

### Class 5: Representation in federal systems

As we discussed in lecture, federalism has important implications for the way democracies work. One crucial implication relates to the extent of democratic accountability, since it can be difficult in a federation to disentangle the issues that matter for elections at the federal versus subnational levels. The tutorial this week therefore focuses on the extent to which voters are able to sort out which policy actions and responsibilities belong to which levels of government. The discussion will start from Wlezien and Soroka's investigation of public responsiveness in Canada. In your groups, you will then conduct your own research on the Canadian federation to better understand not only how federalism works in practice, but also the difficulties in assigning responsibility for policy outcomes.

Questions:

1. Describe the concept of "public responsiveness" on the basis of this text. Why might federalism increase or decrease public responsiveness?
2. Discuss, based on the empirical findings of the paper, whether federalism affects public responsiveness.
3. Imagine you live in Québec, Canada. You are angry at the government because...

Option A	OR	Option B
a) There are always long lines at the post office; b) a lot of new immigrants have recently moved into your town; c) and you have no access to affordable childcare.		a) A foreign army occupied your town for a week last month; b) your (public) pension has been cut in half; c) and the local hospital has been shut down.

Which level of government (provincial or federal) should you hold accountable for each of these complaints? Choose Option A or B and conduct some research\* in order to answer the question. NB: the answer may not always be as straightforward as you might think. (*Study groups provide the answer for question 3 on 2-3 slides and upload them on blackboard by Wednesday 23:59.*)

\* Some potential sources include:

- [http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/Education/ourcountryourparliament/html\\_booklet/di-vision-powers-e.html](http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/Education/ourcountryourparliament/html_booklet/di-vision-powers-e.html)
- <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-4.html#h-17>
- **Option A:** <http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/prb0420-e.htm> (section: The Federal Role in Child Care) & <http://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/cst-eng.asp>
- **Option B:** <http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/prb0858-e.htm> (section: The Federal Spending Power) & <http://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/cht-eng.asp>

Readings:

Wlezien, C., and Soroka, S.N. (2011) 'Federalism and Public Responsiveness to Policy.' *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 41(1): 31-52.