aphorism that 'the same heat that hardens the egg, melts the butter' (Allport 1937:325). Still others are virtual ink blots, leading individuals with varying characteristics to project their inner dispositions onto them.

The connection between personality and context is so integral that this relationship has become the basis of an important approach to personality theory known as interactionism (Magnusson and Endler 1977; Pervin and Lewis 1978; Endler 1981). By systematically analysing personality and politics in interactional terms, the analyst is sensitized to the kinds of contingent relationships that make the links between personality and politics elusive.

A good example of a contingent relationship in which the impact of personality is mediated by the environment is to be found in the work of Katz and Benjamin (1960) on the effects of authoritarianism in biracial work groups in the north and the south of the USA. Katz and Benjamin compared white undergraduates in the two regions who scored low and high on one of the various authoritarian personality measures to see how they comported themselves in interracial problem-solving groups. They found that in the south authoritarianism (which previous studies showed to be associated with racial prejudice) was associated with attempts of white students to dominate their black counterparts, but that in the north the authoritarians were more likely than the non-authoritarians to be *deferential* to blacks. The investigators' conclusion was that the socio-political environment of the southern authoritarians enabled them to give direct vent to their impulses, but that the liberal environment of the northern university led students with similar proclivities to go out of their way to avoid conflict with the prevailing norms.

The relative effect of environment and personality on political behaviour varies. Ambiguous environments—for example, new situations and political roles that are only sketchily defined by formal rules (Budner 1962; Greenstein 1969:50–7)—provide great latitude for actors' personalities to shape their behaviour. Structured environments—for example, bureaucratized settings and contexts in which there are well-developed and widely known and accepted norms—tend to constrain behaviour. The environment also is likely to account