

Government 30

Lecture 8

Political Culture

March 1, 2006

FISCAL FEDERALISM

A. Grants-in-Aid

B. Goals

1. state needs: transportation, welfare
2. national needs: health, educ/training

C. Mandates and Conditions

1. ADA (1990) – provide disabled w/ equal access
2. Reagan and drinking age

D. Categorical grants v block grants v revenue sharing

E. Competition among states: wisdom of founders.

Table 2. State Own Source Revenues and Federal Grants to States As a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product, 1961 - 2001

Year	Own Source Revenues	Federal Grants	Total
1961	3.87%	0.75%	4.63%
1971	5.26%	1.79%	7.06%
1981	5.46%	1.88%	7.34%
1991	5.88%	2.10%	7.98%
2001	6.01%	2.57%	8.58%

Note: Columns may not add to total because of rounding. Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, www.ncsl.org.

Growth of State Spending in Texas, 1978-2003

Year	Governor	Texas State Spending from All Funds, Billions \$	% Incr.
1978-79		16.5	
1980-81	Clements I	21.6	30.90%
1982-83	Clements I	25.7	19.00%
1984-85	White	30.9	20.20%
1986-87	White	35.6	15.20%
1988-89	Clements II	40.1	12.60%
1990-91	Clements II	48.3	20.40%
1992-93	Richards	62.7	29.80%
1994-95	Richards	75	19.60%
1996-97	Bush I	81.1	8.10%
1998-99	Bush I	88.9	9.60%
2000-01	Bush II	102.4	14.60%
2002-03	Perry	113.8	11.70%

Why Federalism?

A. For Framers, no logic. Rather a practical problem: how to unite the colonies.

B. Liberty-based Argument: liberty more secure in small republics.

(1) participation greatest in smaller governments, to a point (Eric Oliver)

(2) states often lead the way in civil rights (e.g., western states and women's suffrage)

(3) but, rights can be curtailed by states too [e.g., Jim Crow laws in South in 1890s-1910s]

Why Federalism?

Efficacy-Based Arguments

(1) Local Problem-Solving: "Washington doesn't know best" arguments.

- developmental policies versus redistributive policies.

(2) The Logic of Laboratories (Osborne)

FDR and New Deal, Balanced Budget Amendment, Regulation (RRs, food and drugs, financial services), Welfare: "workfare".

Qualification: still need degree of uniformity in order that we can all benefit from the learning?

D. Federalism as Government Competition (the Buchanan Argument)

1. Federalism a possible political analog to the market.
2. Where decentralization is high, voters have “exit options,” that is, can buy and shop elsewhere.
3. But think of Federalist critique: might “race to the bottom” adversely affect states’ abilities to provide essential services?
4. Buchanan: 19th c. U.S. growth under conditions of limited federal government. True, but (a) state government was “big” in many ways during 19th c. U.S. (see William Novak, *The People’s Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America*), (b) 20th c. growth under conditions of expanded federal government.

Federalism: Protector or Enemy of Liberty?

- A. Protector: devolution of power means that it is not concentrated
- B. Threat
 1. rights and benefits of govt vary across states
 2. State majorities can oppress (Madison, *Federalist* #10)
- C. State innovation a protection (Wyoming and women)

Political Culture in the United States

Q: what makes us free? What if we were to transport our institutions to another country?

Political culture: a definition (Wilson and DiIulio): “A distinctive and patterned way of thinking about how political and economic life ought to be carried out.” National character.

Add: Patterned ways of *seeing* and *talking*, usually not explicit or conscious.

“Culture” consists as much in *symbols* and in *language* as in thought.

Example: Abortion Debate

Debate in U.S. is framed almost entirely i/t/o rights of individual.

Pro-life: right to life of unborn

Pro-choice: reproductive freedom

Alternative framings are possible:

- (1) utilitarian argument -- what's efficient?
- (2) moral argument: what's just, moral, holy, duty?
- (3) communitarian argument -- what are the interests/rights of community (Glendon)?

Political Culture vs Political Institutions

Institutions: Rules of Engagement
e.g., Constitution, laws

CULTURE: Norms (expectations), **symbols** of engagement (Edelman). Creates our assumptions as political actors. Gives us our language of expression.

Institutions  Culture

Edelman: Symbols, Symbolic Power and Traceability

Politics dominated by symbols, most of them vague, ambiguous (perhaps intentionally):

“For most men most of the time politics is a series of pictures in the mind, placed there by television news, newspapers, magazines and discussions.”

Referential symbols:

Condensation symbols:

Condensation Symbols and Symbolic Politics

Edelman, S&W, p. 279: "Where condensation symbols are involved, the constant check of the immediate environment is lacking. ... Nor is there the check of reality and feedback upon those to whom Adlai Stevenson or Barry Goldwater or Dwight Eisenhower are symbols of reason, intelligence, and virtue in public policy. Conclusive demonstrations that their heroes' policies may often be futile or misconceived are impossible simply because the link between dramatic political announcements and their impact upon people is so long and so tangled."

Doug Arnold (Princeton): **traceability** of outcomes to policies and political actions is often weak, highly variable.

Examples: Democratic and Republican

Bill Clinton and the Lewinsky scandal. Affected the election of 2000. Important for confirmation of "Ted Kennedy" imagery.

Research by Kathleen Hall Jamieson (Penn): Gore (2000) is damaged on issues of "honesty," link to doubts on Clinton

Ronald Reagan and lobbying for Japan (May 1989).

Bush and the UAE-ports deal.

Precept #2: FAITH

A. Religious

1. America is a profoundly religious nation, esp in comparison to European counterparts.
2. Politics often fought out in arena of religion.
 - (a) Abolition struggle
 - (b) Civil rights struggle
 - (c) Prohibition struggle

B. Secular (Croly): What is the Faith of the 20th century?

1. Symbol of the Frontier (JFK)
2. Symbol of the Dream (King)
3. Symbol of the Struggle, of Liberation (King)

Precept #3: DELIBERATIVE ORGANIZATION

Hypothesis: The constitutional primacy of the legislature in America rests on the cultural primacy of the committee. (Symbol: the committee).

DeT: In response to a given problem, “the neighbors at once form a deliberative body; this improvised assembly produces an executive authority which remedies the trouble before anyone has thought of the possibility of some previously constituted authority beyond that of those concerned.” (VI, Pt I, Ch. 4)

Why the committee? Why the association?
(1) collective problem-solving, comb w/
(2) individual freedom and voice.

Precept #1: INDIVIDUALISM

(You've seen this already.)

A definition. DeT, *Democracy in America*, VII, Part 2, Ch 2, “Of Individualism in Democracies.” (p. 193)

“Individualism is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the greater society to look after itself.”

Precept #1: INDIVIDUALISM

(You've seen this already.)

Implications:

- BELIEFS: “Let your conscience be your guide” (Thoreau, Hartz).
- GOVERNMENT: “That government governs best which governs not at all” (Thoreau).
- SYMBOL: the cowboy (Bellah, et al.).

DeT: individualism is a threat to democracy.

The antidotes: (1) political liberty, (2) faith, deliberation and association.

Precept #4: ASSOCIATIONS

(You've seen this already.)

DeT, *Democracy in America*, V II, Pt. 2, Ch. 5, "On the Use Which the Americans Make of Associations in Civil Life."

"Americans of all ages, all conditions, and dispositions constantly form associations. They have not only commercial and manufacturing companies, in which all take part, but associations of a thousand other kinds, -- religious, moral, serious, futile, general or restricted, enormous or diminutive. The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; they found in this manner hospitals, prisons, or schools."

Precept #4: ASSOCIATIONS

Problem: Is DeT's associational world still with us?

(1) West, *Race Matters*: "We have created rootless, dangling people with little link to the supportive networks -- family, friends, school -- that sustain some sense of purpose in life. We have witnessed the collapse of the spiritual communities that in the past helped Americans face despair, disease, and death and that transmit through the generations dignity and decency, excellence and elegance."

(2) Putnam's metaphor of "Bowling Alone." Are we losing this cultural feature (*social capital*)?
