presentation of issues upon which the court so largely depends for illumination of difficult constitutional questions."[376] This practical conception of standing has now given way to a primary emphasis upon separation of powers as the guide. "[T]he 'case or controversy' requirement defines with respect to the Judicial Branch the idea of separation of powers on which the Federal Government is founded. The several doctrines that have grown up to elaborate that requirement are 'founded in concern about the proper—and properly limited—role of the courts in a democratic society.'"[377]

Standing as a doctrine is composed of both constitutional and prudential restraints on the power of the federal courts to render decisions,[378] and is almost exclusively concerned with such public law questions as determinations of constitutionality and review of administrative or other governmental action.[379] As such, it is often interpreted according to the prevailing philosophies of judicial activism and restraint, and narrowly or broadly in terms of the viewed desirability of access to the courts by persons seeking to challenge legislation or other governmental action. The trend in the 1960s was to broaden access; in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, it was to narrow access by stiffening the requirements of standing, although Court majorities were not entirely consistent. The major difficulty in setting forth the standards is that the Court's generalizations and the results it achieves are often at variance.[380]

---

[376] Baker v. Carr, 369 U.S. 186, 204 (1962). That persons or organizations have a personal, ideological interest sufficiently strong to create adverseness is not alone enough to confer standing; rather, the adverseness is the consequence of one being able to satisfy the Article III requisite of injury in fact. Valley Forge Christian College v. Americans United, 454 U.S. 464, 482–486 (1982); Schlesinger v. Reservists Comm. to Stop the War, 418 U.S. 208, 225–226 (1974). Nor is the fact that, if plaintiffs have no standing to sue, no one would have standing, a sufficient basis for finding standing. Id. at 227.

[377] Allen v. Wright, 468 U.S. 737, 750 (1984) (quoting Warth v. Seldin, 422 U.S. 490, 498 (1975)). All the standards relating to whether a plaintiff is entitled to adjudication of his claims must be evaluated "by reference to the Art. III notion that federal courts may exercise power only 'in the last resort, and as a necessity,' . . . and only when adjudication is 'consistent with a system of separated powers and [the dispute is one] traditionally thought to be capable of resolution through the judicial process.'" Id. at 752 (quoting, respectively, Chicago & G.T. Ry. v. Wellman, 143 U.S. 339, 345 (1892), and Flast v. Cohen, 392 U.S. 83, 97 (1968)). For the strengthening of the separation-of-powers barrier to standing, *see* Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife, 504 U.S. 555, 559–60, 571–78 (1992).

[378] *E.g.*, Valley Forge Christian College v. Americans United, 454 U.S. 464, 471–476 (1982); Allen v. Wright, 468 U.S. 737, 750–751 (1984).

[379] C. WRIGHT, HANDBOOK OF THE LAW OF FEDERAL COURTS 60 (4th ed. 1983).

[380] "[T]he concept of 'Art. III standing' has not been defined with complete consistency in all of the various cases decided by this Court . . . [and] this very fact is probably proof that the concept cannot be reduced to a one-sentence or one-paragraph definition." Valley Forge Christian College v. Americans United, 454 U.S.