

Political Science and Federalism

**SEVEN DECADES OF
SCHOLARLY
ENGAGEMENT**

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2000 KENNETH R. MACGREGOR LECTURER



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FOREWORD

This publication is the revised and much expanded text of a public address by Richard Simeon as the Kenneth R. MacGregor Lecturer in Intergovernmental Relations. The lecture was delivered on 13 October 2000.

Richard Simeon is among Canada's leading political scientists and a very distinguished scholar of federalism and intergovernmental relations. He received his PhD in Political Science from Yale University in 1968 and spent over twenty years as Professor of Political Studies at Queen's University, where he also served as Director of the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations and then as Director of the School of Public Administration. Dr. Simeon has contributed extensively to public service, as Research Coordinator (Institutions of Federalism) with the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Canada's Development Prospects 1983 to 1985; as Vice-Chair of the Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1988 to 1994; and as a member of the Ontario Advisory Committee on Confederation, 1978 to 1982. He has also advised successive Ontario governments on constitutional matters. He has held visiting appointments at the University of British Columbia, Essex University, Australian National University, and at Harvard University where he was Mackenzie King Visiting Professor of Canadian Studies in 1998.

Simeon has made significant contributions to research and writing focusing on Canadian politics and public policy, with a special emphasis on federalism, the constitution and intergovernmental relations. Among his numerous publications in these areas are the award-winning *Federal-Provincial Diplomacy* (1972), *Must Canada Fail?* (1977), *Redesigning the State: The Politics of Constitutional Change in Industrial Nations* (edited with Keith Banting, 1982), *State, Society and the Development of Canadian Federalism* (with Ian Robinson, 1990), and *Rethinking Federalism: Citizens, Politics and Markets* (edited with Karen Knop, *et al.*, 1996). He has broadened his scholarship by engaging in issues of contemporary Canadian and comparative governance, multilevel governance, globalization, and constitutionalism in divided societies, including South Africa.

This essay critically reviews and analyzes how successive generations of Canadian scholars have understood Canadian federalism, and explores the relationship of their work to the evolution of the Canadian federation. To my

knowledge, this is truly pioneering work and thus a major contribution to our understanding the role of federalism literature, especially in English-speaking Canada, in the life of the country.

Queen's University established the MacGregor Lectureship in order to bring to the campus from time to time a prominent public figure or scholar who can make an important contribution to the understanding or practice of federalism, intergovernmental relations or related matters in Canada or other countries. The lectureship is funded by an endowment in honour of Kenneth R. MacGregor who had a distinguished career in the field of insurance, including its intergovernmental complexities, in particular as the federal Superintendent of Insurance, 1953 to 1964 and President of Mutual Life Assurance of Canada, 1964 to 1973.

Previous MacGregor Lecturers have included Robert Stanfield, Peter Lougheed, Alan Cairns, Allan Blakeney, Albert Breton, Gordon Robertson, Daniel Elazar and Roger Gibbins.

The Institute of Intergovernmental Relations is delighted to be able to publish this very important contribution to the study of federalism and intergovernmental relations in Canada.

Harvey Lazar
Director

Institute of Intergovernmental Relations
January 2002

PREFACE

Canadians are completely unable to imagine their country as being other than federal, as having any existence apart from federalism ... Federalism is undoubtedly, for better or for worse, a fundamental attribute of the way in which Canada conducts its public business.¹

What is true of Canada generally is, of course, even more so for those who study its politics. Federalism and regionalism — and the relations between them — have been the central preoccupations of Canadian political scientists, whether their object has been to explain or recommend, to praise or condemn. Concern with federalism has infused almost every other aspect of political studies, from parties to policy-making to political theory. But how has the study of federalism been conducted? How have the themes, issues, and questions changed over the generations? What contributions have scholars made to our understanding of the dynamics of Canadian federalism and of its implications for community, society, and economy in Canada?

These are the central questions posed in this exploration of the scholarly literature on federalism over the course of the twentieth century. It is, in a sense, a personal reflection, since I have been preoccupied with federalism throughout my academic career. As an undergraduate at the University of British Columbia in the 1960s, three of Canada's leading federalism scholars — Edwin R. Black, Alan Cairns, and Donald Smiley — became lifelong mentors and models. My PhD dissertation, *Federal-Provincial Diplomacy: The Making of Recent Policy in Canada* built on what they taught me. At Queen's University, three notable principals who also happened to be first-rate federalism scholars — Alex Corry, John Deutsch, and Ronald Watts — provided further support and inspiration. In 1976, I succeeded Ron Burns as director of the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, which remains the leading source of academic and policy-related research on federalism in Canada. Shortly after my appointment the Parti Québécois was elected to power in Quebec, instantly shifting our agenda from fiscal and administrative federalism to the most fundamental questions of national unity and constitutional renewal. In 1983 I joined the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Canada's Development Prospects as a research coordinator on federalism, under the direction of Alan Cairns. And the preoccupation with federalism has continued since my joining

the University of Toronto, working with new colleagues, notably David Cameron, Grace Skogstad, and Peter Russell. Despite many promises to myself to move away from the field, it will not let me go. As Alan Cairns said in the limerick he wrote for me at the end of our work on the Macdonald Commission:

There once was a scholar named Simeon
For whom federalism was like a religion
He argued its strength at inordinate length
With a passion quite close to a sermon.

I am not, therefore, a dispassionate or remote observer of the story told here; rather, I am an engaged participant. This accounts both for what I have included and what I have ignored or downplayed.

Some caveats must be made at the outset. Many disciplines — history, law, economics, geography, and sociology — have contributed to our understanding of federalism in Canada, but this paper focuses primarily on work in political science. The study of federalism is intimately entwined with debates about Quebec nationalism, national unity, and Canada's "constitutional odyssey," but I do not attempt a full-scale review of the vast literature on these subjects; the focus is squarely on federalism itself. The analysis is impressionistic; I have not made a quantitative analysis of journals, books, or government publications, a project now being undertaken by David Cameron and Jacqueline Krikorian.² Most important, I have concentrated most heavily on writings in English. There are major differences in how anglophone and francophone scholars have approached the study of federalism. As we will see, in the postwar period most (but not all) of the former were railing against decentralization, while most of their Quebec colleagues were arguing strenuously against perceived centralization. In later periods, most Québécois political scientists were sympathetic to Quebec nationalism and supported sovereignist proposals in varying degrees. English-speaking scholars were deeply divided in their responses to Quebec nationalism. But almost all appear to have seen it as an issue to be managed: if many Quebecers focused on "nation-building," anglophones concentrated on "nation-saving," even as they disagreed about how to do it. Differences in perspective remain — for example, it is conventional wisdom among anglophone scholars that Canada is among the world's most decentralized federations; few francophone colleagues view it in that way. The reader should thus bear in mind the consequences of my choice to focus largely on writing in one of our two national languages.

The paper begins with an overview of continuing themes and approaches to the study of federalism. The shifting focus of attention is then traced over time, beginning with the critical work of the 1930s, and concluding with an assessment of some recent work. I explore the varying methodological approaches that have been brought to bear on understanding federalism, and then assess their strengths, weaknesses, and unfinished agendas. I conclude with some thoughts about future directions in the study of federalism.

RÉSUMÉ

Le fédéralisme a été et demeure l'une des préoccupations essentielles des chercheurs engagés dans l'étude de la politique canadienne. Mais les questions posées, les méthodes employées pour mener cette étude et les implications normatives et politiques qui lui ont été attribuées, ont énormément varié au cours des décennies. Notre étude examine les travaux que des chercheurs, essentiellement anglophones, ont effectués sur le fédéralisme depuis les années 1930. Elle montre que les points forts ainsi que les faiblesses de ces travaux sont en grande partie imputables à l'implication des auteurs dans les questions politiques majeures du moment. Ils portent la marque indélébile de cette qualité partisane et *engagée* — qu'elle se soit manifestée, tout d'abord, par des dénonciations du fédéralisme comme étant obsolète et rétrograde ou, plus récemment, par la célébration de celui-ci. Ils ont aussi été orientés par l'utilisation de méthodes alternatives pour aborder cette discipline, depuis l'économie politique, en passant par le béhaviorisme, jusqu'au « nouvel institutionnalisme ». En conclusion, notre étude offre une évaluation optimiste du programme de recherches, pour l'avenir, étant donné que les études fédérales, au Canada, ont été renforcées par une perspective comparative et par un renouvellement des liens avec les théories politiques de citoyenneté, d'identité et de différence.

ABSTRACT

Federalism has been and remains one of the central preoccupations of scholars engaged in the study of Canadian politics. But the questions that have been asked about it; the methods employed to study it; and the normative and policy implications that have been ascribed to it have all varied greatly over the decades. This study explores the work of scholars, primarily English-speaking, with federalism since the 1930s. It shows that both the strengths and the weaknesses in this work are largely a product of the engagement of writers with the major policy issues of the day. The work is indelibly marked with its partisan and engagé quality — whether in the denunciations of federalism as obsolete and retrograde in earlier times or in its celebration more recently. It has also been shaped by its use of alternative methods and approaches to the discipline, from political economy to behaviouralism to “new institutionalism.” The study concludes with an optimistic assessment of the scholarly agenda for the future, as federal studies in Canada have been invigorated by a comparative perspective and by renewed links with political theories of citizenship, identity, and difference.

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND FEDERALISM

SEVEN DECADES OF SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Two fundamental forces have shaped the character and preoccupations of the study of federalism and regionalism in Canada.³ The first is the influence of political events in the wider society. Research and analysis have been inextricably bound up with the political fortunes of the Canadian political system, even as they have helped shape popular and political definition of the problems. The second influence has been the changing theoretical and methodological concerns of the discipline as a whole. These forces help explain both the issues and concepts that have attracted scholarly attention and the strengths and weaknesses of the field.

All social science exists in a creative tension with its own society. It gains its energy from the attempt to grapple with real, immediate conflicts and problems; it makes its longer term contribution through abstracting from and transcending the bounds of day-to-day discourse. To be preoccupied with the here and now poses the danger that scholars become commentators or journalists; their work ephemeral. To be preoccupied with "general theory" risks being remote, abstract, and sterile.

The Canadian study of federalism has leaned to the former pole: it has been overwhelmed by the events surrounding it. This has had a number of consequences. To be so close to the phenomenon one studies is to be captured by detail; to stress the particular, the contextual; or to be impressed by the complexity and nuance of the forces at work. The closer one is to one's subject, the less easy to abstract or generalize from it. This helps account for the frequently noted paucity of theory in federal studies, and for the small (but growing) contribution by Canadians to the comparative study of federalism. The pull of current events has led to a "present mindedness" in much of our work; and "the desire to be timely and relevant consumed an excessive share

of intellectual resources."⁴ Research has tended to a "tolerant eclecticism"; it has emphasized the multiplicity of variables, and the need for multi-causal explanations. While recent work has been more theoretically explicit and self-conscious, this eclecticism remains. As E.R. Black observes, Canadian political thought is more practical than abstract and is more implicit than explicit.⁵

A second consequence of the rootedness in events is an *engagé* quality to much of our work. Political scientists have also been political actors. Normative and empirical elements have been inextricably linked. Both major textbooks in the field (Smiley's, *Canada in Question*⁶ and Stevenson's *Unfulfilled Union*⁷) are suffused with normative concerns. Much work consists of commentary, often polemical, on contemporary events. Political scientists have often been mobilized around political controversies — in the 1930s in the revolt against the stifling effect of the "dead hand" of the *British North America Act* (BNA) as interpreted by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; in the 1960s around whether or not Quebec should have "special status"; in the 1970s in defence or opposition to centralist or provincialist conceptions of federalism; in the 1980s and 1990s in debates over the implications of the Charter for federalism and over the Meech Lake Accord, Charlottetown, and the aftermath. Political scientists have also played a central role in a number of government-sponsored enquiries — the Rowell-Sirois Commission, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the Pepin-Robarts Task Force on Canadian Unity, the Macdonald Commission on the Economic Union, and other advisory groups on the constitution. Academic allegiance has been sedulously courted by competing governments. The Pepin-Robarts Report was largely written by political scientists; so was the Parti Québécois' White Paper on Sovereignty-Association. Few students of federalism have been content to remain as observers or outside critics,⁸ despite the strictures of Harold Innis against politicized social science. Political analysis of federalism has been fundamentally shaped and stimulated by crises in the federal system.⁹ And, as Richard Lipsey put it in a summary of a conference of economists on constitutional change, "there are no unbiased observers."¹⁰

The impetus of crisis accounts for some of the central themes in the Canadian study of federalism outside Quebec. The central thread is Canadian unity. The title "One Country or Nine" on which so many subsequent variations have been played, appeared in 1938.¹¹ Writing is suffused with a sense of the fragility and tenuousness of Canada, and with ambiguity about the relationship of federalism to that survival. *Canada in Question*, Smiley calls his text — and he tells us in the first edition (1972) that he almost gave up before completing it for fear that the federation would not last long enough to see it published. He describes starkly the state of "compounded crisis" of Canadian federalism. Stevenson calls his book *Unfulfilled Union*, David Bercuson calls his *The Burden of Unity*,¹² David Bell and Lorne Tepperman write of the *Roots*

of Disunity.¹³ A group of scholars at Queen's responded to the election of the Parti Québécois with *Must Canada Fail?* and to the 1982 constitutional settlement with *And Noone Cheered*.¹⁴ More recently, Alan Cairns' collection of essays on constitutional struggles from the Charter to Meech Lake is starkly titled *Disruptions*,¹⁵ and R. Kent Weaver of the Brookings Institution collaborated with three Canadians on *The Collapse of Canada?*¹⁶ Federalism is seen as being double-edged: on one hand as a condition of unity, given the obvious inability of unitary government to reflect Canada's diversity; on the other as contributing to disunity, by institutionalizing and reinforcing territorially-defined cleavages.

A related theme is that of *disjunction*. It focuses on a perceived lack of fit, or "incongruence" between federalism, seen as a set of institutions and legal rules, and the nature of the underlying society. Thus, in the thirties, federalism was felt to act as a barrier to the development of policy to meet emerging needs, and to prevent effective policy-making to combat the Depression. As Mallory argued, the lag between changing ideas and power relations and institutional and legal adaptation has frequently caused "political disequilibrium."¹⁷ Federalism in this view institutionalizes territorial cleavages when the underlying divisions are not necessarily territorial; in Porter's words, it inhibits the emergence of "creative" politics, whether defined as class politics, or more recently, politics rooted in gender, ethnicity, and the like.¹⁸

An underlying thread of criticism, from Frank Underhill through John Porter, is that the stress on federalism is exaggerated: a form of mystification, diverting attention from the real issues. Another version of disjunction has been prominent since the advent of the Charter. It stresses the tensions and contradictions in the logic and premises underlying each of the three central pillars of the Canadian constitutional order — the Charter, parliamentary government, and federalism. And, of course, for many Quebecers there is a powerful sense of disjunction between their conception of a binational Canada, and the Canada of ten provinces and (now) three territories built into the *Constitution Act, 1867*.¹⁹

In all of this, then, there is a profound ambivalence about federalism — the sense that *yes*, federalism is an effective institutional form for managing territorially based conflicts; but, *no*, it entrenches, institutionalizes and perpetuates the very conflicts it is designed to alleviate. *Yes*, in principle federalism enhances the quality of Canadian democracy — but *no*, the secrecy of executive federalism produces a democratic deficit. *Yes*, federalism can contribute to effective, responsive policy-making, but *no*, the "difficulties of divided jurisdiction, and the transaction costs involved in coordinating across 11 governments can result in a joint decision trap."²⁰

In the literature, federalism and regionalism have been treated as pivotal or intervening variables — both as phenomena to be explained and as explanations of other phenomena. One of the thorniest questions is the relationship between

the two. Is the federal system better seen as a consequence of the underlying regionalism or territorialism of Canada's social and economic organization; or is territorialism itself a consequence of the political structure of federalism?²¹ To some extent the two are independent; federalism refers to institutions: it may exist in highly homogeneous countries. Regionalism refers to the spatial organization of social and economic life; it can exist with unitary institutions. Thus, the core analytical question has been the causal linkage between federalism and regionalism, between the "division of powers and territorially-located particularisms."²²

Whether federalism is seen as an independent or dependent variable calls to mind very different sets of questions. The key question from the latter perspective is to ask what accounts for shifts between relative centralization and decentralization and for greater or lesser levels of intergovernmental conflict. In particular, why has Canadian federalism apparently been the exception among federal systems (at least until recently), moving toward greater rather than lesser provincial power? Why have regional identities remained so strong? That centralization was inevitable was conventional wisdom in the postwar period; as Samuel Beer put it, modernization and centralization went hand in hand. But such predictions have regularly been confounded.²³ Today, forces such as globalization and democratization have shifted the theoretical focus: now it is the traditional nation-state and traditional conceptions of sovereignty that are under pressure. Subnational identities, localism, decentralization, multi-level governance and federalism are no longer seen as holdovers from the past, but rather as signs of an emerging post-modern political order.

Several kinds of answers have been given to such questions, each giving primacy to a different set of independent variables. The first emphasizes the objective character of the underlying material base. It is pre-eminently the domain of political economy. Developed in the main originally by economists such as Innis, Macintosh, and Fowke and by historians such as Lower and Creighton, it grew especially during the 1930s, faded in the 1960s, and revived in the 1970s.

The second are sociological or political-cultural explanations that focus on the patterns of loyalties, attitudes, orientations, and identities. Such explanations came to dominate political science in the 1960s, largely under the influence of theory and research tools originating in the United States and reemerged later with the increased focus on the "politics of identity." Third are institutional explanations, which see an independent, determining role for the structural characteristics of the system itself, focusing on the constitution and judicial interpretation. Fourth, and often closely related, are explanations rooted in the character and drives of political elites — a view most strongly asserted in Alan Cairns' radical statement of the autonomy of political and bureaucratic elites in his 1976 Presidential Address to the Canadian Political

Science Association.²⁴ Smiley, too modestly, described the third edition of *Canada in Question* as an extended footnote to Cairns. Indeed, "neo-institutionalism," the "state-centred" approach and the "autonomy of the state" were well established in studies of Canadian federalism well before they became influential in the United States through the work of such writers as Skocpol, Nordlinger, Krasner, and others, perhaps because such concepts had never been as thoroughly displaced.

As independent variables, federalism and regionalism have been held to exert a pervasive influence over other aspects of Canadian political life. Some concerns are normative: the consequences of federalism for parliamentary democracy, citizen participation, government accountability, and the like. Some focus on the implications of federalism for the policy-making process and the role of government; others on the implications of federalism for the party system, voting behaviour, and so on. Indeed, there has been a tendency to invoke federalism to explain almost everything about Canada. It has been variously held to account for the slow development of the welfare state,²⁵ and for the excessive growth of government in Canada.²⁶ A kind of "tyranny of the vested interest in an independent variable" may be at work. Or, as another saying goes: "If all you have is a hammer, then every problem is a nail." Federalism is our hammer. Stevenson is right to criticize those who "give the impression that these are the only significant questions in Canadian political life — but, as the opening quotation suggests, he too had to recognize their pervasiveness."²⁷

Virtually all students of Canadian federalism agree that federalism matters. But there is little consensus on the *how's* or the *whys*. The case hostile to the effects of federalism has often been put more forcefully than the positive one. But for many, federalism is not so much a positive or a negative feature of our political life, it is, as Smiley put it a "condition" that we must live with and adapt to.

Finally, federalism is inherently a multidimensional phenomenon, it is about territorially distributed social and demographic differences — the domain of sociology and geography; about trading patterns and fiscal federalism — the domain of economics; about the constitutional division of powers and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms — the domain of law; and about institutions, bargaining, power, and conflict — the domain of political science. For earlier students of federalism such disciplinary definitions and boundaries had little meaning, scholars felt free to wander across them at will. Since the 1960s the rapid growth and institutionalization of social science disciplines have sharply limited the cross-fertilization among different fields of study. For example, the research program of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union (1983–85) was divided into three separate streams — economics, institutions and law — each with its own research director. Three research coordinators were

responsible for the work on federalism, and they attempted to bridge the disciplinary divide by integrating the three fields into a single set of publications, with at least some success.²⁸

The implication is that in a field like federalism, which pervades almost every aspect of Canadian political life, the best work will always cross disciplinary boundaries. No political scientist can ignore the work of legal scholars like John Whyte, William Lederman, Patrick Monahan, David Schneiderman, Peter Hogg, and many others, nor can they ignore the work of economists like Thomas Courchene, Albert Breton, Richard Bird, Robin Boadway, and others on the economics of federalism. An important contribution of the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations at Queen's University has been to sustain the interdisciplinary dialogue.

EVOLUTION OF THE STUDY OF FEDERALISM

Prior to the 1930s little academic analysis of federalism existed, and even less that could be labelled as political science. The dominant theme was the evolution of Canada toward responsible government and independence, as seen in works like H.E. Egerton and W.L. Grant's, *Canadian Constitutional Development* (1907) and W.P.M. Kennedy's, *The Constitution of Canada* (1922).²⁹

More recent scholarship, notably Robert Vipond in *Liberty and Community: Canadian Federalism and the Failure of the Constitution*,³⁰ has shown how the ideas of provincial autonomy and a "classical division of powers" federalism developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century to challenge Sir John A. Macdonald's centralist view. The provincialist challenge, he argues, was not simply a result of the power-seeking ambitions of politicians like Oliver Mowat, but also an expression of a deeper nineteenth-century liberalism.³¹ R.C.B. Risk has also examined an earlier literature that explored the development of increased provincial autonomy after 1867.³² Legal scholars articulated a model of "autonomous federalism, where coordinate governments, independent of each other, each having exclusive and supreme authority in its own sphere of power" co-exist as equal partners.³³

These writings show that many of the themes that pervade contemporary scholarship are evident from the earliest days of the federation. Was federalism about the creation of a new nationality, centred on a strong federal government, in which eventually provincial identities would wither away, and provincial and local governments would be "absorbed in the general power," as John A. Macdonald hoped? Or was it a compact among the constituent units; and if so, was it a compact between "two founding peoples," or between equal provinces? Among Quebecers, who would turn out to be correct: the *Rouges* who believed that Confederation would put Quebec at the mercy of an all-powerful federal government and an English-speaking and Protestant

majority, or the pro-Confederation *Bleus*, who saw Confederation as a recognition of Quebec "as a distinct and separate nationality" that would "enjoy the full exercise of our rights and the formal recognition of our national independence."³⁴

My analysis of the literature, however, begins with the emergence of the modern Canadian state out of the crucible of Depression and war. The primary concerns of the literature since the 1930s can roughly be divided into four time periods, each preoccupied with slightly different questions. I label the first period, from the 1930s to the late 1950s, as "federalism and the modern state." The central issue was that explored so brilliantly by the Rowell-Sirois Commission: how, given a regionalized economy and the difficulties of divided jurisdiction, can governments, individually and collectively, respond to the economic and social problems of an advanced industrial society? By the 1940s and 1950s, the sense of crisis characteristic of the Depression era was attenuated and the literature focused less on basic structural change than on development of the administrative and fiscal tools of cooperative federalism to implement the Canadian variant of the Keynesian welfare state.

In the second period, from the 1960s to the 1980s the focus shifted from the functional perspective to one based on competing outlooks of community, centralist versus provincialist. By then cooperative federalism was breaking down. The initial driving force was the rise of a secular Quebec nationalism that looked to the Quebec state as the instrument of national development. With rising bureaucratic and fiscal resources, other provinces too sought greater autonomy, a drive powerfully stimulated by the sharp regional conflicts over energy and resources in the 1970s. This was the period of competitive state-building captured in the phrase "country-building" versus "province-building," coined by Black and Cairns in 1966.³⁵ Federal institutions were judged on terms of their relationship to competing visions of Canadian community; was Canada to be seen as a community of communities or a nation-centred polity?³⁶ Given the heightened regional and linguistic tensions, was federalism an effective instrument for managing and reconciling them, or did it rather exacerbate and intensify the very conflicts it was supposed to accommodate?

This period ended with the climactic battles over the constitution, leading to patriation and passage of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. That Act, with its entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms helped transform not only the politics of federalism, but also the preoccupations of its students, ushering in the third period, from the 1980s to the middle of the 1990s. Stimulated most strongly by the work of Alan Cairns, the focus shifted to the mobilization and empowerment of social groups that defined their interests in non-territorial terms. Some writers saw this new politics of Chartered Canadians as displacing the older politics of region; others saw a profound tension between Charter politics and the politics of federalism. Executive federalism was subjected to ever more blistering critiques; the constitutional agenda widened, as did the

range of interests (including their academic supporters) who believed they had a stake in constitutional reform and a right to be heard. The courts, now mediators between citizens and governments, as well as between governments themselves, achieved new prominence. The constitution dominated the field.

The final period covers most of the 1990s. Following defeat of the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord, political scientists felt the same constitutional fatigue as their fellow citizens and politicians, and attention turned to non-constitutional renewal, and to a stronger interest in the policy implications of federalism in an age of fiscal crisis, globalization, and threats to the postwar welfare state. Canadian political scientists also turned their attentions increasingly to federalism elsewhere in the world. And for a significant number of students, including Alan Cairns and Peter Russell, the profound issues surrounding Canada's relationship with its Aboriginal peoples came to occupy the same moral space that Quebec-Canada and federal-provincial questions had previously occupied.

Any such division into distinct time periods is inherently arbitrary. There are few sharp breaks and discontinuities and the edges are often blurred. The shifts often involve not so much the rise of new themes and the disappearance of old ones, but rather shifts in emphasis and attention. Many themes, such as fiscal federalism, command attention throughout the whole period. Moreover, the principal contours of any period are often unclear to contemporaries and only come into focus in hindsight. This is one reason why my discussion of the 1990s is more tentative, and sees more disparate threads than my analysis of earlier ones. The rhythm of developments in the discipline and developments in the "real world" of politics do not necessarily always coincide. The periods identified here are primarily linked to the changing political landscape, with which political science scholarship is continually trying to catch up.

Let me review each of these four periods in more detail.

Federalism and the Modern State: 1930 to 1960

The crisis of the Depression provided the impetus for the first great wave of federalism studies. Frank Scott expressed the underlying thrust well, "The human misery cried out for relief, the failed institution for reform."³⁷ "While the law of the constitution went one way, the forces of modern industrialism went the other."³⁸ The overwhelming lesson for students during the decade was the failure of federal institutions. The prescription was clear: centralize.

Several elements, normative and empirical, were woven through the analysis. It combined an implicit theory of the emerging character of modern industrial society, an image of how institutions can frustrate and block that evolution, and a view of the sources of institutional rigidity. This was combined

with a majoritarian view of parliamentary government fundamentally hostile to federalism, derived from A.V. Dicey and Harold Laski.

"Our present dissatisfaction with the Canadian constitution," wrote Norman M.L. Rogers, "is a result of a significant change in our conception of the functions and responsibilities of government."³⁹ This meant above all development of social services, the welfare state, and assumption of state responsibility for economic planning. J.A. Corry summarized the underlying theory well in a 1941 article "The Federal Dilemma":

The current dilemma of federalism may be outlined briefly. In the free trade area which a federal system maintains, applied science, modern advances in transportation and communication, and the growth of large-scale organization have created a unified and interdependent economy of great complexity out of what were previously several separate, relatively simple and relatively independent economies. Parallel with this growth and in close interaction with it, has been the rapid extension of government intervention in social and economic matters.⁴⁰

Only the central government had the breadth of view and the resources to undertake these new tasks. Provinces were too limited and parochial, their taxing powers too fragmented, their span of control too narrow. The BNA Act, and its interpretation by the courts, especially the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, was seen as the chief barrier to the necessary adaptation of the state to these new conditions. Federalism was antiquated, an outworn instrument, obsolete, suffering from congenital defects. "We are being governed by the dead," wrote Norman Rogers; Canada was suffering from a "constitutional mortmain."⁴¹ F.R. Scott, one of the most successful scholars in combining legal analysis with a focus on social and economic forces, agreed that self-aggrandizing provincial politicians and cautious Dominion leaders were partly responsible for the legal morass of federalism, but "the courts are most to blame."⁴²

Not all commentators were as willing to focus on the courts and the constitution. Frank Underhill, for example, argued that this tendency to concentrate attention upon the political forms on which a society is organized instead of the economic forces that lie behind them is a characteristic of the modern bourgeois liberal mind.⁴³ The Depression, he argued, was a crisis of capitalism, not of federalism. This view was forcefully reiterated by John Porter, in 1958, and was until recently characteristic of left views of federalism. The fundamental conflicts, Underhill said, are not between governments but "between various economic interest groups, all of whom strive with varying success to use the political machinery of federal and provincial governments."⁴⁴

As well, decentralist federalism was seen to embody conservative, reactionary, legalistic values. It was indelibly associated with *laissez-faire* liberalism. "All those ... who profess to be afraid of what they call centralization

are really afraid of the substitution of governmental power in place of private wealth,' said Underhill.⁴⁵ Federalism was associated with rule by a small group of conspiratorial lawyers, judges, businessmen, and politicians. This too has formed a constant thread in evaluations of federalism. Its institutions and practices such as executive federalism reinforce élitism and contribute to the weakness of popular participation; and the policy consequences are often held to be conservative.⁴⁶ An associated view, that there are basic tensions between a federal system and parliamentary government predicated on majority rule, also surfaces in this period.⁴⁷

Thus, the 1930s witnessed the growth of the political economy tradition. "The social and economic basis of the conflict between federal and provincial rights ... has received but scant attention," wrote R.D. MacFarlane in 1935. "It is in these latter phases that the rudiments of the conflict [between provincialism and nationalism] are to be found."⁴⁸ Harold Innis built a theory around the importance of staple goods in the Canadian economy, and the effects of this dependence on centripetal and centrifugal forces.⁴⁹ He and the historian Donald Creighton interpreted Confederation as the political expression of the commercial, transportation, and financial interests of central Canada. While Creighton celebrated this model, it did provide the basis for explanation of protest in the west and the Maritimes in terms of the dominance of the centre over the periphery, most dramatically represented in the National Policy. This could have led to a more decentralist set of political recommendations, but few drew this conclusion in the 1930s.

The blending of institutional and economic analysis received its fullest expression in the work of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations (Rowell-Sirois), and in its massive report, submitted in 1940.⁵⁰ Two of its five members, H.F. Angus of British Columbia and R.A. MacKay of Nova Scotia were political scientists; and political scientists like J.A. Corry played a major role in its extensive research program directed by O.D. Skelton. The Commission was asked to re-examine "the economic and financial base of Confederation and the distribution of legislative powers in light of the economic and social developments of the last 70 years." Its work is a landmark in the study of federalism, most notably for its masterful historical analysis.⁵¹ As Underhill put it, the report "in almost every sentence, every paragraph, every volume, is a powerful exercise in the economic interpretation of history."⁵²

The Commission's recommendations are well-known. Most analysts have concentrated on the centralizing aspects, which were attacked by several provinces, by Quebec critics, and by Harold Innis. Yet in other respects, the Commission was sensitive to provincial autonomy. "As striking as the economic interdependence of Canadian provinces," says the *Report*, "is their political, social and cultural individuality."⁵³ Hence the need for provincial freedom to act in domains like education and health.

The report noted two other themes that were to continue into the next period. First, was the need for redistribution between richer and poorer regions, with the proposed National Adjustment Grants foreshadowing the modern equalization program. Regional disparities were seen as a basic threat to national unity. Second was the call for more effective cooperation between the two orders of government. J.A. Corry had argued in the research study *Difficulties of Divided Jurisdiction* that it could lead to "friction, waste and inefficiency"⁵⁴ and that shared responsibility would stimulate rivalry between competing bureaucratic power centres. He anticipated many of the current criticisms of executive federalism. Yet he understood that cooperation was essential in an interdependent world — hence the Commission recommended an institutionalized Dominion-Provincial Conference with a secretariat. It rejected, however, the device that was to become the characteristic expression of federal-provincial cooperation in the postwar period: the shared-cost program.

Thus, during the 1930s, we find many of the major themes which were to occupy future students. But the orientation was heavily centralist; provincial governments were denigrated and not systematically studied; the pejorative term "sectionalism" was preferred to the more positive "regionalism," and English-language scholars essentially ignored Quebec. The overwhelming concern was with the policy consequences of federalism: with the tension between divided jurisdiction and the perceived requirements of the modern state.⁵⁵ Faced with judgements of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which strongly defended provincial autonomy, much of the writing on federalism in the period came from legal scholars such as F.R. Scott.

Following World War II, the emphasis on crisis and institutional failure faded. For a time federalism seemed to become primarily a problem in public administration and fiscal arrangements, as the welfare state was gradually put in place with federal leadership and federal dollars. Many of the themes that were developed in the 1930s continued. J.A. Corry in a classic 1958 article "Constitutional Trends and Federalism,"⁵⁶ expanded on the view that a wide variety of economic, social, and cultural trends were steadily strengthening the federal government, and reducing the provinces to no more than glorified municipalities. Similarly, Underhill's theme of the "mystification" of federalism and its association with conservative, anti-democratic politics was elaborated in detail in John Porter's *Vertical Mosaic*. A.H. Birch's *Federalism, Finance and Social Legislation* (1956), compared development of social policy in three federal countries and argued that the complexities of federalism accounted for the relative underdevelopment of the welfare state in Canada.⁵⁷

There were dissenting voices. Pierre Trudeau, in "The Practice and Theory of Federalism" published in 1961,⁵⁸ argued that "the dynamics of history are not urging Canada towards centralization any more than they are towards

decentralization." Nor, he argued, should it be opposed by socialists. Progressive forces were able to win power and policy influence at the provincial level when they had little chance of gaining office in Ottawa.

But now the sense of crisis was missing. No longer did the constitution or the courts seem to erect insurmountable barriers to adaptation. J.R. Mallory, with an optimism soon to be confounded, wrote that "the obstacles which prevented ... the general acceptance of a broadly conceived national policy in Canada have been overcome. Political society in Canada is once more in a state of equilibrium."⁵⁹ Now, under federal leadership, the two orders of government were able to develop a wide range of financial and administrative arrangements such as tax rentals, equalization, and rapidly expanding shared programs — cooperative federalism.⁶⁰ Federal-provincial relations came to be characterized by a "process of continuous and piecemeal adjustment between the two levels of government," wrote D.V. Smiley in *Constitutional Adaptation and Canadian Federalism Since 1945*, coining the single most influential label for the Canadian model: executive federalism. The characteristics of federalism "have come to be less what the courts say they are, than what the federal and provincial Cabinets and bureaucracies in a continuous series of formal and informal relations determine them to be."⁶¹ Cooperative or administrative federalism, involving close relations between professional public servants at both levels and use of the federal spending power, could overcome institutional rigidity. Increasing interdependence meant that governing Canada was a partnership. "The story of Canadian federalism," wrote Trudeau, "is one of constant intergovernmental exchange and cooperation."⁶² This focus on federalism as intergovernmental relations — rather than on federalism as political theory or federalism as the division of powers — was the dominant model of analysis seen in the work of D.V. Smiley, R.M. Burns (first director of the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations at Queen's University, established in 1965), A.R. Kear, Stefan Dupré, and others.⁶³ Maurice Lamontagne's *Le fédéralisme Canadien* adopted the same functionalist, co-operative approach, much more sympathetic to strong federal leadership than most Quebec writers.⁶⁴

But other themes were also being struck. One was the growth of provincial studies, with a number of book-length works on individual provinces (Thorburn on New Brunswick, Beck on Nova Scotia, Donnelly on Manitoba, Mackinnon on Prince Edward Island, and Quinn's study of the *Union Nationale* in Quebec).⁶⁵ The most important of these were two studies of prairie politics. C.B. Macpherson, in *Democracy in Alberta*, used the province's *petit bourgeois* character to explain both internal provincial politics and the struggle between Alberta and central Canada.⁶⁶ S.M. Lipset interpreted Saskatchewan politics in terms of North American agrarian radicalism, and of the sociology of cooperative organization in *Agrarian Socialism*, in 1950.⁶⁷

Two landmarks in political economy in this period, both emphasizing the economic base of western protest, were Vernon Fowke's studies of western agricultural development, especially "The National Policy – Old and New," and *The National Policy and the Wheat Economy*;⁶⁸ and Mallory's *Social Credit and the Federal Power*. The grounds were being laid for a growing focus on regionalism.

The overwhelming consensus among scholars in the period to the end of the 1950s was that modernization and centralization went hand in hand. Rooted in the sociological literature on modernization, it predicted that identities would steadily shift from the parochial and outdated attachments to territory, language, and religion to the more modern identities and cleavages associated with the nation-state and rooted in economic interests.⁶⁹ A national and international economy would supplant specialized regional economies. The growth of the welfare state would require national policies and national standards, largely conceived and financed by a dominant central government, even if provincial administration remained in place. As the next decades demonstrated, these expectations proved spectacularly wrong. Linguistic and regional identities came to the fore, and the provinces were resurgent.

From the 1960s to the 1980s: Regionalism and Province-Building

No sharp break separates the next period from preceding ones. Legally-oriented studies did not disappear. Nor did the emphasis on administrative federalism, although by the late 1960s executive federalism and intergovernmental relations were more and more coming to be seen as arenas for expressing sharp political differences than for cooperation. Increasing numbers of scholars were raising serious questions about their implications both for policy and for parliamentary democracy. The shift, Smiley observed, was from functional federalism to political federalism, where the emphasis is on government-wide concerns, manifested by first ministers and specialized intergovernmental officials.⁷⁰ Stefan Dupré demonstrated how modern theories of public management emphasizing strategic leadership from the centre raised the competitive stakes, while undermining the closer cooperation among program officials at the ministerial level.⁷¹

Until the late 1960s, political science in Canada had few full-time practitioners, and the lines between disciplines were highly permeable. But with the explosion in the number and size of universities, there was a concomitant growth in the number of political scientists. This, combined with the influx of new ideas, theories, and methods brought back by many who had studied abroad, led to a rapid proliferation of new approaches. There was less rather than more consensus on the "essential nature" of Canadian federalism or on

how to study it.⁷² Once again there was a growing sense of crisis in the federal system; but whereas the crisis of the 1930s only peripherally dealt with regional and territorial conflict, those of the 1970s concentrated on it. Linguistic duality and regionalism — the organization of political life according to territory and culture — became the dominant concerns.

The most important of the emerging new methodologies were spawned by the behavioural revolution in the United States, which included a new self-consciousness about theory and method, acceptance of the scientific canon, a concern with seeing political systems whole, increased use of quantitative methods, and a focus on the normative bases of politics, or political culture. W.S. Livingstone attempted a decisive break with traditional legalism. Federalism, he argued, is pre-eminently a sociological phenomenon, to be understood in terms of territorially or geographically concentrated diversities. "The essence of federalism lies not in the institutional or constitutional structure, but in the society itself. Federal government is a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected."⁷³ This, as Michael Stein pointed out in "Federal Political Systems and Federal Societies,"⁷⁴ opened up a whole new range of concerns. One must investigate the federal character of all sorts of informal political structures: parties, pressure groups, movements, competing elites, and, above all, mass and elite attitudes, political cultures and subcultures. This was a subject matter that could distinguish political science both from legal institutional studies and from economics.

This new impetus showed up in many areas. First, in the growth of studies of electoral behaviour, perhaps beginning with Howard Scarrow's "Federal-Provincial Voting Patterns in Canada,"⁷⁵ and Robert Alford's comparative study *Party and Society* which described Canada as a case of pure "non-class voting."⁷⁶ The regional and linguistic dimensions of electoral cleavages and differences in federal and provincial voting patterns were carefully examined in a host of studies by Meisel, Blake, Irvine, Perlin and Peppin, Hoffman, Smith, and others. It is a central theme of the most ambitious such study of the time, *Political Choice in Canada*, by Clarke, Jenson, Leduc and Pammett.⁷⁷

Following Riker's dictum that the essential factor maintaining the federal bargain is the party system,⁷⁸ the federal dimensions of political parties also received new attention. The dominant theme here was the frequent tension between federal and provincial parties,⁷⁹ the increasing ideological and financial separation of parties at the two levels,⁸⁰ and, most importantly, the growing inability of the national party system to bridge regional and language differences. The Canadian party system was not so much federal as confederal. The interaction of federalism and the party system was a central theme in major studies of parties, such as Smith's *Prairie Liberalism*, Whitaker's *The Government Party* and Perlin's *The Tory Syndrome*.⁸¹ Alan Cairns stressed how an institutional factor — the electoral system — exacerbated the problem,

and thus provided the basis for proposals for electoral system reform prominent in later ideas for constitutional change.⁸²

As evidence of deep-rooted electoral and party cleavages along regional and ethnic lines accumulated, and as the classic "brokerage politics" at the federal level broke down with the regionalization of the party system, an increasing number of scholars sought other bases of political integration. Some found it in élite accommodation or consociational democracy, which argued that in societies deeply divided into regional or linguistic subcultures, harmony could be maintained by overarching cooperation among élites committed to "system maintenance."⁸³ Like other élitist theories of democracy prominent in US political science, this model celebrated mass isolation and apathy and sought stability in the moderation of élites. By the 1970s its brief vogue faded: consociational democracy was at best a descriptive model; and the description, given the rise of the PQ and the inability of intergovernmental conferences or national parties to resolve deep-rooted conflict, seemed to become less and less accurate. Indeed, Alan Cairns stood Lijphart's model on its head: it was élites competing for power who generated and exacerbated conflict; and élites, using government power, who sought to mould competing identities. Divisions among citizens were far less sharp.

Associated with these developments was the increasing focus on political culture, drawing on work by US writers such as Daniel Elazar.⁸⁴ The pioneering work here was done by Mildred Schwartz in *Public Opinion and Canadian Identity and Politics and Territory: On the Persistence of Regional Differences in Canada*.⁸⁵ There was an associated interest in political socialization.⁸⁶ Two general conclusions emerged from these studies. First is the relatively weak sense of national identity. As Meisel stated:

The country as a whole is almost totally lacking in a genuinely shared set of symbols, heroes, historical incidents, enemies or even ambitions. Canada, in short, lacks a fully-developed secular political culture, and the many divisions ... cannot be mediated within the context of a shared and similar complex of national values and emotions.⁸⁷

Second is the strength and persistence of the limited identities of region, culture, and province. Historian J.M.S. Careless summarizes this view:

As for English Canada, the habitual emphasis on particularized social groupings rather than mass citizenship, on pragmatically nearer community interests instead of some generalized idealized national way of life, effectively ministers to strong identification with regions or provinces delimited by geography, economics and history.⁸⁸

Richard Simeon, David Elkins, and others, using the tools of comparative politics, mapped differences in attitudes to politics and found widely differing provincial political cultures, even when the data were controlled for factors such as income and education.⁸⁹

All these directions constituted a radical break from earlier themes. However, the emphasis on federal-provincial relations and the role of executive federalism as a policy-making process continued and found expression especially in the work of Smiley, Dupré, Careless, Schultz, Simeon, Veilleux, and others.⁹⁰ Here there was an emphasis on the policy consequences of shared responsibilities and federal-provincial interaction. This work, too, was influenced greatly by more self-conscious theorizing about decision-making. A small stream of work on the relations between federalism and the structure and influence of interest groups also began to appear.⁹¹

But if the discipline was following an American model, the system in which it was embedded was not. By the 1960s the confident predictions of the inevitable decline of the provinces in the face of the nationalizing forces were being confounded. This apparent contradiction of universal trends became the central intellectual issue for Canadian political scientists studying federalism. In 1965, for the first time since World War II, combined provincial-municipal spending exceeded federal spending. By 1967 Smiley was analyzing the attenuation of federal power, in *The Canadian Political Nationality*.⁹²

These developments meant a renewed emphasis on the importance of bargaining between 11 governments, at once interdependent and autonomous, as the dominant model of policy-making — a government of governments, or *Federal-Provincial Diplomacy*. Scholars sought explanations in a wide variety of causes: in the rapid growth of provincial responsibilities, and hence in the size and self-confidence of their political and bureaucratic élites; in developments in political economy which seemed to be bolstering provincial power while depriving Ottawa of the rationale provided earlier in the National Policy and later in the building of the welfare state (Smiley's "Second National Policy"); in the political modernization and mobilization in Quebec, and so on. Rather than an ineluctable trend toward centralism, scholars now emphasized the cyclical swings from centralization to decentralization and back again, and saw periods of federal dominance, not as normal, but as a result of crisis.⁹³

Canadian politics, it now seemed clear, was regional politics. Regionalism or provincialism became a preoccupation of scholarly analysis; and evidence for it was widely sought. Increasingly, regionalism was coming to be seen not as an archaic holdover, or a barrier to modernity, but as a positive, defining characteristic of Canadian society. Almost overnight, wrote J.E. Hodgetts in 1965, "regionalism has become the current fashion."⁹⁴ "What we need — and I think what the world needs now — is a political theory of regionalism," wrote John Conway in "Geopolitics and the Canadian Union."⁹⁵ "Then we must have a constitution based on that theory." But regionalism was one of those protean concepts that tend to mean everything and nothing. For writers like Paul Fox it referred primarily to the persistence and growth of provincial responsibilities, and to the increased importance of intergovernmental relations.⁹⁶ Others referred to the persistence of interprovincial differences in

cultures, economies, and the like. Yet others referred to the growth of interregional conflict, and the puzzle of why such "primordial divisions" were maintained in a world where virtually all the literature on political development predicted the triumph of functional, economic cleavages over cultural, ethnic, and regional ones. Later regionalism or provincialism also came to be seen as ideology, as a program, in contrast to "centralism."

A further consequence of the discovery of regionalism was an increase in serious study of provincial politics and policy, represented by such books as *The Provincial Political Systems*, edited by Bellamy, Pammett and Rowat; Carlo Cadorola's edited *Society and Politics in Alberta*, Robin's volumes on BC, Richards and Pratt on Saskatchewan and Alberta, and Marsha and William Chandler's *Public Policy and Provincial Politics*.⁹⁷

But Conway's call for a political theory of regionalism posed an interesting problem. It was not clear at all what followed, constitutionally, from the persistence of regional difference. For one thing, how was one to respond to the difference itself: was it to be celebrated as a unique feature of Canadian life, to be institutionalized and actively promoted, as suggested by the Pepin-Roberts Commission later? Or was it to be regretted, condemned, and if possible transcended, following Porter? Was Canada a single national entity or a "community of communities?" And did the fact of regionalism necessarily imply a decentralization of institutions, or rather a greater regional presence in Ottawa? Regional cultural differences could perhaps be dealt with through decentralization; interregional conflict over the location of development and the sharing of wealth was much more problematic.

In 1965, E.R. Black and Alan Cairns coined the term "province-building."⁹⁸ It turned regionalism into a much more dynamic concept, rooted not just in cultural or historical difference, but in the drive of provincial political, bureaucratic, and economic élites to mould provincial societies and undertake responsibility for managing provincial economic development. This was a major theme in writing on Quebec's Quiet Revolution in the 1960s.⁹⁹

The concept was brilliantly applied later to Alberta by Larry Pratt¹⁰⁰ and still later by Richards and Pratt to both Alberta and Saskatchewan in *Prairie Capitalism*. Here was an image of provinces that was a far cry from that of the 1930s. "We cannot agree that the provincial state lacks either competence or the capacity for entrepreneurial initiative — or that they are the victims of manipulation by external capital," wrote Richards and Pratt.¹⁰¹

The revival of political economy provided the impetus for another element of the regionalist focus — a stress on the materially-based conflict of economic interest among Canadian regions — on the conflict between energy producers and consumers, and so on. This was linked to systematic imbalances in access to power in Ottawa, seen now not to be so much a national government, but rather the agent of the central Canadian majority or its economic élites. Thus there were applied within Canada the concepts of

dependency, centre-periphery, metropolis-hinterland, and internal colonialism which others had applied to Canada in its relations with the world. This perspective, developed by scholars in both the west and the east, is best summarized in the essays in Bercuson's *Canada and the Burden of Unity*.¹⁰² Other notable examples of this emphasis on central Canadian dominance of the hinterland are found in Tom Naylor's *History of Canadian Business* and in the work of Forbes and Matthews on Atlantic Canada.¹⁰³

Much of the new political economy was explicitly Marxist in orientation. But it too had to come to terms with regionalism and the continuing importance of the provincial state. "Without an understanding of Canada's federal nature, which Canadian Marxists had avoided dealing with in a serious way, the Canadian state cannot be properly analyzed," wrote Leo Panitch in *The Canadian State*.¹⁰⁴ Writers like Garth Stevenson added an important dimension to explanations of centrifugal tendencies in Canada. Direct links between Canadian provinces and US capital reduced the dominance of central Canadian capital and linked Canadian regions less to each other than to external centres.¹⁰⁵ Continental integration and Canadian unity were at odds, a theme that reached a crescendo in the later free trade debate of the late 1980s. Thus, the new political economy stressed the forces pulling in a centrifugal direction, older models had underlined the centripetal forces tug of economic forces.

These intellectual developments took place against a rapidly changing political background. While the increasing specialization and professionalization of political science tended to weaken the close relationship between politics and scholarship, events pulled the other way. Especially as constitutional reform emerged as the framework within which federal-provincial and interregional conflict was played out, the classic subject matter of political science — governmental institutions — was near the top of the political agenda.

The first shock was the political mobilization of Quebec, the quiet revolution and the resulting drive for greater autonomy and, later, independence. Quebec and French-Canada had been virtually ignored in earlier anglophone political science. One of the first responses to the stirrings in Quebec was Alexander Brady's 1959 article "Quebec and Canadian Federalism," which carefully reviewed the report of the province's Tremblay Commission on federalism (a landmark in the literature of federalism).¹⁰⁶ Brady argued that the Canadian federation was a "unique alliance of two peoples," and saw in Quebec's historic resistance of centralization a major element of flexibility in the federal system. A few years later Donald Smiley identified the "two themes" of Canadian federalism as cultural dualism, reflected in the Tremblay Report, and national economic policy, reflected in Rowell-Sirois.¹⁰⁷ Several directions followed from these developments. First, of course, was an explosion of work by writers like Léon Dion, Gérard Bergeron, Pierre Trudeau, Vincent Lemieux, Marcel Rioux, Stanley Ryerson, Hubert Guindon, Kenneth McRoberts, and others. Second was, among anglophones, a search for a re-

sponse to these developments.¹⁰⁸ Political scientists, along with many others became embroiled in often sterile debates about whether or not Quebec really is a "nation," and about whether the most appropriate strategic response was to more fully represent Quebec's interests within the federal government, or whether to espouse "special status," *deux nations*, or associate states. The most eloquent attack on Quebec nationalism generally, and special status in particular, was in Trudeau's *Federalism and the French Canadians*,¹⁰⁹ but it was extended in many other articles, such as Eugene Forsey's "Our Present Discontents."¹¹⁰ A stiff exchange between Hugh Thorburn and David Kwavnick in *Queen's Quarterly* well illustrated the debate.¹¹¹

As issues came to be phrased in constitutional terms, and the first constitutional review process (1967-71) got underway, there was also a vigorous debate over the desirability, feasibility, and possible directions of constitutional change. Writers like Alan Cairns stressed the flexibility within the existing document and the difficulties of arriving at a new settlement, a point that has received ample confirmation in the years to come.¹¹²

Political scientists increasingly participated in public and quasi-public action. In 1965, the Ontario government appointed an Advisory Committee on Confederation (ACC), which included several political scientists; a less academically-oriented ACC was revived in 1977. A major focus for political scientists' work in the 1960s was the Royal Commission on Biculturalism and Bilingualism. It furnished "an extraordinary opportunity for researchers in the social sciences," wrote one of the commissioners. "It was a laboratory in which they could advance their own knowledge and experience, and an opportunity to be involved in the formulation of public policy on a vast scale."¹¹³ Most established political scientists in the country appear to have conducted research for the Commission, on topics ranging from the linguistic makeup of cabinets (Van Loon), voluntary associations (Lemieux and Meisel), administrative federalism (Smiley) and bilingualism and the Supreme Court (Peter Russell).¹¹⁴ David Easton, an ex-patriate Canadian whose application of systems analysis to politics had become enormously influential throughout political science, was senior advisor on research; and John Meisel and Léon Dion helped direct it. While this work created the foundation for the *Report*, its conclusions did not directly address political relations between language groups, or between Quebec and Canada.

The election of the Parti Québécois in 1976 prompted renewed emphasis on French-English conflict, and once again political scientists were mobilized around political crisis, perhaps in a more public way than before. Again, there were divisions between anglophone scholars (who generally posed questions in terms of preserving Confederation) and francophones, an apparent majority of whom were sympathetic to the *indépendantiste* idea. Individuals of both language groups frequently agreed on the need to search for a Third

Option, somewhere between the status quo and separation, though there was little agreement on what it might consist of.¹¹⁵

R.L. Watts and Jean-Luc Pepin were political scientists on the federal government's Task Force on Canadian Unity; its research director, David Cameron, was also a political scientist; and many of its researchers were drawn from within the discipline. While the prime minister was deeply hostile to the report's sympathetic approach to reconciling regionalism, Quebec nationalism and national unity, the conclusions were consistent with prevailing views among political scientists, and were influential in shaping future work.

Early responses to Quebec tended to stress that while Quebec was a distinct society, English Canada also increasingly constituted a unity, oriented primarily to Ottawa. Indeed, one of the attractions of special status to anglophones was that a strong centre could be retained for the rest of Canada. But increasingly that assumption weakened, as evidence was found for strong regional identities in the rest of the country, and as, especially after the 1973 energy crisis, interregional conflict greatly intensified. Thus, regionalism joined dualism as the primary cleavage in Canadian political life. While this provided the impetus for much of the work on provinces and province-building described earlier, academic definitions of the problem appear to have had a considerable impact on elite and popular diagnoses of the issues. Again, while there were many disagreements within the discipline, the weight of political scientists' opinion leaned to an accommodative, and decentralizing approach, rather than to the more centralist, rights-based approach exemplified by Pierre Trudeau.

The growth of western regionalism provoked similar explanations and responses. In general, the newer generation of political scientists looked more favourably on provincialism than did its predecessors but this was by no means universal. Cairns criticized the "prevailing intellectual opinion" which was sympathetic to "small is beautiful" and captivated by province-building.¹¹⁶ Stevenson, in *Unfulfilled Union*, lamented that the "balance of articulate opinion has in the last decade shifted excessively in a provincialist direction that I can only regard as disastrous."¹¹⁷

As the intergovernmental conflict crystallized into a debate over alternative constitutional options, discussion came to be framed less in terms of identities and loyalties, and more in terms of alternative structures. Despite the growth of alternative methods discussed earlier, many political scientists demonstrated that what really got their adrenalin going was institutional and constitutional design.

Perhaps the most characteristic political science contribution to the debate on constitutional options was a stress on intrastate federalism. The idea was first adumbrated by Donald Smiley (1971), and then quickly became conventional wisdom.¹¹⁸ This analysis centred on the declining ability of federal government institutions effectively to represent and reconcile competing

regional interests, most starkly reflected in the absence of a national party system. The response, it was argued, was not necessarily to increase provincial authority or to divide responsibilities more clearly between governments (interstate federalism); rather it was to build regional interests more fully into the centre and to temper the parliamentary principle of representation by population and majority rule with greater representation for smaller provinces.¹¹⁹ In this period, these proposals tended to take two forms, though often they were confused. One was to strengthen the integrative capacity of representative institutions such as parties and Parliament. From this perspective flowed such proposals as electoral system reform.¹²⁰ The other was to further institutionalize federal-provincial collaboration and build provincial government interests into the centre. Initially the centrepiece proposal was a House of the Provinces or Federal Council, modelled in part on the German Bundesrat. The idea took many forms and in successive versions developed from proposals for a provincially appointed Senate, within Parliament, to a federal-provincial body outside Parliament, designed to institutionalize federal-provincial conferences.¹²¹ By the 1980s, the pressure for democratic participation had shifted the debate to different versions of an elected Senate. The idea of a Triple-E Senate (elected, equal, and effective) was driven by western political pressures, but the details were the work of political scientists like Roger Gibbins, David Elton, and Peter McCormick, often working closely with the newly formed Canada West Foundation.¹²² It is hard to identify any other proposals so developed and articulated by political scientists that then became so seriously debated by governments. The pressure of events then led political scientists to become prescribers and advocates, not just observers and explainers. Willy-nilly this led to an emphasis on institutional tinkering. The cost was a loss of detachment and advocacy well beyond the limits of established knowledge.

Political analysis of federalism in the 1960s and 1970s came overwhelmingly to focus on regional and linguistic difference coexisting with the search for possible bases of unity, and a sense of "the decline of Canadian nationhood."¹²³ Smiley saw Canadian federalism to be in a state of "compounded crisis" — of French-English, centre-periphery and Canadian-American relations — combined with institutional failure.¹²⁴

The strictures of Porter against the "myth of national unity" and the mystifying preoccupation with federalism was almost forgotten. Even the last sentence in Stevenson's left political, economy-based text discusses "unity."¹²⁵

The 1980s: Post-Territorial Federalism?

If the writing of the 1960s and 1970s emphasized regionalism, language, and provincialism — perhaps to the detriment of other perspectives — the balance again shifted. The triggering event was passage of the *Constitution Act*,

1982. The events leading up to it, including the Quebec referendum of 1980 and the energy wars of the 1970s, were the culmination of an intense period of rival state-building and intergovernmental conflict. But its major components — the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and a more democratic and federalist amending process — dramatically altered the politics of federalism, and with it the preoccupations of scholars.

Territorial conflicts and identities faded from view. In a revisionist article, Young, Faucher and Blais argued that the expansionist provincial role had been exaggerated, and that Ottawa remained the central actor in regional development policy.¹²⁶ Roger Gibbins, in a comparative analysis of territorial politics in Canada and the United States,¹²⁷ argued that the difference was not that Canada is more regionally divided, but that its federal institutions exaggerate the differences and accommodate them less successfully than does the American intrastate model, with its locally oriented national government. R. Kenneth Carty, Peter W. Ward, and others asked whether a generation of political scientists had not perhaps become seduced by regionalism — primed to look for difference, not surprisingly they found it; and sometimes ignored another strong Canadian theme — that of nation-building and the creation of national associations and networks.¹²⁸

Indeed, in a fascinating replay of the expectations of a class-based "creative politics" in the 1950s, many now predicted that the obsolete identities associated with federalism were to be displaced by the new identities of gender, ethnicity, and the like. By emphasizing a homogenous view of individual rights, the Charter would undermine federal diversity and have a powerful centralizing effect.¹²⁹ Federalism was seen to be incompatible with modern liberalism,¹³⁰ and the Charter was seen as a nation-building device to undermine provincialism.¹³¹ But again the predictions proved wrong. The new identities did indeed have profound effects on Canadian politics, including the politics of federalism — but they coexisted and interacted with regional and provincial interests, rather than displacing them. The Supreme Court of Canada has not wielded the Charter as an instrument of central power; rather, it "began to place more emphasis on a federalism jurisprudence that has led to a reconciliation between rights and federalism in Canada."¹³²

Once again, events drove analysis in this period. Passage of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the Meech Lake Accord of 1987, the extraordinary subsequent debate culminating in its rejection in 1990 and the subsequent renewed round of constitutional discussion leading to the Charlottetown Accord of 1992 and its defeat in a national referendum again threw many political scientists into the national debate as commentators, partisans, committee witnesses, and not infrequently governmental advisers. Few resisted the "tug of involvement."¹³³ A bibliography of writings on the Meech Lake Accord prepared in mid-1990 identified 278 publications, of which, by rough count, 64 were written by political scientists.¹³⁴ Some of the most powerful critics of the Accord — again,

notably Alan Cairns — were political scientists, as were many of its most ardent supporters. The bases of disagreement were many but the most fundamental argued that the Accord represented a replay of the older politics of intergovernmental federalism at odds with the emergent trends of diversity and democratization stimulated by the 1982 amendments. Both the substance of Meech Lake — including a perceived weakening of the federal government, the implications of the “distinct society” clause for Quebec, and a potential erosion of the Charter; and the process, policy-making by executive federalism, “men in suits,” were profoundly criticized.

However, it is also notable that as a group, political scientists appear to have been more favourable to the Accord, as an acceptable accommodation to bring Quebec back into the constitutional family, than were academic commentators from other disciplines such as history and law. Prominent among these were Donald Smiley, David Cameron and scholars associated with the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations at Queen's University, including Peter Leslie, Richard Simeon, and Ron Watts. But political scientists were also among its severest critics. Cairns suggests that his colleagues' support for the Accord is a consequence of the tendency of political scientists to be insiders, and to see Canada's “chief organizing principle” as federalism. Defenders of Meech Lake, he argues, tended to suffer a cultural lag, too attached to pre-Charter assumptions about federalism to respond to the new, Charter-based agenda.¹³⁵ Allan Tupper also argues that the long preoccupation with nation-saving by many political scientists led them to accept Meech as a necessary compromise and blocked them from asking harder questions about the conceptual underpinnings and political weakness of the Accord. The preoccupation with nation-saving at all costs, he argues, contributed to a narrow philosophical discourse.¹³⁶

So here too, the work of political scientists reflected their differing adherence to competing visions: which of the three equalities noted by Cairns — of two nations, ten provinces, or 30 million citizens — was to predominate? And how was Canadian federalism to respond to the mobilization of social movements, and the Aboriginal drive for self-government?

Political scientists were not only critics or supporters; they also continued to be avid constitutional engineers. Philip Resnick, for example, developed a new model for a Canada-Quebec Union.¹³⁷ Jean Lapointe, Robert Young, and Kenneth McRoberts argued for a more territorially based language policy.¹³⁸ David Milne argued strongly for “concurrency with provincial paramountcy” as a solution to dilemmas in the division of powers;¹³⁹ Peter Russell argued for a constituent assembly.¹⁴⁰ And just as it was political scientists who had promoted a Bundesrat model for a reformed Senate, it was another group of political scientists, led by David Elton, who developed and enthusiastically advocated the Triple-E model of a more democratic Senate. While the great bulk of this work sought reform within the federal system, a few began to imagine the possible futures of a Canada without Quebec.¹⁴¹

The new politics of federalism had major effects on scholarship. The Charter was seen to both reflect and advance new images of citizenship and identity powerfully at odds with territorialism and federalism.¹⁴² The Charter meant that the constitution was now not only about the relationships among governments, but also about citizens and their relationship to all governments. It asserted a national citizenship, and national rights, enforced by a national institution (the Supreme Court of Canada). The prediction that flowed from this was an erosion of provincial particularities and variations in provincial policy. Moreover, it recognized and gave constitutional status to collectivities defined in non-regional terms: women, Aboriginal peoples, and ethnic groups. These constitutional developments reflected broader changes in Canadian society: the relative decline in population of the French and British charter groups and Canada's increasing ethnic and racial diversity, especially in large urban areas. The rise of social movements such as feminism and environmentalism challenged traditional forms of politics, including federal and intergovernmental politics. Indeed the battle to reverse the erosion of women's rights in the Charter in 1981 was a galvanizing event for the women's movement, which was also to colour its reactions to the 1987 Meech Lake Accord. These events fascinated students like Alan Cairns, who explored their ramifications in many writings, built around the concept of the "citizens' constitution and the continuing tensions among the 'three equalities' of regions, nations, and individuals."¹⁴³ Social economic and political developments within Quebec no longer exerted the fascination that they had in the era of the Quiet Revolution and the rise of the PQ. Now it was changes in the rest of Canada that took centre stage.

While Cairns noted that the Charter was itself a product of increased concern for rights and democracy, both in Canada and globally, the thrust of his argument was that the Charter and the constitutional politics surrounding it were powerful, independent factors — transforming political culture — at least in English Canada, and mounting a fundamental challenge to existing federal institutions and intergovernmental relations.¹⁴⁴ This view has been challenged in part by Ian Brodie and Neil Nevitte.¹⁴⁵ They argue that the causes of the "new politics" are broader, rooted in fundamental social and economic change in all industrialized societies; Cairns, they suggest, attaches too much weight to the causal impact of the Charter. The difference is one of emphasis, showing the difficulty of weighing state and societal forces and understanding the interaction between them. Certainly, it appears to be the case that in Canada the new politics has tended to be played out on the constitutional stage; in countries where the constitution itself is not in question, the same forces have been expressed in different forums.

These developments also broadened the study of federalism and linked it more strongly both to other aspects of the discipline and to other disciplines. For example, political theorists such as Charles Taylor¹⁴⁶ and Reginald

Whitaker¹⁴⁷ explored larger issues of identity, equality, democracy, and representation. The revitalized role of the courts in a politics of rights stimulated renewed interest in judicial review and the role of the courts by scholars such as Peter Russell and Jennifer Smith.¹⁴⁸ Another example of the broadened federalism agenda was Aboriginal rights, and the growth of the concept of Aboriginal self-government that developed into the idea of a Third Order of government later termed Treaty Federalism,¹⁴⁹ in part under the impetus of a major series of studies undertaken by the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations. Some, such as Thomas Courchene and David Elkins, saw the logic of federalism, predicated on shared identities and a division of powers, as a possible template for Aboriginal self-government.¹⁵⁰ At the same time, there developed much closer links between political scientists working in these areas and constitutional lawyers, armed with the Charter.

The widening constitutional debate also spawned an increased interest in comparative models. Banting and Simeon edited *Redesigning the State: The Politics of Constitutional Change in Industrial Countries*¹⁵¹; Bakvis and Chandler linked federalism to changing roles of the state in *Federalism and the Role of the State*.¹⁵² Thomas Hueglin linked federalism both to political theory and political economy in works such as *Federalism and Fragmentation*.¹⁵³ Canadian students looked to federal models in Germany, Australia, Belgium, the United States and most recently in the European Community.¹⁵⁴

The Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Canada's Development Prospects (the Macdonald Commission) was for political scientists in the 1980s what the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism had been in the 1960s, and Rowell-Sirois had been a generation earlier. Alan Cairns was research director for the institutions stream and Richard Simeon was research coordinator for the work on federalism; both had a hand in drafting the final *Report*. The research program published 13 volumes in its federalism series (co-edited by Richard Simeon, Ken Norrie, Economics, and Mark Krasnick, Law) and broader forces shaping federalism were examined in many of the other volumes.¹⁵⁵

Much of this work suggested that questions of federalism, public policy, and intergovernmental relations had not been swamped by the new emphasis on post-Charter federalism. Frederick Fletcher and Donald Wallace carefully summarized the literature on federalism and public policy in the literature.¹⁵⁶ Keith Banting's *The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism*,¹⁵⁷ Grace Skogstad's *The Politics of Agricultural Policy-Making in Canada*¹⁵⁸ and Doern and Toner's *The Politics of Energy*¹⁵⁹ were notable case studies in federalism and public policy. Peter Leslie attempted a broad restatement of the non-Marxist political economy tradition with *Federal State, National Economy*.¹⁶⁰ Despite these and other contributions to federalism and public policy, Patrick Fafard is probably right when he observes that an "overdeveloped emphasis on constitutional politics" among political scientists has come at the expense

of our understanding of other issues of governance and of "the more routine interaction of organized interests and inter-governmental relations." There is, he pointed out, no reason to believe that relationships in these substantive areas mirror those in the constitutional arena.¹⁶¹

Within the Macdonald *Report* itself, there was an interesting debate about the role of collaborative federalism in the policy-making process. One thrust — a constant theme since the postwar period — was that extensive intergovernmental cooperation, perhaps institutionalized in federal-provincial councils, justiciable federal-provincial agreements and the like, is essential to policy-making, given the extensive interdependence of federal and provincial activities. The other, elaborated by Albert Breton in his Supplementary Statement to the *Report*,¹⁶² argued that the primary virtues of federalism lie in intergovernmental competition, and that joint decision-making frustrates innovation, accountability and participation and increases transaction costs. Coordination could be achieved without collaboration.

Finally, the federalism of the 1940s to the 1970s was the federalism of growth. Both orders of government were growing rapidly, increasing their fiscal and bureaucratic resources and jointly occupying new policy spaces. These developments greatly influenced the literature on federal-provincial relations, fiscal federalism, and related areas, fuelling the image of province-building.¹⁶³

The 1990s

There was little respite from agonizing over the constitution after the defeat of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990. Soon new parliamentary committees were at work, a new set of federal proposals was drafted, a widely publicized set of national consultative conferences was held, and intensive intergovernmental meetings were convened, culminating in the Charlottetown Accord and its subsequent defeat in a national referendum in October 1992. Once again, many political scientists were mobilized into action. As scholars, they explored the alternatives in an important agenda-setting volume edited by Ronald Watts and Douglas Brown, *Options for a New Canada*.¹⁶⁴ As commentators, discussion leaders, and rapporteurs they played a prominent role in the public conferences that took place from Halifax to Vancouver. They debated the Charlottetown proposals in public forums during the referendum campaign. And they played a critical role behind the scenes as advisers to governments. Ronald Watts went to Ottawa as an associate deputy minister in the Federal-Provincial Relations Office, responsible for developing the federal proposals that set the process in motion and providing advice during the negotiations. His team included political scientists Roger Gibbins and Peter Leslie, along with economist Doug Purvis and constitutional lawyer Katherine Swinton.

David Cameron was a senior adviser to the Ontario government. Finally, political scientists explored the implications of the referendum defeat in a variety of ways, including a careful analysis by Richard Johnston and his colleagues of the vote, an important collection of commentaries edited by Kenneth McRoberts and Patrick Monahan; and the second edition of Peter Russell's masterful *Constitutional Odyssey*.¹⁶⁵

The defeat of the Charlottetown Accord brought an abrupt halt to the constitutional engineering indulged in by so many of us in the previous decade of "constitutional federalism." National unity, of course, never left the political stage. The narrowly decided 1995 Quebec referendum and the subsequent debate over the federal *Clarity Act* made sure of that. Reactions to these events drew a range of responses not unlike those in earlier decades. Some took a tougher line toward Quebec, arguing that secession could be obtained only according to existing constitutional rules, that secession might encompass the partition of Quebec, and that the PQ objective of "partnership" was a cynical delusion. Others, such as Kenneth McRoberts in *Misconceiving Canada*¹⁶⁶ took a more accommodating view, suggesting that the current impasse was a legacy of the polarizing views of Pierre Trudeau. Yet others, such as Roger Gibbins and Guy LaForest in *Beyond the Impasse*¹⁶⁷ sought with not much success once again to find a new Third Way that might reshape the Quebec-Canada relationship along mutually acceptable lines. Some, on both sides of the language divide, sought to keep lines of communication open.¹⁶⁸ More writers now argued the need to think carefully about how secession might come about, and its consequences for the rest of the country.¹⁶⁹ Perhaps the most important response was the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on the *Secession Reference* in which the court sought to articulate the principles of federalism and democracy, the rule of law and minority rights that underpin the *Constitution Acts* of Canada — in effect a judgement that was "applied political science."

Regionalism also remained on the agenda, especially following the federal election results of 1993, 1997, and 2000. The dramatic break-up of the coalition of Ontario, westerners and "soft nationalists" in Quebec that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney had assembled; the emergence of the *Bloc Québécois* and the Reform, later Alliance, Party as the major Opposition parties with highly regionalized bases of support; and the relative weakness of the governing Liberal Party in western Canada all led to a renewed focus on the electoral system, the party system, and the implications of Westminster-style parliamentary federalism.¹⁷⁰

But Canada's failure to "constitute itself as a sovereign people," in multiple rounds of "mega-constitution-making," as Peter Russell put it, had produced a pronounced constitutional fatigue, even among those whose livelihood it had so well provided for.¹⁷¹ Attention now turned to non-constitutional renewal, the subtitle of the 1997 volume of the *State of the Federation*.¹⁷² There

was renewed interest in the informal mechanisms of adaptation that had served Canada so well in earlier periods when federalism had to adapt to broad changes in the role of the state, and a rediscovery of the virtues of constitutional silences and ambiguities.¹⁷³

This discussion was greatly influenced by changes in the wider economy and society. First, if federalism in the 1960s was the federalism of growth, now it was the federalism of decline, as rising debts and deficits led to massive cost-cutting, down-loading, and shifting of burdens from Ottawa to the provinces and provinces to municipalities, school boards, and the like. Fiscal restraint had a double-edged significance: senior governments left more room for provincial and local governments to make their own decisions, but left them fewer dollars to meet their responsibilities.¹⁷⁴ Hence scholars developed a renewed interest in the intricacies of fiscal federalism as they explored the implications of the collapsing of federal shared programs into the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), and of the draconian federal cuts in the 1995 budget.¹⁷⁵

Second, where political economy had previously been largely about debates within the national economy between centre and periphery, now it was phrased in terms of globalization. What implications did this multi-faceted phenomenon have for federalism? As we have seen, the earlier political economy literature believed that economic modernization and centralization went together. If the development of national economies had been destined to strengthen the national government as the only entity that could effectively regulate them, would not the same be true in an era of globalization? Would not the national government be required to exercise greater control over provincial government taxing, spending, and borrowing; would it not need a more powerful hand to ensure that Canada spoke with one voice in the international arena?

But the most influential scholarly voice of the decade, an economist, Thomas J. Courchene, argued the reverse. Globalization, the shift of influence from the national to the supranational level, and localization, the shift of power from national governments to lower level units in provinces and cities, were directly linked.¹⁷⁶ Globalization meant a fundamental weakening of central governments and the policy instruments they deployed, as they lost power both upwards and downwards in a process he called "glocalization." Globalization, in his analysis, spelled the end of the nineteenth century National Policy designed to build an east-west economy. Now the forces ran north-south and globally. And this would have profound political consequences — an erosion of central authority; threats to the east-west social policy railway; a strengthening of the provinces, which would increasingly act as region-states little concerned with Ottawa or the other provinces;¹⁷⁷ the growth of urban city-states in centres like Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver; and declining economic linkages among Canadian provinces as each integrated in its own

way with North American and global markets. As a result, there would be increasing inequality and competition among provinces, a declining commitment to equalization and sharing, and increasing inability to agree on national standards in social policy. The implication, Courchene suggested in an influential and controversial contribution, *ACCESS*,¹⁷⁸ was that in the face of declining federal fiscal, political, and even moral power the Canadian social union could be secured only by a movement toward a more confederal Canada in which national policies and standards would emerge less from federal influence and dollars, and more from interprovincial agreement, with Ottawa largely on the sidelines.

This analysis has been criticized from many vantage points. Economists John McCallum and John Helliwell have argued that economic integration within Canada remains many orders greater than Canada's integration with the United States.¹⁷⁹ Political economists like Ian Robinson have argued that in the long run the increasing importance of the "economic constitution" imposed by international agreements strengthens Ottawa against the provinces.¹⁸⁰ Critics of the argument that powerful provinces like Ontario and Alberta will emerge as quasi-independent region-states have argued that there is (as yet, at least) little evidence to support this idea in public opinion or electoral behaviour.¹⁸¹ Those analyzing federalism from a social policy perspective have stressed the erosion of national standards and the "rush to the bottom" that may result from a confederal or interprovincial pattern of policy-making.

Here again empirical and prescriptive analyses are inextricably entwined: Courchene links globalization to decentralization and limited government, and applauds it; Robinson links it to centralization and condemns it; Garth Stephenson links it to decentralization, but says that in the face of geographical barriers and our proximity to the United States, Canada "may require a stronger central government than it has enjoyed in recent years and a corresponding reduction in the powers of provincial governments."¹⁸²

Students of intergovernmental relations in the 1990s reflected the shift from constitutional to a more policy-oriented federalism. Some reacted to the changed relations among governments by arguing for a more collaborative model. If neither order of government had the fiscal, political, or constitutional resources to make major policy on its own, then we must look to a more collaborative partnership among equals to assure policy development that meets the needs of Canadians. Such analyses pointed to agreements such as the Agreement on Internal Trade (1996) and the Social Union Framework Agreement (1998) as harbingers of the new model.¹⁸³ Others were more sceptical. Some saw the political and jurisdictional interests of governments as undermining the trust necessary to make such a partnership work; some social and environmental policy advocates saw the common policies that might emerge from collaborative federalism as a lowest common denominator that would weaken national standards; and yet others remained concerned that the democratic

deficit, so powerfully exposed in the Meech Lake debacle, would continue to exclude the public. Thus an older debate — is federalism inherently the enemy of progressive social and environmental policy? — was revived. Most writers from the left of the political spectrum, like their predecessors in the debates of the 1930s to 1960s and in the debate over limits to the federal spending power during Meech Lake, continued to look to federal leadership, even as they criticized Ottawa's adoption of neoliberal policies.¹⁸⁴ Others, notably Alain Noël, challenged the notion that federalism is conservative, or necessarily involves a "rush to the bottom."¹⁸⁵

While the specific issues and language had changed, these were debates familiar to students of federalism throughout the period studied in this monograph.

But two developments were more novel. First was the growing involvement of Canadian scholars in comparative federalism. Remarkably, federalism had become fashionable in the world, as countries like Belgium, Spain, Russia, and South Africa moved toward federalism, as it began to take on new life in countries like Nigeria, Mexico, and Brazil, and as international agencies such as the World Bank embraced decentralization as a key to democratic governance in developing countries. Perhaps the most notable indicator of this shift of interest to a more international stage was the publication of Ron Watts' invaluable guidebook to federalism, *Comparing Federal Systems* published by the Institute of Intergovernmental relations in 1997.¹⁸⁶ Watts was perhaps the first Canadian student of comparative federalism: his *New Federations: Experiments in the Commonwealth* was published in 1966.¹⁸⁷ Many other Canadian scholars found themselves undertaking research, publication, and occasionally giving advice in settings as diverse as Russia, South Africa and Mexico.¹⁸⁸ The establishment of the Forum of Federations, and its first international conference on federalism at Mont Tremblant in 1999 gave public and governmental impetus to these developments.

Canada, we now realized, is a member of the broader category of multinational or multi-ethnic states, and thus we had much to learn from and to contribute to other such states. Federalism is one means of achieving accommodation in such societies.¹⁸⁹ Policy-making in Canada's federal system could also be put into a broader comparative framework, one that sees governance in contemporary societies as inherently multi-level, embracing complex interactions at local, state/provincial, national, and international levels.

Second was a much greater involvement of political theorists in thinking about federalism in Canada. The inspiration was that Canada was and is a society of multiple and deep diversities that interact in complex ways. Some of these divisions are the result of older legacies that we live with still — language and region are the most notable. Some are the result of demographic change and the mobilization of newer identities: gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. One — the mobilization of Aboriginal peoples against historic injustice and in support of greater autonomy — combines an old legacy with

a new salience. As Samuel LaSelva puts it, the problem that James Madison faced in thinking about American federalism in *The Federalist* was how to create a large country in which individual liberty and local initiative could be sustained; the challenge for Canada was how a diverse nation could exist at all — and he found his Madison in Georges-Etienne Cartier. “Canada was to be a nation in which multiple identities and multiple loyalties could flourish within the framework of a common political nationality.” Federalism did not presuppose a Canadian nation; it made a nation possible.¹⁹⁰ Thomas Hueglin makes a slightly different reference to Madison in his analysis of the political thought of Althusius: “in contrast to the top-down governmental federalism of Madison and the American Federalists, for example, Althusius develops a kind of *societal federalism*, bottom up.”¹⁹¹

This growth of involvement of political theorists has several major advantages for students of federalism in Canada. First, it has reinvigorated the impulse to ask normative questions about federalism — what are its consequences for democracy, social justice, equality, and community?¹⁹² Second, it has helped bridge the gap between the cadre of scholars whose work focused almost entirely on the federal system itself to the relative exclusion of other dimensions of Canadian political and social life and another group focused more on social policy and newer identities, for whom the study of federalism was little more than the “old politics.”¹⁹³ With the work of these scholars, regionalism can be discussed with the larger framework of understanding Canadian diversity, and intergovernmental relations within the larger framework of Canadian democracy. The idea of a Third Order of Aboriginal governments can be integrated with more conventional thinking about federalism as in Courchene’s proposal for an “Aboriginal province” and in the concept of “treaty federalism.”¹⁹⁴ As James Tully puts it, the marriage of political theory and more traditional study of federalism integrates “the more normative or theoretical questions of justice and recognition on one side and the more institutional or empirical questions of accommodation and stability on the other.”¹⁹⁵ These, says Charles Taylor are the “constitutive tensions” of all multinational democracies.

ALTERNATIVE MODELS

Canadian students of federalism have rarely been self-conscious or explicit about their theoretical models and assumptions, or about carefully delineating dependent and independent variables and the causal links between them. The analysis has tended to be descriptive, declaratory, and prescriptive rather than question-posing, puzzle-solving and hypothesis-testing. Yet three dominant approaches stand out: those predicated on the primacy of cultural and attitudinal factors (Ideas); those predicated on the interactions between politics

and the economy or class factors (Interests); and those predicated on the autonomous roles of institutions and of the political élites who occupy them (Institutions). Each approach varies widely within itself; and the dividing lines between them are frequently blurred. To some extent they address common questions: why the persistence and growth of strong provinces; why Canada did not follow the centralizing trends elsewhere; what are the sources of inter-governmental and interregional conflict? To some extent each generates its own distinctive questions and internal controversies; and each has its own unfinished agenda of questions. Yet most would agree with Donald Smiley that full understanding arises from the interaction of all three sets of factors.¹⁹⁶

Political Culture

The vogue of political culture studies in American political science, combined with the renewed stress on "national unity" in the face of Quebec nationalism and regional discontent led many scholars to focus on the ideas, values, assumptions, and beliefs as the key to understanding Canadian politics, especially in the 1960s and after.¹⁹⁷ "Cultural disunity represents the problem of national disunity in miniature; but perhaps it is also a root *cause* of disunity," write Bell and Tepperman.¹⁹⁸ Political culture was thus both an explanation of regionalism and the distinctive characteristics of Canadian federalism and a source of prescription for its amelioration. More recent scholars have focused on identity — national, provincial, Québécois, and so on — as the key element of culture. And in the most recent manifestation of this approach, some scholars have begun to explore the extent to which Canada's civil society is able to build bridges among regions and language groups.

But there are difficulties with attitudinal explanations, especially in their ability to account for levels of conflict or for movements toward centralization or decentralization. First, by definition, culture is stable and slow to change; it cannot, therefore, explain relatively fast-moving change. Indeed, fluctuating attitudes to governments or the federal system are likely to be more a response to events and governmental actions.¹⁹⁹ Thus, to explain variations in conflict, other non-cultural variables must be adduced. A key factor here is the extent to which the issues confronting the system tend to divide the country along regional lines, and thus evoke regional aspects of identity and interest, as distinct from those that evoke alternative sets of interests and identities. Second, there is some evidence that, at least in some respects, regional cultures have become less distinctive in recent years. There appears to be convergence across regions in citizens' orientations to the role of government.²⁰⁰ Gibbins has shown how in many ways, the west has become less distinctive from Ontario; there was increased heterogeneity in the west and less between the region and the centre: just at a time when east-west conflict was increasing.²⁰¹

Similarly it can be argued that many characteristics of Quebec culture became less sharply distinct from that of English Canada's with the Quiet Revolution, but cultural convergence did not necessarily imply reduced conflict. Indeed, the opposite case can be argued; that where cultures are similar, groups share similar goals and aspirations, and competition for these scarce values may well increase. Thus, the most characteristic form of conflict seems not to arise out of diversity of tastes, but rather from conflict over rival claims; group identities and the content of cultural factors appear to be substantially independent of each other.²⁰²

In order to explain conflict, cultural identities need to be energized and mobilized. This requires first, organizational support — the existence of networks of economic, social, and associational linkages that knit together members of the group, while establishing barriers between it and other groups. This, in part, is why when scholars talk of regional cultures in Canada, they almost always talk of provinces with their defined borders and established governments. Second, differences, even strong identities, appear to generate conflict only when they are associated with inequalities in either material benefits or political power, that is, when they are associated with concrete conflicts of interest. In fact, institutionalization and inequality are linked: it is inequality that generates conflict; and it is the way in which collectives are institutionalized that shapes the terms in which those conflicts are defined and played out.²⁰³

This is not to argue that cultural circumstances are not important background factors. It is to argue that in general they are intervening variables, and that their salience is largely to be explained by other, not intrinsically cultural, factors. Frequently, cultural memories and identities come to be resources that can be shaped, defined and mobilized by political and economic élites. They are socially and politically constructed "imagined communities."²⁰⁴

The unfinished agenda for political culture lies in further exploration of the organizational networks and linkages, both regional and national, and perhaps increasingly the Internet that underlies and sustains regional and linguistic identities.²⁰⁵ These include the mass media, education, voluntary associations, individual mobility, and trade patterns. Are such networks becoming more or less regionally self-contained? To what extent are non-governmental associations federally organized? How do they manage language, by separation, sovereignty-association or integration? To what extent is federalism as a set of relationships among political élites underpinned by a kind of "social federalism," and do the two dimensions move together or independently? To what extent do changing orientations to governments respond primarily to short-run shifts in political issues; or do they move in a different rhythm?

Even more important is to explore the hypothesis that under the impact of evolving democracy and of changes in attitudes and identities associated with

the Charter, a fundamental shift has taken place. Are orientations rooted in gender, ethnicity, life-style, and ideology displacing those rooted in place? Is the dominant axis of Canadian politics shifting from region to something else? If so, what are the implications for the relative strengths of federal and provincial governments? How do the newer orientations interact with older ones? Is the model not so much displacement, but addition, with newer and older orientations interacting in multi-faceted ways, leading to the kind of complex federal and constitutional agenda so evident in the post-Meech debates? And to what extent does the new politics — less deferential, more participant, more focused on rights and legal claims — translate into a fundamental challenge to executive federalism? Important as such changes are, it is worth noting that similar predictions for a reorientation of Canadian politics have been made before.

Political Economy

Political economy approaches have many advantages. In particular, they stress the material basis of conflict, and the extent to which both regional and ethnic conflict (even the constitution) are primarily about the distribution and location of economic benefits. The focus is on the state and what it does, in sharp contrast to the cultural approach.

Political economy approaches too have a number of problematic elements and an unfinished agenda. First, is the need to understand more fully whether there indeed are relatively stable coalitions of economic interests that support federal and provincial governments. Little independent analysis of the character of national and regional economic interests, or of their positions with respect to federalism, has been undertaken. Indeed, Thorburn's analysis of business views on federalism undertaken for the Macdonald Commission suggested that business views on federalism had little salience, coherence, or consistency.²⁰⁶ Given the mobility of capital, and the interconnections between regional, national, and international capital, it is unclear how useful a sharp distinction between them is. Certainly they must be described independently of the governments with which they are alleged to be linked.

The clearest "class interest" that has been identified as lying behind province-building is that of the new middle class — "the ascendant class of indigenous business entrepreneurs, urban professionals and state administrators."²⁰⁷ To the extent that the largest element of this coalition, the one whose interests are most closely tied to the interests of the provincial state, are public and para-public employees, this new class explanation becomes virtually indistinguishable from approaches that emphasize the autonomy of political élites. Nor is it clear why there should be permanent alliances between class fractions and either level of government. Reactions instead may be more *ad hoc*,

varying according to the issues or to the ideologies of the particular governments in power. It can also be argued that all capital is frequently frustrated by the complexities and conflicts of federalism, at least in the short run, and that it always has an interest in political stability. This accounts for one of the few consistent demands of business: a reduction of interprovincial trade barriers; and for business support for groups such as the Council for Canadian Unity working for accommodation between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Thus, we need more information on links between economic élites and governments and about how relations between governments affect the concerns of business.

Related to this is the need to know more about how federalism influences the role of the Canadian state and whether there can be an economic rationale for the division of responsibilities between the two orders of government. Indeed, what constitutes the Canadian state is itself in question: from one perspective it consists of the ensemble of the institutions of federal, provincial, and local governments and their interactions; from another, it consists of "competitive state-building," in which provinces and Ottawa each aspire to conduct most of the activities of the contemporary state. No theory, Marxist or otherwise, seems to provide a rationale for the existing division of responsibilities. We need to understand more about how shifts in governmental power affect the influence of different groups (sectors or classes) in society, and how federalism affects the kinds of policy instruments governments use.

More generally, federalism is an institutional framework predicated largely on the centrality of territorially based divisions. Analysis based on economic forces, however, grants no primacy to region: the divisions are functional or class-based. The question, then, is the extent to which these functional divisions parallel regional divisions and how a territorially-structured polity affects the mobilization of these other interests and their reflection in policy.

Third, the relations between institutions and economic forces need to be clarified. The logic of political economy is that institutions change in response to economic forces; they are dependent variables. Yet, few of the writers on the political economy of federalism deny the independent effect of institutions and the autonomy of governments. Stevenson, for example, places a great weight on the historical accident of provincial ownership of resources. The implication is that in this and other ways, economic interests must adapt to federalism, rather than themselves moulding it. Richards and Pratt conclude their study of prairie capitalism by saying "In the final analysis it has been the ideas of politicians and the actions of governments that mattered most of all,"²⁰⁸ and the general thesis of their book is that, at least under some circumstances, provinces can shape their own development and overcome the constraints of capital. Thus, institutions and political élites are autonomous. But the precise nature of the interaction between them and the economic forces remains to be clarified.

Finally, the implications of globalization, the current preoccupation of political economy, for federalism remains a contested and poorly understood

field. Are its effects inevitably fragmenting and decentralizing, as Courchene suggests, or is the logic of the new "economic constitution" embodied in international treaties such as the North American Free Trade Agreement one that inexorably undermines provincial capacities to shape their own economic and social policies?²⁰⁹ Yet another possibility is that globalization is such a remote set of causal variables that no clear links can be made between it and the dynamics of federalism — they are driven by much more domestic institutional and political factors.²¹⁰

Institutional Approaches

Philip Goldman once attacked what he called the "curse of institutionalism" in Canadian political science.²¹¹ By this he meant a concentration on government and governance, to the exclusion of a concern with political sociology or a politics that explores the theoretical and empirical links between institutions, the economy, and society. Institutionalism to him meant an atheoretical celebration of the development and workings of governing institutions that served only to reinforce the elitism of Canadian politics. He had the study of federalism in mind. Much work, as we have seen, was preoccupied with legal and constitutional development, and was, especially in the postwar period, heavily concentrated on the internal operations of administrative or executive federalism, with the complexities of fiscal arrangements and the like. But we have also seen a strong continuing thread, albeit in the early years coming mainly from other disciplines, that raised much broader and more critical questions about the place of federalism within the wider political setting. More recently, there has emerged an attempt to specify more fully the causal relations between institutions and society.

Goldman also observes that a preoccupation with institutions is a feature of new societies, whose institutions are being formed, or of societies in crisis, whose institutions have been called into question. The latter has generated renewed concentration on institutions in Canada: scholars have sought institutional explanations for the crisis of federalism and have sought institutional solutions to them. The crisis of federalism is seen to be both cause and consequence of institutional failure.

Institutional approaches can also see federalism as the dependent variable. For example, the fact that Canadian federalism coexists with Westminster-style parliamentary government helps explain many characteristics of our federalism — notably the emphasis on executive federalism. Similarly, the national electoral and party systems are seen to have important consequences for the dynamics of federalism. But it is institutional analysis that emphasizes federalism as the independent variable and directs our attention most forcefully to the *consequences*, whether for policy outcomes, economic growth,

the distribution of wealth among regions and classes; for democracy, citizenship, and accountability; or for our ability to recognize and accommodate regional, linguistic or other elements of Canadian diversity.

The first great wave of institutional study focused on the independent role of institutions as a block to adaptation or change. Crystallizing now obsolete cleavages and conceptions of government, institutions frustrated politics and policy based on new issues and cleavages. That was the prime concern of the 1930s, one that faded with the growth of "flexible federalism" after World War II, then resurfaced in the work of Porter and of later writers focused on gender and multiculturalism. Recently, there has been a revival of critical assessments of executive federalism, both on the grounds that it inhibits the political responsiveness and accountability of governments, and has serious weaknesses as a device for effective policy-making.²¹²

A stronger claim for the effect of institutions was that which ascribed provincialism in large part to the way in which federalism reinforced and crystallized regional cleavages and particularities. The regional dimension was "organized into politics"; other dimensions were "organized out." Thus, federalism emphasized and reinforced the underlying regionalism in the economy and society.²¹³ Another line of analysis, more prominent recently, helped explain the difficulty of managing interregional conflict and the growth of provinces as regional spokesmen by reference to the failure of national parliamentary institutions fully to reflect and provide the arena for accommodation between various regional interests. Fred Engelmann argued that no other federal system provides for less influence by the regions in central institutions and policy-making — intrastate federalism — than does Canada.²¹⁴

As in other areas of political science in Canada, public choice approaches have made relatively few inroads into the study of federalism. One scholar who has used the approach to considerable advantage is Mark Sproule-Jones, who sees Canadian federalism as a "grand metagame" between the club of federal and provincial governments playing under the flexible rules of executive, parliamentary federalism.²¹⁵ Another, not a political scientist, is Steven Kennett, who used the analysis of transaction costs (signaling, administration, coordination) developed by economists Albert Breton and Anthony Scott to bear on the question of how authority should be allocated in Canadian water resource policy.²¹⁶ The relative dearth of public choice analyses of federalism in Canada is surprising. Approaches that emphasize the self-interested behaviour of federal and provincial élites and the constraints and incentives that the institutional structure offers to governments engaged in intergovernmental bargaining have considerable explanatory power. Moreover, public choice theory has been prominent in studies of American federalism. *Federal-Provincial Diplomacy* (1972) using then current theories of international behaviour could easily have been framed in these terms.

Public choice theory is also implicit in the work of Alan Cairns, perhaps the chief exponent of the strongest version of the independent effect of institutions, though his focus is much more on the goals and strategies of political and bureaucratic élites, than on institutions per se. The latter become, in his model, the tools and resources that élites use in a constant struggle to expand their power. His model, in "The Governments and Societies of Canadian Federalism," is a radical statement of the autonomy of governing élites. "The history of Canadian federalism," he writes, "is nothing more than the ... efforts of governing elites to pyramid their resources."²¹⁷ Or elsewhere, "the reality, surely, is that much of the penetration of society by government is a product of the internal dynamics of Leviathan."²¹⁸ While federalism, he argues, did indeed originate in certain ethnic and provincial particularisms, "it does not follow that the outputs of governments a century later ... are responses in more than a nominal way to territorial particularisms, or to what we are or have in common as Canadians."²¹⁹ From these assertions about the power drives of élites, he reverses the causal arrow: societies are the creations of governments. This work has been enormously influential in shaping the study of Canadian federalism.

Cairns' position is almost certainly a provocative overstatement. As governments have grown, the interests of governing élites are indeed more pervasive. But the drive for power is presumably universal; it cannot by itself, therefore, explain change. Constitutional levers are indeed important governmental resources, but they are not the only ones. Popular support and alliances with other élites are crucial, and this is the avenue by which societal influences on government are reintroduced. Institutional explanations cannot stand alone: they are important as they interact with social and economic cleavages, with culture, and with changing economic forces. Thus, institutional and political élite factors alone cannot provide a complete explanation of the dynamics of federalism.

Although institutional approaches have dominated the study of federalism, they too have some important gaps. There has, remarkably, been no systematic study of First Ministers' Conferences. The impact of federal-provincial relationships on decision-making within governments remains little explored.²²⁰ Concentration on the "high politics" of confrontation over the constitution has inhibited detailed examination of federal-provincial relationships in other spheres, where the issues and conflicts are not themselves primarily regional. With some important exceptions, the study of federal-provincial relations has focused on the interactions between governmental officials, and has paid too little attention to how these affect other groups and interests in society.²²¹ At another institutional level, while it has become conventional wisdom to stress the inability of Parliament in a regionally divided country to act as an arena for accommodation, relatively little work has been done on the responses of Cabinet, caucuses, and the federal bureaucracy to regional tensions.²²²

The institutional structure also influenced our own research. The classic example is how political scientists have followed the constitution in treating local government as a creature of the provinces. The result is that municipal politics has been studied in a box separate from federalism, and we have seriously neglected the study of local governments, provincial-municipal relations, and the role of municipalities in multi-level governance.

There remains the question of the causal arrow. Is institutional failure, such as the decline in the integrative capacity of central institutions, a *cause* of increased interregional conflict, or a result of it?

Finally, writing on the crucial question of how federalism *matters* in terms of explaining policy outcomes, the distribution of costs and benefits, and so on is frustratingly vague. There is a general agreement that shared and overlapping responsibilities and the resulting need for intergovernmental coordination and cooperation can complicate and slow down the decision-making process, and may result in lowest common-denominator solutions. But it is not clear that this is a bad thing when genuine differences need to be reconciled; nor is it clear that it is the institutions of federalism, as distinct from the underlying differences in opinion, that are most to blame for policy incoherence.

This analysis suggests that no single approach provides a convincing or complete account of the dynamics shaping the federal system. It also suggests that the central analytical question is to clarify the causal arrows between institutional and elite factors on the one hand, and societal and economic forces on the other, and to theorize the links between federal state and federal society. While no single definitive answer to that question is likely, the most important work on Canadian federalism — by Mallory, Macpherson, Smiley, Corry, Rowell-Sirois, Cairns, Pratt — has all focused on this nexus, even while weighing the factors somewhat differently. No approach can stand alone: the focus must be not on state versus societal explanations, but rather on a more complete understanding of state-society relationships.²²³

CONCLUSION

This survey has shown the wide diversity in concerns, approaches, and methods in the study of regionalism and federalism in Canada. But what has this enormous output contributed to our understanding of Canadian politics, to the international discipline of political science, and to the course of political debate in Canada?

No single general theory of federalism and regionalism — either as dependent or independent variables — has emerged. We do know a lot about a number of areas. For example, we have detailed evidence about current attitudes to federal and provincial governments and the balance between national and provincial identities, though the meaning and significance of these data

are often obscure. We have very good data on regional variations in voting and party support, and increasing understanding of federalism and the party system. We have a growing number of sophisticated studies of intergovernmental relations and their place in Canadian policy-making. Considerable progress has been made in understanding the economic bases of interregional conflict. Similarly, we have a number of equally provocative hypotheses about the linkages between institutional and élite forces and underlying social cleavages. Yet there are important gaps and many unresolved questions.

Future work must address three broad questions. First is the oldest question of all: What are the conditions of political integration in Canada? The fragility of Canadian unity, and how best to achieve it, is as we have seen, the question to which much writing has been drawn. Federalism has been considered both as a barrier to integration and as an essential prerequisite to it. We need to explore the networks of social and economic linkages that underpin intergovernmental relationships. A theory of political integration requires that we understand the character of these exchanges — political, economic, social — among regions and the degree of *mutuality* or equality — politically and economically — that characterize them. It also requires an understanding of *dis*-integration and the possibilities of *re*-integration in the future. We need as well to explore in more detail varieties of asymmetrical federalism. Globalization has challenged traditional notions of sovereignty, suggesting a variety of new forms of multi-level governance that may open new avenues to the resolution of the Canadian dilemma.

Second, we need more extensive knowledge of the relationships between federalism and the role and performance of the Canadian state. What are the consequences of the division of powers, of shared responsibilities, of rival provincial and national state-building, of federal-provincial negotiations for policy and for social and economic interests? What are the consequences of a political and policy-making system predicated largely on the primacy of territory for interests defined in other ways? And how has all this affected the performance of roles such as promoting economic development and legitimation?

Third, what is the relationship between federalism and various normative concerns, especially those surrounding democratic values and models of representation? Work on Canadian federalism has focused primarily on its implications for integration and policy, and, until recently, very little on its implications for democracy, community, and citizenship. One influential line of argument has been highly critical of the Canadian variant of federalism on this score. It is alleged to reduce accountability and responsibility of governments, to enhance secrecy, to foster élitism, to weaken representative institutions such as parties and Parliament, and to frustrate national majority rule.²²⁴ A thinner thread is more optimistic: federalism is held to maximize satisfaction by permitting local majorities to satisfy their goals without threat

of veto, to provide more accessible government, to give citizens greater freedom of choice and so on.²²⁵ The study of federalism has already been greatly improved by the growth in contributions by political theorists to such debates.²²⁶ Constitutional debates have also crystallized critical questions concerning conceptions of community, of majority rule versus minorities, of alternative conceptions of how to register consent and of representation. But again, much clarification is needed.

We need more synthetic analysis on the relations between federalism and conflict and its management; federalism and policy and the role of the state; and federalism and democratic theory. In exploring such questions, Canadian scholars need to be more comparative. While Canadians have been much influenced by non-Canadian theoretical models in the study of federalism, such as those by Wheare, Beer, Elazar, Riker, and Lijphart, very few studies have directly compared regionalism and federalism in Canada with those in other countries. Similarly, with a few notable exceptions,²²⁷ Canadians have contributed little to the international comparative literature, theoretical or empirical, on federalism. As Gwendolyn Gray, assessing the work of Banting and Cairns, observed "they are writing not about the dynamics of federalism but rather about the dynamics of Canadian federalism."²²⁸ One reason perhaps is that the international literature in federalism is itself relatively weak. Riker has argued that federal systems are so diverse in form and operation that each is largely *sui generis*: generalizations about federalism itself as an independent variable are rare.²²⁹ The interesting theoretical categories are not so much federal/non-federal, but centralized/decentralized; territorial versus functional cleavages, and so on.

Yet many of the questions that arise in the Canadian context may be illuminated by comparative study — both of other federal countries with varying institutional structures and social and economic patterns, and of unitary countries with analogous territorial or linguistic cleavages. By the same token, the primacy of language and territory in Canada provides Canadian scholars with a kind of comparative advantage, especially important given the re-emergence of such cleavages in a number of other advanced industrial states such as Spain and Belgium, and the development of multi-level government in the European Union. Again, we have recently taken important steps in this direction.

If federalism and regionalism are the fundamental "problems" of Canadian society and politics, then what have Canadian political scientists contributed to their resolution? Some might argue that research has actually been mischievous: that social science usually finds what it looks for, and in looking for and finding regional divisions, we have contributed to the very thing we have studied to the neglect of alternative constructions of the Canadian reality. It is also argued that some have jumped from a *finding* of regionalism to a celebration of it, a charge levelled at the Pepin-Robarts Task Force, whose work was largely conducted and informed by recent political science. In earlier periods,

though, we saw that to study federalism was often to condemn it as reactionary and that this theme has forcefully re-emerged in recent years.

It has also been argued that some students of federalism are mesmerized by the processes of executive federalism, and by the need for solutions consistent with a classical model of the equality of governments and divided sovereignty, so that their suggestions have been too narrow and unimaginative, too constrained by the "realities" of federal and provincial power to prescribe more radical changes. Indeed, there is a genuine tension between realism and imagination and between federalism as a top-down expression of institutionalized élites and federalism as a bottom-up expression of the desire for self-governing communities to have greater control over their own destinies. There is an additional tension between the view of federalism as an end in itself and the view that federalism, like any other institutional structure, should be subordinate to the broader issue of the purposes, values, and interests that are to be pursued.

Nonetheless, political scientists have recently explored an impressive variety of reforms, and have often become persuasive advocates for them.

Most such proposals have focused on institutional change, reflecting not only the bias of the discipline, but also the fact that constitutional engineering, while difficult, is easier than manipulating much more basic underlying social and economic forces, however much it is believed that they are more fundamental. From Rowell-Sirois, to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and to the Macdonald Commission, political scientists have played a considerable role in shaping public and political definitions of the central questions. At the same time, political science analyses have been shaped by the dominant political concerns facing the system. And our responses display the same diversity and the same contradictions as the currents of political debate we study. As this suggests, all academic endeavours are deeply shaped by the social, political and institutional milieus in which they are embedded. This survey has demonstrated that the central preoccupations of English-Canadian political scientists who have focused on federalism are on *governance*. How to manage intergovernmental relationships in a divided society? How to adapt federalism to the changing roles of the contemporary state? This is in a sense a top-down view; its central concern is with public management in its broadest sense. More bottom up, radical views, for example on the democratic potentials of federalism, or on the potential virtues of genuinely decentralized politics involving localities and neighbourhoods, have been few and far between.

This should not be surprising. As we have seen, much of the impetus for federalism studies has come from a series of Royal Commissions. All were appointed by governments to address problems that governments defined. W.A. McIntosh, Alex Corry, and John Deutsch established a pattern that others have followed. Many of the most prominent students of federalism have moved

easily and frequently between academia and public service, among them Peter Meekison in Alberta, Howard Leeson in Saskatchewan, and David Cameron in Ontario.

One result of this pattern of close engagement with governments is that most of the fundamental critiques of federal practice in Canada — whether those of John Porter in an earlier period or feminist critics of the Meech Lake Accord in a more recent one — have come from those who would not define themselves primarily as students of federalism.

The Institute of Intergovernmental Relations (IIGR), now based in the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University, reflects some of this history. It was established, with federal funding, in 1965; later it built strong support from provinces such as Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario. Ron Burns, a senior federal government official, was its first director and its first major work was on fiscal federalism and the management of intergovernmental relations. His successor, Richard Simeon, arrived at the Institute just two months before the 1976 election of the *Parti Québécois*, and found the agenda of research and communication instantly and dramatically changed. In 1983, he left to join the staff of the Macdonald Commission, as coordinator for federalism studies in the Institutional research stream under the direction of Alan Cairns. His successor at the Institute, Peter Leslie, along with Ronald Watts, was seconded to work in Ottawa during the Charlottetown round of constitutional discussions. The present director, Harvey Lazar, also came to the Institute from the ranks of the senior public service. Like virtually all research institutes, the IIGR remains dependent on government grants and contract funding, with inevitable resulting constraints on what can be achieved.

Yet successive directors, responding to the changing political and policy environment, have succeeded in broadening the envelope of federal studies to embrace new issues and concerns, from free trade, to the environment, to Aboriginal self-government; and have attempted to give voice to divergent views and perspectives on federalism in a wide range of conferences and publications.

Thus, the Institute remains the most important centre for encouraging federalist studies in Canada. Its annual volumes on *The State of the Federation* are essential sources for the best writing on federalism on the most pressing issues facing the system today. Starting as a simple chronology of current events, it has developed into a series of tightly edited volumes, each focused on a single theme. Its other services such as its well-maintained bibliography are equally valuable resources for all students of federalism.

Again, like other institutions, the Institute now operates in a global environment. It was a founding member of the International Association of Centres for Federal Studies, in which it plays a leading role. Recent work has focused on globalization and its impact both on Canadian federalism and on other federations. Canadians such as Lloyd Brown-John, Maureen Covell, and Alain

Gagnon have also been very active in the Committee on Comparative Federalism of the International Political Science Association (IPSA). Articles by Canadians or about Canadian federalism appear regularly in the leading journal in the field, *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, and three Canadians currently serve on its editorial board.

Happily, the range of voices active on issues debating federalism in Canada has also broadened. The Canada West Foundation has been an essential voice on institutional reform and a wide range of policy issues; the Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) has published important work on social policy in the federation, on the Social Union Framework Agreement and on the politics of identity and diversity; the Caledon Institute is a fresh voice on social policy and fiscal federalism; the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) has federalism squarely on its agenda; and the C.D. Howe Institute has published extensive work not only on economic policy and fiscal federalism, but also on the social union and French-English relations.

A few years ago Peter Leslie and Tom McIntosh had a number of discussions with political scientists on the state of federalism research in Canada.²³⁰ They came to a gloomy conclusion: student interest in courses on federalism was declining; young scholars were not being attracted to the field; federalism studies no longer seemed to be at the cutting edge of the discipline. Their reports may well have influenced the federal government — anxious to defend federalism against its sovereignist critics — to develop the Forum of Federations and to encourage the SSHRC to devote special funding to stimulate federalism research among professors and graduate students.

That is certainly to be welcomed, but I think the pessimism may have been displaced. All sorts of things have been going on recently that have given a renewed energy to federal studies. I conclude by recalling just a few that have been discussed.

First, there is the extraordinarily fruitful marriage of federal studies and political theory. The work of Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, James Tully, Joe Carens, and others gives us a much richer palette with which to explore the multiple dimensions of identity and community, and the recognition and accommodation of diversity and difference. Their work could only have grown out of the Canadian milieu. They have put the study of federalism squarely within a set of overarching normative concerns — identity and community, democratic governance, and policy effectiveness — that have given it a new energy. The institutional agenda of executive federalism, fiscal arrangements, and the policy consequences of federalism remain core areas of study, but we can also apply different questions to them: how to make these processes more open and accountable, how to integrate them with alternative bases of representation, how to bring elected legislators more fully into the process, and so on. Must the phrase “intergovernmental relations and democracy” be an oxymoron if ever there was one?²³¹

Second, the Canadian experience with a multinational, regionalized federalism, simultaneously managing other dimensions of diversity, has become relevant around the world. More and more Canadian scholars are, in contrast to earlier periods, doing comparative research and contributing to the international discourse. Equally important, we are much more likely now to draw on comparative experience to understand Canadian realities.

One of the great advantages of this, as we think about our own challenges, is that we are free to explore the rich array of possible relationships outside the traditional boxes that have dominated Canadian political discourse. These include multi-state partnerships, as in the European Union, asymmetrical relationships as in Spain and now the United Kingdom, confederal and partnership models, and a host of middle positions between the old conceptions of sovereignty and unity — two nations or ten provinces — that have constrained our thinking in the past. We can now think of localism, provincialism, and the like not as relics of pre-modern societies, but as central features of contemporary life. Indeed, the fluidity and variability of identities, the porosity of boundaries and the erosion of sovereignty as a result of globalization may suggest not that Canadian federalism is obsolete, but that "Canada is the first post-modern polity par excellence."²³²

Fourth, the study of federalism seen as limited to federal-provincial relations has morphed into a much broader exploration of multi-level governance. Local government now claims a greater, if still limited, amount of our attention. International institutions do so even more. We are now coming to see citizenship, identity, and policy as simultaneously local, regional, national, and international. The tools we have learned in studying federalism are relevant here too. Moreover, this much more capacious view of our field opens the door to at least some renewed interest in federalism among our Quebec colleagues.

More closely linked to political theory, less parochial, more attuned to the diversities of multi-level government, students of federalism are now painting from a wider palette, with a wider range of colors. There is no longer a neatly wrapped and separate box labelled "federalism." The box has spilled open, and while we have little idea about how to rearrange the pieces, our study is much the richer.

NOTES

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2. David R. Cameron and Jacqueline D. Krikorian, "The Study of Federalism in Canada Since 1960." Unpublished manuscript 2001.
3. The first draft of this essay was completed in 1980 before patriation, the Charter or Meech Lake. It can be argued that these changes, and the politics surrounding them, have fundamentally altered the context for writing about federalism. In the present version, I seek to take account of these developments on recent scholarship, but I have not altered the original framework. This version, like the first, also concentrates primarily on the contributions of English-language scholars.
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25. For example, see A.H. Birch, *Federalism, Finance and Social Legislation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955.
26. See D.V. Smiley, "An Outsider's Observations of Federal-Provincial Relations among Competing Adults," in *Confrontation and Collaboration: Intergovernmental Relations in Canada Today*, ed. R. Simeon. Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1979, pp. 105-13; see also Alan Cairns, "The Other Crisis in Canadian Federalism," *Canadian Public Administration* 22(1979): 175-95.
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217. Alan Cairns, "Governments and Societies."
218. Alan C. Cairns, "Research on the Institutions of Canadian Federalism," in *The Challenge of Research on the Canadian Communities*, ed. Simeon, p. 88.
219. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
220. The 2002 edition of *Canada: The State of the Federation* will focus on the institutions of federalism and thus fill in some of these gaps.
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222. See, however, Herman Bakvis, *Federalism and the Organization of Political Life*. Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University, 1980.
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224. See Smiley, "An Outsider's View."
225. See, for example, the work of Daniel Elazar and Vincent Ostrom.
226. See, in the Canadian context, William Mathie, "Political Community and the Canadian Experience: Reflections on Nationalism, Federalism and Community," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 12(1979):3-20; and Cameron, *Nationalism, Self-Determination*.
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