

Good example of federalism essay

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



Question No. 1 Evolution of Federalism

One aspect of federalism that evolved through time is the jurisdiction of federal courts. In *Chisholm v. Georgia* 2 U. S. 419 (1793), an out-of-state citizen sued Georgia for unpaid supplies delivered during the Revolution. The Court held that such a claim could prosper in a federal court, but Justice Iredell dissented on the grounds that the state should not be subjected to a lawsuit unless it gives its consent under the common law concept. Georgia, therefore, did not have to defend itself in a private federal court action. The case inspired the passage of the 11th Amendment, which precluded federal courts from hearing actions brought by private citizens against states in federal courts (Banks and Blakeman 2012, p. 26).

A much contested aspect of federalism in its early years was the nature of the relationship between the national government and the states. After the Union had adopted federalism, the Jeffersonian bloc argued that federalism simply meant that the states formed a compact and were free to leave at any time or invalidate federal laws they did not agree with. For example, the southern states believed that slavery should be a matter for the state and not determined by the federal government. The victory of the north in the American Civil War quashed all these debates. Thus, the passage of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments effectively abolished slavery, put a limit to the powers of the states with respect to civil rights and liberties, and established the supremacy of the US Constitution (Katz 1997).

The early conception of federalism was it was a 'dual federalism' in the sense that the national government and the states had their respective responsibilities – distinct and separate from each other. For example,

national defense and foreign affairs were thought to be the exclusive province of the federal government while education and family issues were those of the states. Roosevelt's New Deal, however, changed this system into ' cooperative federalism' where both national government and states worked out issues together to solve social and economic problems (Katz 1997).

Question No. 2 Factors that allowed federalism to shape the American political system

Federalism is allowed to shape the American political system because it brings more advantages to the system than when federalism is absent. The need for stability in a group of states with different agenda and interests requires a unifying system offered by federalism. Federalism fosters stability, which makes it advantageous to the American political system. In the early days, James Madison advocated federalism because he believed that it would eventually bring about stability and cooperation among the various states and many interest groups. He believed that if US Constitution could be established as the foundation of American politics and could unite all components of the union (Miroff et al, 2014, p. 30).

The size and the number of states making up the US could result in complex problems that require innovative solutions. Federalism promotes innovation because it allows the gathering and comparison of a market of ideas. For example, when Clinton's healthcare did not fare well, states created health insurance pools where small businesses bonded together to buy insurance and leveraged for better coverage. The states also pioneered other ideas that worked to the advantage of the people, such as imposing work

requirements on welfare recipients (Sifer 2010, p. 36).

The maximization of political participation in a large community of states can be possible with federalism. Federalism creates multiple layers of government, and this gives citizens various venues for political participation. Federalism allows the exercise of suffrage not only at the local and state levels, but also in the national level. When the African American civil rights movement in the 1950s and the 1960s did not get the attention of state legislatures it needed, it targeted the national legislature where it was better well-received (Sifer 2010, p. 36).

Question No. 3 Effect of relationship between states and federal government on US policy

Federal government and states relations, known as intergovernmental relations, significantly impact the creation of government policies. In the latter half of the 20th century, for example, the relationship between the states and the federal government weakened because of the issues the plagued the latter. Such issues included the Vietnam War, the Watergate Scandal that saw the resignation of President Nixon, inflation, the Iran hostage crisis and other issues that put the federal government's credibility under suspicion. As a result, confidence in the national government weakened, and Ronald Reagan responded to this with a change in the national policy. He diminished national participation in state affairs by cutting taxes, stopping government programs and withdrawing federal funding from several state programs. The government placed mandates on states, such as the Medicaid, without providing accompanying funding (Doonan 2013, p. 8).

The desegregation principle that emerged after the 1964 case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, stirred considerable resistance to the federal government in the South. In response to such resistance, government policy shifted from cooperative federalism to coercive federalism. School desegregation was, thus, enforced by sending the military to Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. The effect of the resistance strengthened the resolve of the federal government to assert its dominance. Federal courts initiated a civil rights revolution against state and local governments and the federal government created externality policies, such as environmental degradation. Congress compelled states and local governments to carry out affirmative actions formulated by federal agencies (Jun and Wright 1996, pp. 39-41).

References

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