

Reaction to this  
topic : explain the  
trade-offs that exist  
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concentrating ...

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Reaction Paper: Trade-off between Centralization and Decentralization of Government Power Affiliation with more information about affiliation, research grants, conflict of interest and how to contact

Reaction Paper: Trade-off between Centralization and Decentralization of Government Power

Response to Professor's Comments:

The professor has presented a good argument when asking how I would respond to those who argue that legalized racism, as existed in many states in America until relatively recently, was part of the "local cultural and political autonomy," which is seen when decentralization takes place. For that I would like to make reference to the American Constitution, wherein the Article IV Section 1 emphasizes 'Full faith and credit' clause, which means that each state is to respect the laws and rules of every other state. This thus implies and also facilitates that states independently have local cultural and political autonomy. Thus, to the opponents who argue that this autonomy allows for states to have their own laws regarding crucial issues such as racism, I would like to bring to their notice that as of now, racism is illegal in all states of the country. I would also explain to the opponents that for any given group of individuals, it takes time to understand and realize certain important things. While other individuals would have already accepted it, certain individuals find it hard to accept change from their already existing philosophies, and this is why there was legalized racism in some states of the US until recently. I would then point to the banning of racism now in all states and tell them how this is no proof that all state

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governments have realized the evil behind racism, and there is now a growing understanding and respect for every individual as a human.

Furthermore, I would tell them to consider the case of same-sex marriage in the US and how different states have different views regarding it, that is, some states have banned it whereas in other states it is completely legal, which shows each state's political and cultural autonomy. The opponents will thus understand the need for each state to have its own cultural and political autonomy,

The professor asks if federal government has the right to impose standards on state government, which would upend the local cultural norms of the state. My answer is that in cases like the above mentioned, there should not be an overall decision taken by the central government as to ban or legalize such marriages, as it all basically comes down to the lifestyle choice of the individual. At the same time, there is no harm being inflicted on any person with the same-sex marriage of two individuals. However, in the case of racism, there is both direct and indirect, physical as well as mental pain being inflicted on individuals.

The professor also asks if the federal government should have such a right, for which my answer is that the Federal Government needs to take into its hands laws and rules where an individual's life is significantly affected by the other, and leave other laws regarding local and cultural beliefs to the respective states. Certainly it is hard to categorize race and marriage under different heads, as they are both part of culture. Thus, it is difficult to decide where federal government has right and where the state government does,

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however, what can be done is to review each case and issue independently and then ascribe it to the respective government. In this way the state can maintain its local political and cultural autonomy and the federal government would not be responsible of upending these different cultural norms as well. I also believe that the focus of the federal or national government should be more on matters that are of national interests such as issues relating to wars, home affairs etc.

Professor has also raised a quite critical question as to federal government being more corrupted than state government especially with respect to proportion. I would first like to clear my point about no member of the federal government going to jail for corruption. What I meant is that this fact reflects from the time period after the Second World War and connotes to the time when the state government officials were sent to jail. This argument that I made is evidence based and is backed by Boffa, Piolatto and Ponzetto in their article, when they show that as per the investigations carried out by Department of Justice as part of the “ federal prosecution of public corruption,” “ no President” of the US “ nor any member of the federal cabinet” was charged with crimes related to corruption (2014, p. 1). For the matter of proportion, that is federal government being more corrupted, I would like to argue as stated by Boffa, Piolatto and Ponzetto that history stands testimony to corruption being “ more widespread in state and local governments” as compared with the federal level government (p. 1). For instance, when New Deal was introduced, the various relief programs that were looked after by the state and local governments were purified of its

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political manipulation through the transfer of supervision to the federal government. I also believe that when one is at a federal level government position, they have more pressure to do the right thing and not fall prey to selfish motives. Also, since the decision and actions taken by officials at the federal level is supervised by various other officials, they cannot get away as quickly with a corrupted deed as is in the case of local or state governments. Thus, I would like to make the argument that corruption is more prevalent at local and state levels than at the federal level.

Response to Lori:

Lori, you have stated and I quote " The Constitution assured National unity by including Article IV Section1, calling for " Full Faith and Credit which obligates each state to honor the policies and procedures of other states." However, you contradict your own point in a following sentence saying that " there is confusion" as there are differences in the policies of different states regarding matters of " highway speed limits, marriage and divorce discrepancies, health care coverage" etc. So my question to you is, with the growing differences in such policies, the confusion will keep on rising. In such a light, how can you say that the constitution assures national unity? Every state will follow its own set of values and its own beliefs, then how is the nation unified as a whole? Also explain the " un-unified union." How is the nation an un-unified union with all the confusion that exists?

I agree with the last sentence, that is, the conclusion you have made when you say " I believe State Level Government should be strengthened and enforced because each State has uniquely inherent social concerns that

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would be overlooked at a National Level.” However, it brings back the question of increasing confusion, with state governments being more strengthened, they will receive more political autonomy, so wouldn't that only increase the confusion? Also, you have mentioned that in recent decades, power is again tilting towards the state, and have asserted that it causes “ some dysfunction in equality and uniformity of programs.” I agree with this statement, however, you might want to give some ‘ recent’ examples of such dysfunction in order to support your statement.

Response to Anthony:

I agree with your statement of state governments receiving help from federal government in case of resource sharing and indeed you have given a great example by citing the Boston Marathon Bombing. Matters that threaten the safety and security of the citizens are indeed a joint responsibility of both the state and federal level government. Especially when you take the case of natural disasters, calamities etc, where the state government should not think twice about asking federal government for help, and where the latter should not wait for the former's invitation to help either.

When you say “ this clause always for a more national unity and protects out-of-state residents or in other words, states cannot discriminate against someone from another state to it own residents,” I believe you mean ‘ this clause allows.’ With reference to Privileges and Immunities clause, you say that this is a loss for state governments. It would be better if you could explain how it is a loss to them, because otherwise, it gives the readers a feeling that the loss suffered by state governments due to this clause is the

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wasted chance of acting out discrimination against people from other states, which is just not true. You state, " This limits power to states and demands that states follow these laws." Should the one state try to impose its own standards and beliefs on a resident of another state, if not then why is it considered a loss for this particular state?

You also talk about Reserved Powers that " allows states to control and enforce their criminal codes, regulate family affairs, and develop health and safety laws." Do you think matters such as health should be within the jurisdiction of states independently? In such cases there will entail a lot of problems for citizens who cannot get access to medical aid in particular states. I think matters relating with health should be left to be decided by the government and in that way all citizens of America can get access to healthcare no matter in which state they are. For instance the Obamacare program, although it will take time for it to be fully effective, I believe it is better than states having their control over healthcare, as then a situation will not arise where in some states all people have access to healthcare, whereas in others they don't.

## References

Boffa, F., Piolatto, A., & Ponzetto, G. A. (2014). Political centralization and government accountability. Retrieved from [http://www.crei.cat/people/ponzetto/ponzetto\\_centralization\\_2014new.pdf](http://www.crei.cat/people/ponzetto/ponzetto_centralization_2014new.pdf)

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