

The Evolution of Federalism Studies in Canada:
From Dependent to Independent Variable

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Introduction¹

The Supreme Court of Canada, in the Secession Reference, suggested that federalism is among the core shared values of Canadians along with democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law, and respect for minorities.² As such, it would be reasonable to expect that federalism would be a major and ongoing preoccupation and concern for those who, broadly defined, study Canadian politics and government. However, there is some debate about the extent to which, in fact, federalism remains the object of sustained and continuing scholarly attention. This paper seeks to add to this debate based on a review of recent scholarly literature on federalism published in Canada and the results of a series of interviews with scholars for whom federalism is major concern.

In this paper we combine both quantitative counts of relevant publications dealing with Canadian federalism, generally defined, with a more qualitative assessment of the state of the federal studies from researchers active in the field.

Specifically, in this paper we aim to:

- identify the current state of federalism studies across Canada and in both official languages;
- gauge the attractiveness of federalism studies to graduate and undergraduate students; and,
- probe the trends in federalism scholarship over the past decade.

This paper is divided into five parts. The next section offers a brief description of earlier studies that seek to assess federalism studies in Canada. The second section describes the methodology of the current study. The third and fourth sections are the core of the paper and present the results of our quantitative review of the scholarly literature on federalism published in Canada between 2000 and 2007 and the results of a series of 16 interviews conducted with a diverse group of students of political science, economics and law. The final section of this paper briefly considers the implications of the results and offers some preliminary suggestions as to what can and should be done to strengthen the study of federalism in Canada commensurate with its status as a core shared value of Canadians.

¹ This paper was prepared with the able and effective assistance of Maxine Leger-Haskell and Catherine Ellyson. We would also like to acknowledge the helpful comments of Katherine Fafard and Tom McIntosh, Canadian Policy Research Networks / University of Regina and the contribution of Tea Rokolj, Morriset Library, University of Ottawa. Of course the usual caveats apply. This paper was originally written for the Canadian Policy Research Networks and the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat of the Privy Council Office, Government of Canada.

² Reference re Secession of Quebec, [1998] 2 S.C.R. 217

1. What do we know?

Over the past ten years, a number of generalizations have been developed based on different overviews of the state of federalism³ studies in Canada. In a general review of the literature published in 2002, political scientist Richard Simeon stressed that studies on federalism could be characterized by two main phenomena: first, they have been profoundly influenced by contemporary political events, and, secondly they have become more diversified, reflecting the changing nature of the relationship between different political and methodological issues in contemporary political science.⁴ Thus, several areas that have dominated the study of Canadian federalism are themselves a response to the political reality of the day. In this context, it is not surprising, observed Simeon that the Canadian unity debate had captured and held the attention of researchers.

In his overview of the literature, Simeon discerned four phases in the study of federalism. The first (1930-1950) paralleled the modernization of the Canadian state and the development of the modern Keynesian welfare state. The studies published from 1960 to 1980 were above all interested in the way federal institutions adjusted (or failed to adjust) to changing visions of the Canadian political community. Following the constitutional entrenchment of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982, studies from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s were focused on constitutional debates and the mobilization of social groups, as well as on a shift to a certain post-territorial conception of federalism. Lastly, the defeat of the Meech and Charlottetown accords meant that, in the 1990s, “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”.⁵ Thus, interest for many scholars of federalism shifted to contemporary issues such as the relationship of the state with First Nations or policy-oriented studies. Others developed an interest in comparative studies using Canada as a case study or moved beyond Canada altogether and focused on the politics of federalism in other countries.

Although Richard Simeon’s overview reflected his own particular study of works on Canadian federalism, it nevertheless draws several general conclusions on the then current state of scholarship. According to Simeon, it was fair to conclude that we had:

[...] detailed evidence about current attitudes to federal and provincial governments and the balance between national and provincial identities [...] very good data on regional variations in voting and party support [...] increasing understanding of

³ Federalism here refers to studies where federalism is of interest but is not necessarily the central focus of the research. This is distinct from a smaller group of studies that deal with federalism per se that is as theory and as a set of governing arrangements (e.g., division of powers, intergovernmental relations, fiscal arrangements). As we describe below, only a small number of studies address this narrower set of issues.

⁴ Richard Simeon, *Political Science and Federalism. Seven Decades of Scholarly Engagement* (Kingston : Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen’s University, 2002), p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

federalism and the party system [...] a growing number of sophisticated studies of intergovernmental relations and their place in Canadian policy-making [...] [made] considerable progress [...] in understanding the economic bases of interregional conflict [...] provocative hypotheses about the linkages between institutional and elite forces and underlying social cleavages.⁶

Despite the burgeoning of scholarship on federalism, beginning in the mid-1990s there developed an impression that scholars had, in fact, begun to neglect and move away from this field of study. Thus, summarizing a meeting among Canadian political scientists in June 1996, Peter Leslie noted a belief that there was a growing shift in the focus of federalism studies: the literature focused less on traditional questions of federalism (division of powers, federal-provincial relations, fiscal federalism), in favour of new and emerging themes (the politics of identity, the Charter, etc.).⁷ In a follow-up study based on a mail survey of 120 academic researchers in Canada and a roundtable discussion, Tom McIntosh discovered additional support for this view and noted that students were increasingly interested in issues such as ethnicity, citizenship and new social movements.⁸

In an effort to gauge the intensity of such a move from traditional to new themes of federalism, David Cameron and Jacqueline Krikorian undertook a comprehensive analysis of articles published, between 1960 and 1999 in pertinent scholarly journals (in political science, law, history, and economics) and uncovered several underlying trends.⁹ Their goal was to determine whether there had been a decline or an increase in interest in issues related to federalism and, having done this, to determine whether there were observable differences and similarities in French- and English-language studies and to what extent francophone scholars engaged with the published work of their Anglophone colleagues and vice versa. This analysis was recently updated by the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat of the Privy Council Office (PCO-IGA) to include articles published between 2000 and 2006.¹⁰ Several important trends are evident from these studies:

1. Cameron and Krikorian found that there was no decrease in studies characterized as the “traditional” areas of federalism notwithstanding the increased interest in new themes focusing on political identity, gender, ethnicity, citizenship and new social movements.

The updated version mandated by PCO-IGA emphasized that the vast majority (92%) of articles published between 2000 and 2006 in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* were concentrated on emerging themes and areas of study.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39-40.

⁷ Peter Leslie, *Report to the Privy Council Office on Federalism Studies in Canada*, unpublished, 1996.

⁸ Tom McIntosh, “Federalism Studies in Canada: The current state and future options”. Unpublished paper, (2007), p. 4.

⁹ David R. Cameron and Jacqueline D. Krikorian, “The Study of Federalism, 1960-1999: A Content Review of Several Leading Canadian Academic Journals” *Canadian Public Administration* 45 (3), September 2002, p. 328-363.

¹⁰ *Overview of Cameron-Krikorian Study Update Findings*, Research and Analysis, Strategic Policy and Research, Intergovernmental Relations, Privy Council Office, Summer 2007.

2. Cameron and Krikorian found that there has been a steady and significant increase in the overall number of works published on federalism.

The update prepared by PCO-IGA revealed that, between 2000 and 2006, there were more articles published on federalism than throughout the 1990s.

3. Federalism-related studies in French were relatively rare, leading Cameron and Krikorian to comment that “there was [...] little evidence of a robust French-language literature on issues related to federalism” and that “when francophones did pursue such research, it was often, though not exclusively, in the context of examining Quebec sovereignty issues”.¹¹

The update prepared by PCO-IGA indicated that a large number of the federalism-related articles published between 2000 and 2006 in the scholarly journal *Politique et sociétés*, an important French-language outlet for Canadian political science, centred on the international role played by Quebec or on the repercussions of the continental integration process on Quebec’s identity.

4. Works published in English did not, by and large, include the relevant French-language literature in their references to the existing scholarship.¹²
5. Cameron and Krikorian found that female authors were underrepresented in the literature on federalism. The PCO-IGA update reports that only 22 percent of the articles on federalism were written by women.

Overall, the analysis of literature published in some of the key academic journals demonstrates that federalism, whether seen as the dependent or independent variable, remains an important object of study. For political science journals specifically *Canadian Journal of Political Science* and *Politique et sociétés*, a total of 100 articles were published between 1960 and 1999, 42 were identified by PCO-IGA as being published between 2000 and 2006. This indicates a significant increase in scholarly attention and an intensification of interest. Although “traditional” themes (constitutional process, Quebec sovereignty, nationalism) continue to occupy an important place in these works, there is a noticeable increase in the interest in theoretical issues (six articles between 2000 and 2006 compared with four in the earlier study covering 40 years of scholarship), as well as greater attention to new themes: Aboriginal issues, the repercussions of the Charter on federalism, international relations (the impact of globalization on federalism or on the international role of provincial governments), and local government. Legal scholars, for their part, remain focused on constitutional issues and the role of judicial review, while public administration specialists are generally interested in the impact of federalism and intergovernmental

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

¹² A more recent and more exhaustive study comes to the same conclusion. See, François Rocher, “The End of the “Two Solitudes”? The Presence (or Absence) of the Work of French Speaking Scholars in Canadian Politics” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 40 (4) (December 2007), pp. 833-857.

relations on public policy. History scholars continue to be very much interested in questions of nationalism and to a lesser degree intergovernmental relations. With respect to the federalism literature developed by economists, Cameron and Krikorian's work as well as the PCO-IGA update indicates that scholars in this field seem less interested in Canadian federalism as such and that studies on this subject (at least to 1999) have been eclipsed by the rising interest in regionalism and province-building as well as the analysis of the efficiency of certain public policies.

This overview of existing reviews of the scholarship on Canadian federalism does reveal several key trends in this field. However, these analyses are each based on a single, somewhat limited source of data whether it be a panel or roundtable discussion (Leslie/McIntosh), a mail survey (McIntosh), the reflections of a single scholar (Simeon).¹³ or a review of a small number of Canadian scholarly journals (Cameron and Krikorian, PCO update).

2. Methodology

In order to assess the current state of the study of federalism in Canada, in this study we proceeded as follows. First, we reviewed and assessed the earlier qualitative and quantitative reviews. Second, with these studies in mind, we then developed our own bibliography of the Canadian literature on federalism drawn from political science, law, and economics. Finally, we shared the preliminary results of our literature review with 16 scholars from a range of disciplines and asked them a set of standard questions with a view to getting their impressions and understanding of the state of federalism studies in Canada.

2.1 The bibliography

The project bibliography is made up of articles from scholarly journals, books chapters, monographs, reports of think tanks, and doctoral dissertations dealing in some way with some aspect of federalism. To build on earlier studies, we limited our bibliography to studies published between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2007.

To build the bibliography we began by focusing on authors. Thus, we began by developing a list of Canadian scholars working on federalism. This list was based first, on the authors identified in the PCO-IGA update of the earlier study by Cameron and Krikorian. The list was also constructed by including the names of persons who had received bursaries of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) under the Federalism and Federations Program. In an attempt to ensure to the greatest extent possible that we had a comprehensive list of Canadian scholars on federalism we then consulted the web sites of all Canadian departments of political science, law,

¹³ Simeon describes his overview as a personal reflection and one concentrated on writing in English. He goes on to observe that, "I am not, therefore, a dispassionate or remote observer of the story told here; rather, I am an engaged participant. This accounts for both what I have included and what I have ignored or downplayed." Richard Simeon, *Political Science and Federalism. Seven Decades of Scholarly Engagement* (Kingston : Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University, 2002), p. ix-x.

economics, and public administration/ public policy. From these sites we identified those scholars who self-identified as having a research interest in federalism.

Having built an initial bibliography based on authors, we then proceeded to expand it by focusing on subjects and their associated keywords. Thus, the bibliography was further expanded by searching using keywords (in both French and English) associated with seven sub-fields of federalism. As appropriate, searches were narrowed using Boolean searches (e.g., federalism and Canada; federalism and Quebec). These sub-fields, and in particular, the associated keywords, are by no means an exhaustive treatment of all aspects of Canadian federalism. Rather they were meant to allow us to identify the maximum number of studies that are generally representative of the literature.

These subjects and the associated keywords were then used to do several additional searches. For monographs we used the Library catalogue at the University of Ottawa and *Worldcat*. For articles in academic journals, we used the database *Scholars Portal*. For reports issued by think tanks we used the *Canadian Public Policy Collection* and *Policy.ca* and for doctoral dissertations we used *Proquest* and *Érudit*. These databases were chosen in consultation with the Morrisset Library at the University of Ottawa as being effective tools to search the Canadian scholarly literature in political science, economics and law.

The subfields and keywords identified for this literature review are as follows:¹⁴

- 1) *Normative and philosophical aspects of federalism*: theory, justice, diversity, trust, democracy, solidarity, social cohesion, values, citizenship.
- 2) *Identity and sub-state nationalism*: multinationalism, multiculturalism, culture, political culture, Aboriginal, sovereignty, Quebec nationalism, Quebec constitution, sovereignty-association.
- 3) *Regionalism and provincialism*: western alienation; regionalism; separatism (and Alberta, Newfoundland, Western Canada), federalism (and each province).
- 4) *Institutions, the constitution and intergovernmental relations*: constitutional amendments, division of powers, asymmetric federalism, intergovernmental relations, intergovernmentalism, interstate federalism, intrastate federalism, annual Premiers' conference, Council of the Federation, Senate reform, Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA), provinces and foreign policy, free trade and provinces, UNESCO and Quebec, paradiplomacy, executive federalism.
- 5) *Multi-level governance*: treaty federalism, Assembly of First Nations, third order of government, cities agenda, municipal government, infrastructure.
- 6) *Fiscal federalism*: equalization, Canada Social Transfer, Canada Health Transfer, federal spending power, fiscal imbalance, offshore accords and Newfoundland, offshore accords and Nova Scotia.
- 7) *Public policy*: health, education, postsecondary education, training, environment, poverty, energy, regional development.

¹⁴ While the English terms are given here the searches were done in both French and English.

2.2 The expert list

Based on our analysis of departmental web sites, our bibliography, and the list of grant recipients from the SSHRC “Federalism and Federations” program, we developed a list of Canadian experts on federalism *per se* (or at least of those who have taken federalism into account in their research). We then analyzed the list and compiled information for each author using a series of variables, some of which are used in our subsequent analysis of trends in the study of Canadian federalism. The variables are as follows:

- 1) university (as appropriate)
- 2) gender
- 3) language
- 4) province
- 5) academic rank (as appropriate)
- 6) discipline
- 7) recipient of a grant from the SSHRC Federalism and Federations program
- 8) number of publications since 2000
- 9) number of publications on Canadian federalism
- 10) number of publications on comparative federalism
- 11) number of publications in each of the sub-fields identified above

2.3 Interviews with experts in the field

The final element of this project was a series of 16 interviews with experts on federalism studies in Canada, drawn from political science, economics and law (Appendix 1). These experts were asked a series of questions (Appendix 2), designed to elicit their views on the state of federalism studies in Canada and the dominant trends, either in general or, at least, with respect to their particular scholarly discipline. These experts were chosen based on the quantity and quality of their research publications, scholarly leadership and also, to the extent possible to ensure a diverse range of views based on gender, language, discipline, and region. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by telephone. Beforehand, each expert was sent a set of research questions and a preliminary summary of our literature review.

2.4 Strengths and limits of the methodology

The approach used here is more comprehensive than those of earlier studies insofar as it combines a quantitative analysis of the literature with the qualitative results of interviews with informed observers of federalism studies in Canada. The quantitative analysis is also more comprehensive than earlier studies not being limited to a finite set of scholarly journals. In addition, the approach used here also generates more data on who is doing research on Canadian federalism (e.g., gender and rank).

There are also limits to this methodology that need to be taken into account when considering the results. First, notwithstanding the large size of the bibliography generated (i.e., over 1200 entries), it remains a survey rather than a census. There are, by definition, studies on federalism completed in the last several years that are not captured by our methodology. That said, we are confident that the bibliography does capture most of what has been written and is a good basis on which to develop some generalizations about the broad trends in the Canadian literature on federalism. We considered and rejected alternative approaches that might have generated a slightly larger or somewhat more comprehensive list of sources; the additional effort, while considerable, would not have yielded a statistically significant improvement in the quality of the data. Second, our approach understates the number of studies of specific public policies where federalism is analyzed as a possible influence. To fully capture this type of research would have required a more sustained and therefore resource intensive consideration of the policy literature. Nonetheless, this would not likely have changed the general trends identified in this study. Finally, our methodology does not rest on a specific definition of federalism. Rather, our approach was to cast the net widely to capture studies that deal with federalism as such, with federalism as an independent variable that has an impact on some other political phenomenon, or, most broadly, studies dealing with issues that are directly related to federalism such as regionalism, nationalism, diversity, etc.

3. Results of the Quantitative Review of the Literature¹⁵

3.1 Where is research being done?

The first question we were interested in was where in Canada research on federalism was being done during the period 2000-2006. As is to be expected, the number of authors is driven, to some extent, by the size of the university sector in each province. However, even when we take this into account, it is clear from Table 1 that a disproportionate number of Canadian scholars of federalism were to be found in Ontario and, as was noted by Cameron and Krikorian, a relatively small number of studies came from authors based in Quebec universities.

¹⁵ The tables provided here are summaries of the results of our literature review. Detailed results are provided in a series of tables found in Appendix 3.

Table 1:		
Where is research on federalism being done in Canada? (discrete authors)		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Newfound. & Labrador	6	1.0
Prince Edward Island	2	0.3
Nova Scotia	24	4.2
New Brunswick	11	1.9
Quebec	88	15.4
Ontario	188	32.9
Manitoba	9	1.6
Saskatchewan	25	4.4
Alberta	61	10.7
British Columbia	73	12.8
NWT/Yukon/Nunavut	2	0.3
Foreign	83	14.5
Total	572	100.0

We then were interested to determine, for each of the major subfields of federalism research where research being was being done during the period 2000-2006. As outlined in Table 2, our analysis suggests that the study of fiscal federalism is particularly strong in Ontario (53.6% of all studies) and Alberta (10.4%) the latter result reflecting, at least in part, the strength of the economics faculties at the Universities of Alberta and Calgary. There is a somewhat surprising strong interest in issues of sub-state nationalism in B.C. (13.4%). Research on multi-level governance (defined here as municipal and Aboriginal interactions with the federal and provincial governments) is particularly strong in Ontario (50.6%), Alberta (24.7%) and Saskatchewan (10.1%), yet quite rare elsewhere.

As one would expect, studies of regionalism are particularly common in the West notably in Alberta (33.3%), and, if provincial population is the benchmark, a disproportionate number appear in Newfoundland and Labrador (8%) where regionalism accounts for over half of the work done. Fiscal federalism and intergovernmental relations, broadly defined, are also strong areas of research in Newfoundland and Labrador. This situation is perhaps not surprising given the salience of these issues for the province. However, this underscores the observation by Richard Simeon to the effect that much of the scholarship in the general area of federalism is responsive to events (and local concerns).

Curiously, over two-thirds of the work on the philosophy and theory of federalism is done in Quebec and Ontario and another 12.5 percent abroad, although the absolute number of studies (72) is so small that this finding could reflect the work of a few strong faculty members in a handful of universities.

Table 2:
For each of the major subfields of federalism research, where was research being done? (%)

	IGR	Fiscal	Policy	Identity	MLG	Region	Theory
Atlantic	6.1	10.4	2.9	3.2	3.3	12	4.2
Quebec	19.4	7.6	16.5	26.9	1.1	2.7	31.9
Ontario	37.1	53.6	39.9	30.6	50.6	28	37.5
Prairies / North	15.2	12.2	16.5	16.2	35.9	35.9	2.8
British Columbia	15.5	9	13.2	13.4	3.4	12	11.1
Foreign	6.7	7.1	11.1	9.7	5.6	9.3	12.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Legend:
IGR: institutions, the constitution and intergovernmental relations
Fiscal: fiscal federalism
Policy: public policy
Identity: identity and sub-state nationalism
MLG: multi-level governance (i.e., Aboriginal peoples, cities)
Region: regionalism and provincialism
Theory: normative and philosophical aspects of federalism

As indicated in Table 3, perhaps surprisingly, 17.1% of the studies from the Prairies and the North deal with sub-state nationalism. However, this reflects the general point made by Simeon and by Cameron and Krikorian that scholars outside of Quebec feel compelled to better understand the challenge of Quebec nationalism (even if Quebec-based scholars are relatively less interested in federalism-related phenomena outside their province).

In the Atlantic provinces almost one-third of the studies captured by our review of the federalism literature dealt with issues of fiscal federalism. This is not surprising given the importance of the Equalization program and other transfers to the region. Conversely only 8% of studies done by scholars in Quebec universities and think tanks dealt with fiscal issues (the intense debate on fiscal imbalance notwithstanding). Rather, studies on issues of identity (almost 30%) were more common. What is remarkable is the small number of studies in Quebec (less than 1%) dealing with issues of federalism and cities or federalism and Aboriginal peoples.

Table 3:
For each province, what are the dominant subfields of federalism research? (%)

	IGR	Fiscal	Policy	Identity	MLG	Region	Theory	Total
Atlantic	27.2	39.8	4.8	4.8	3.6	17.0	2.75	100
Quebec	28.2	8.2	20.5	29.7	0.5	1.0	11.8	100
Ontario	22.2	23.8	20.5	13.9	9.5	4.4	5.7	100
Prairies / North	14.5	8.3	15	22.4	21.6	17.3	0.8	100
British Columbia	30.6	13.2	22.2	20.1	2.1	6.3	5.6	100
Foreign	18.4	14.6	26.2	20.4	4.9	6.8	8.7	100

3.2 Does the study of federalism in Canada vary by gender?

In their review of the federalism literature to 2000, Cameron and Krikorian noted the under-representation of women in the study of federalism. Their conclusion was based on the participation of women in five federalism-related conferences in the 1999-2000 academic year, where only 18% of papers were delivered or jointly delivered by women. In our literature review we found a similar result. Of the total number of federalism studies published between 2000 and 2007 that were captured by our review, almost 80% were written by men and just over 20% by women, despite the increased numbers of women in academe and especially in law and political science.

	Male	Female
IGR	80.9	19.1
Fiscal	85.8	14.2
Policy	76.0	24.0
Identity	78.7	21.3
Multi-level Governance	73.0	27.0
Region	81.5	18.5
Theory	80.6	19.4
Average	79.8	20.2

This overall trend masked considerable variation. As described in Table 5, women in political science authored 56% of all studies captured by our literature review whereas this proportion fell to 14% in law and to 10% for economics.

	Male	Female
Political Science	47.9	56.1
Economics	15.1	10.3
Law	15.7	14.0
Sociology	3.0	6.5
History	2.1	0.0
Native Studies	1.8	0.9
Philosophy	1.8	0.0
Others	12.7	12.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Using the overall average of 20% as the baseline, as shown in Table 4, women were somewhat more likely to publish in the areas of multi-level governance (27% of all studies) and public policy (24.0% of all studies) and somewhat less likely to publish on fiscal federalism (14.2%) the latter result reflecting, perhaps, the relatively small numbers of women in departments of economics.

3.3 What are the roles of new and established scholars?

In our review of the literature, 95 (42%) out of 229 scholars were new to their discipline, that is to say they were doctoral candidates or held the rank of Lecturer or Assistant Professor. A total of 220 scholars were established, which we define as holding the rank of Associate or Full Professor. The new scholars published fewer than 19% of the studies captured by our review of the literature.

Table 6: For each of the subfields of federalism, what was the role of new and established scholars? (%)		
	New	Established
Intergovernmental Relations	21.3	78.7
Fiscal Federalism	15.9	84.1
Public Policy	23.9	76.1
Identity and sub-state nationalism	15.9	84.1
Multi-level governance	17.5	82.5
Regionalism	15.1	84.9
Philosophy and Theory	11.5	88.5
Average	18.7	81.3
Legend:		
<i>New:</i> Assistant Professor; lecturer or doctoral candidate		
<i>Established:</i> Full or Associate Professor		

Compared with the overall trend, new scholars were somewhat more likely to publish studies in public policy (23.9%) and intergovernmental relations (21.3%) and much less likely to publish on the philosophy and theory of federalism (11.5%).

This finding suggests that, while we may wish to celebrate the arrival of a larger number of new scholars to the study of federalism, at least in relative terms, these new scholars do not publish to a commensurate degree. This situation is to be expected insofar as they are preoccupied with finding a permanent academic post and developing new courses. Much more importantly, new scholars are much more likely to make federalism one of several phenomena they are interested in, or if you will, to make federalism an independent rather than a dependent variable.

3.4 In what language is research on federalism being done?

We were also interested in the language of publication used by authors assuming language to be a proxy for exploring the divide between Quebec scholars and those in the

rest of Canada (knowing of course that this correspondence is far from perfect with French-language studies being done by scholars outside of Quebec and vice versa).

As outlined in Table 7, for individual subfields the distribution of studies between French and English often mirrors, at least in general terms, the general distribution of the language of publication of federalism studies. While overall, approximately 20% of studies are in French and 80% in English, the pattern holds for three of the subfields we examined – intergovernmental relations (23.4% in French), public policy (22%), and perhaps surprisingly, sub-state nationalism and identity (24.3%).

On the other hand, French-language scholars were overrepresented in studies dealing with the philosophy and theory of federalism (36.2%). What is perhaps most striking in the fact that in our sample, French language studies were relatively rare in the areas of fiscal federalism (10.0%), regionalism (7.4%) and, surprisingly, multi-level governance.

	English	French
Intergovernmental Relations	76.6	23.4
Fiscal Federalism	90.0	10.0
Public Policy	78.0	22.0
Identity and sub-state nationalism	75.7	24.3
Multi-level governance	97.8	2.2
Regionalism	92.6	7.4
Philosophy and Theory	63.8	36.2
Average	80.9	19.1

3.5 Who studies the different sub-fields of federalism?

As illustrated in Table 8 in political science the most popular subfields are intergovernmental relations, public policy and identity and sub-state nationalism. This result is consistent with the findings of Cameron and Krikorian which revealed continuing work on some of the traditional issues of federalism including the constitution, institutions and intergovernmental relations. By the same token, the perceived rise in interest in the intersection of federalism and public policy, while real, does not necessarily mean that policy-related studies have overtaken more traditional areas of research.

In economics, not surprisingly, over half (55.5%) of the studies dealt with issues of fiscal federalism and another 16.7% dealt with issues of public policy. What is more surprising is that another 16% of studies done by economists dealt with the largely political and administrative issues of intergovernmental relations, institutions and the constitution.

In law, there were studies in most of the subfields although, not surprisingly, fewer in fiscal federalism. Only 4.9% of all law studies were in the area of philosophy and theory

which is unfortunate given the strong capacity among legal scholars to wrestle with the normative dimensions of these critical issues.

Table 8:
In each of the disciplines which subfields of federalism studies are most prominent? (%)

	IGR	Fiscal	Policy	Identity	MLG	Region	Theory	Total
Political Science	26.6	9.6	23.6	18.5	7	7.3	7.5	100
Economics	16.2	55.1	16.7	4	2.5	4.5	1	100
Law	25.9	6.3	21.7	21	12.6	7.7	4.9	100
Others	16.2	10.8	27	31.5	5.4	1.8	7.2	100

As described in Table 9, with the exception of fiscal federalism, approximately two-thirds of all studies done in each of the subfields is conducted by by political scientists. That said, not surprisingly, over half (55.9%) of the studies on fiscal federalism were done by economists. Law faculty were responsible for 10% or more of all studies across all subfields with the exception of fiscal federalism.¹⁶ Thus the study of federalism in Canada is largely dominated by political science and, to a lesser extent, law and economics. A partial exception to the general trend is the fact that in our literature review just over 10%

Table 9. For Each Subfield, Which Are the Most Important Disciplines? (%)

	IGR	Fiscal	Policy	Identity	MLG	Region	Theory
Political Science	66.7	32.8	62.5	60.2	61.0	68.1	73.5
Economics	12.0	55.9	13.0	3.9	6.5	12.5	2.9
Law	13.9	4.6	12.3	14.6	23.4	15.3	10.3
Others	7.5	6.7	12.3	21.4	9.1	4.2	13.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

of studies dealing with the philosophy and theory of federalism were done by either sociologists (10.3%) or philosophers not otherwise based in departments of political science (10.3%).

4. Examining the Qualitative Data

In order to provide a more comprehensive and complete overview of the status of federalism studies in Canada, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 16 Canadian professors in the disciplines of political science, law and economics. The choice of respondents was designed to ensure a group representative of all regions and one that included both “established” (associate or full professor) and “new” (assistant professor) scholars. We asked each of them a series of questions regarding the dominant trends in the literature, emerging and declining themes, as well as the general interests among new researchers (for more information see Appendices 1 and 2).

¹⁶This finding makes the recent book project on fiscal federalism out of the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Law all the more interesting (Choudhry, Gaudreault-Desbiens and Sossin, 2006).

4.1 Major trends

The first question asked was “What general trends do you notice in the evolution and direction of research and publications on Canadian federalism in the last seven years?” As we might expect, the views of political scientists, legal scholars, and economists were quite varied, thus the responses of each group will be treated separately.

Among the seven political scientists interviewed, many noted a revived interest in issues of public policy. For example, environmental issues, the difficulty in developing comprehensive policies due to the nature of intergovernmental relations, and the evolution of social policies, all seem to have captured significant attention. In their view the focus is less on the study of the workings and functioning of intergovernmental relations and more on the ways federalism can influence and affect public policies. In this sense, several of those interviewed emphasized the fact that recent studies tend to deal with issues tied directly to the contemporary political reality or to current hot topics (a trend identified earlier in this paper). The literature discusses existing arrangements and explores practical questions, without necessarily examining the issue in its historical context or considering the more theoretical and normative aspects of federalism. Thus, there seems to be a lack of broad comprehensive perspectives. Several of those interviewed also mentioned the fact that federalism is often considered as but one of many analytical variables that must be taken into account, suggesting that researchers are more interested in results and outcomes having to do with things other than federalism *per se*. As a result, the tendency is to operationalize federalism as an independent variable rather than treating it as a true dependent variable, where federalism is the object and focal point of research.

Many political scientists also perceive a growing interest in themes related to multi-level governance (municipal government, a third order of government for Aboriginals, etc.). They also spoke of what they see as a similar, growing interest in the interplay between international politics and federalism. This interest is expressed in studies exploring the phenomenon of paradiplomacy and in the growing volume of comparative work. From a theoretical and normative perspective, it was observed that most of the literature revolved around questions of managing the multinational character of Canada through federal institutions. These questions proved particularly captivating for researchers interested in Quebec nationalism or Aboriginal issues both in Canada and from a comparative framework.

A final dominant trend that was frequently mentioned was the fact that studies centre less on constitutional issues in their strict and formal sense and more on non-constitutional or informal solutions to federal questions. In other words, collaboration and negotiation are more important research topics than are examples of conflict. Thus, intergovernmentalism seems to have become a much more significant area of interest than traditional constitutional disputes over the division of powers. As a result, questions surrounding the place of Quebec in the Canadian federation are less attractive to researchers. One scholar also noted the continuing trend whereby francophone and anglophone authors seem to read each others' work less and less and that there is less translation of French-language works into English.

The views of the legal scholars we interviewed echo many of the same issues raised by the political scientists. Of particular note is their emphasis on the fact that the study of the interplay of law and politics has recently been focused less on intergovernmental conflicts and much more on the Charter challenges brought forth by private actors. Thus, legal scholars seem much less interested in intergovernmental relations and the legal issues arising from the management of the federation. Informal or administrative arrangements designed to bypass formal institutions such as the Social Union Framework Agreement garner more attention (even if the impact on the SUFA on the practice of Canadian federalism has been modest). Echoing this generalization, one legal scholar emphasized that, since 1982, federalism itself is a less important object of study; it is treated as largely irrelevant to contemporary legal debates and has been set aside, to the point that it is rarely taught. One Quebec-based legal scholar commented that federalism studies have evolved little in that province. Rather, traditional federalism issues have morphed into, and been subsumed under, the debates about identity and recognition. In the same vein, it was noted that there has been a decline in comparative legal studies on the assumption that Quebec is a unique case. As a result, the normative and ethical issues with regards to federalism are hardly studied any more given that the latter is but a means of managing the multiple nationalisms existing within Canada. According to this legal scholar, colleagues in Quebec universities must try to detach themselves from the Quebec-Canada debate and begin to reflect, in federalism terms, on contemporary issues, looking to the future as well as to the past.

For their part, the economists interviewed emphasized the fact that much of the recent federalism-related work in economics has been devoted to the issue of the fiscal imbalance in the federation, both horizontal and vertical. In this regard, they noted that several recent studies have focused on the impact of fiscal arrangements on provincial public finances and, in so doing, on the resulting incentives for provincial governments to call for ever greater federal transfers. Municipal governments have not escaped a similar dynamic and researchers have begun to focus on the financial challenges facing cities and the resulting implications for Canadian fiscal federalism. One economics professor was amazed at the extent to which political and ideological considerations influenced the literature as a whole. Thus it would appear that think tanks (some with quite clear points of view) have played a large role in defining the recent federalism research agenda in economics. In other words, the issues that are the subject of research are less pan-Canadian and much more regional or provincial, and focus on the intergovernmental conflict that is required to obtain more (or offer less) of the country's financial resources. To quote one economist whom we interviewed, "there is not as much discussion on principles and foundations of programs, as on numbers, ideas of fair share, etc."

4.2 New and emerging themes in the literature on Canadian federalism

In conducting the interviews we attempted to uncover whether new themes had seemed to emerge in studies on federalism completed since 2000 and asked the scholars we interviewed to name them. While many of the interviewees noted a certain overlap with the previous question, additional themes were identified. For this question, there was little

divergence between the views expressed by political scientists, legal scholars, and economists.

Several political scientists mentioned the increased attention to comparative studies, and hoped to see studies of this nature take an even more prominent place in the future. These studies focused, notably, on potential stumbling blocks and challenges for federal states. Others observed the growing importance of questions surrounding the impact of international relations or globalization on intergovernmental relations. The following issues were frequently mentioned when we asked about emerging themes:

- a continued interest in the relationship between Aboriginals and other orders of government;
- an increased number of works on the financing and the role of municipalities within the Canadian federal system in light of the horizontal fiscal imbalance that primarily affects municipal governments; and,
- the resurgence in fiscal federalism.

Economists clearly were among those most apt to mention the importance of this last theme, emphasizing the need to examine and develop the principles which underlie equalization. They also brought up the question of the allocation of expenditures and revenues between the various orders of government, especially in light of the conditions, constraints, and accountability measures that come as part and parcel of federal funding. One political scientist, economist, and legal scholar each raised issues directly linked to the contemporary political context by raising the Conservative government's concept of "open federalism". Note finally, that one economist interviewed mentioned the financial questions surrounding natural resource extraction and exploitation, especially the implications with regards to calculating equalization.

An increased interest in theoretical issues was also emphasized by several respondents. For example, the relationship among democracy, identity and federalism is a favorite topic for contemporary researchers. Along similar lines, there would appear to be a growing interest in issues involving the political management of diversity, not only its institutional dimensions (which is nothing new) but also at least two other dimensions. First, there are a number of studies dealing with the political and normative issues associated with the concept of justice. Second, there are other studies that are more sociological and institutional having to do with questions of stability.

While it was not identified as a theme *per se*, the increase in interdisciplinary work, certainly between economists and political scientists, was a frequently mentioned phenomenon. The advent of this cooperative scholarship was welcomed as it seems to create a stimulating environment that serves to renew, enrich, and expand research perspectives which are too often narrowly trapped within the mindsets and frameworks of particular disciplines (although as described below, some felt that this is only a beginning and there is a need for still more interdisciplinary work).

4.3 Declining themes

There seems to be a consensus among political scientists that the constitutional dimensions of federalism garner much less interest than they once did and that there is a decrease in the number of works published on this ‘traditional’ theme. Along the same lines, less of the literature focuses around constitutional amendments or explores what should normatively make up the fundamental law of the country. This trend away from formal constitutional studies and the structures of institutions is also demonstrated by the small number of recent studies that focus on the interpretation of the division of powers. This tendency is linked to the declining interest in the relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada and paralleling this, the question of national unity. Overall, studies examining intergovernmental relations as a dependent variable seem to be waning, as intergovernmental relations have primarily been treated as but one variable among many in the analyses of particular issues (the environment, social welfare, health care, etc.). Some political scientists also commented that institutional analyses, especially those focused on the functional workings of institutions, have been replaced by neo-institutional analyses that reflect a more general interest in the place of institutions as opposed to the inner workings and the formal processes of the institutions themselves. In this way, the controversial issues that secure the attention of researchers focus less on conflict between levels of government (based on regions and economic problems) and much more on social and fiscal conflicts.

The legal scholars interviewed were even less forgiving: many declared that there was no longer an interest in federalism as an object of study within their field. Few researchers publish on federalism any more. Only a handful are interested in constitutional amendment, the division of powers, or the normative dimensions of constitutionalism, even though these subfields of federalism studies are those where legal perspectives are especially critical and insightful.

Economists emphasized that there was not so much a decline in the quantity of studies published on federalism as there was a decline in thinking about the principles underlying certain themes (like equalization). Here again, our respondents indicated that, in their view, recent scholarly debates about (fiscal) federalism are much more regionally focused. This is in marked contrast to the 1960s when issues were discussed from a more national perspective (national unity considerations, fairness in program spending). Moreover, questions regarding western alienation no longer seem to preoccupy researchers in economics as they once did.

4.4 Neglected issues or those that merit more attention

We also sought to ascertain whether certain aspects of federalism or related phenomena merited more attention from researchers and whether there were areas that seemed neglected by existing studies of federalism. Several respondents once again articulated concerns about some of the themes previously mentioned as being in decline and felt that

these issues should generate more interest and receive more scholarly attention. Other responses emphasized the state of scholarship in certain subfields or key aspects which they felt needed deeper analysis.

The political scientists we interviewed raised several themes that should benefit from more attention by researchers. Notably they emphasized aspects of multilevel governance and, more specifically, the study of urban areas and the place of cities within the Canadian federation. On this view, more work needs to be done on the fiscal implications of those policy fields that are critical to cities as well as on the constitutional dimensions of municipal governance. Several respondents also noted that while the place of Aboriginal peoples in the federation has generated a good number of studies in recent years, these issues are complex and elaborate such that there remain many unanswered questions which require further and deeper study. It is important to note that those we interviewed did not identify specific areas that required more intensive research only these general themes.

Other aspects were considered to merit more scholarly attention, though only mentioned by individual researchers:

- the effects of globalization and continental integration;
- the transformation of identities tied to citizenship and the attachment of citizens to the different levels of government and the way in which this reality is taken into account in the management of federalism;
- questions concerning the trust and loyalty necessary in federations (this issue is particularly important in order to understand the recent shifts affecting Quebec nationalism); and,
- intergovernmental administrative management; and the way public policies are developed in different provinces.

Several political scientists also emphasized that there is little quantitative work done on Canadian federalism compared to what is produced in the United States. As one respondent pointed out, the study of critical political and policy issues, for example the environment, requires quantitative data, particularly to allow for comparisons between provinces and territories. The collection of statistical data in Canadian political science is strongest with respect to elections yet such data are indispensable for understanding the nature of Canadian political life in between and beyond elections. A related critique is that much of the contemporary literature seems to serve as commentaries and comparisons of existing works instead of being devoted to the formulation of formal hypotheses which could then be validated or rejected by means of analysis, investigation, interviews, and quantitative data collection. While some argued that quantitative studies are lacking, other political scientists lamented a declining interest in and study of theoretical and conceptual questions relating to federalism. As a result, it is argued, Canadian researchers contribute little to international theoretical debates on federalism. In this same vein, several political scientists noted that in the recent Canadian literature on federalism, comparative federalism studies were relatively rare.

Our respondents also observed that the institutional dimensions of Canadian federalism and intergovernmental relations are relatively neglected in the recent literature, but so too is the study of more informal relationships which influence the decision-making processes and the subtle relationships existing between formal institutions and informal decision making processes.

One respondent observed that while there are numerous studies on fiscal federalism, political scientists, who have much to contribute, rarely participate in the debate and discussion of these issues, leaving the field to economists. More generally one respondent argued that there is little interest in interdisciplinary work. It seems that there is also a weakness in the linkages between Canadian scholars of federalism and those who practice it be they politicians or public servants.

Several legal scholars also insisted upon the need to encourage more interdisciplinary research which would likely encourage more law faculty to engage with the recent work in political science and political philosophy on issues involving the meaning of the rule of law, democracy, and minority rights. Our respondents also indicated that, among legal scholars, the normative dimensions of federalism were somewhat neglected especially the political theory revolving around the multinational character of Canada. One of our respondents remarked that, because these theoretical dimensions of federalism have not been sufficiently examined in the legal literature, there is a significant gap or difference between the theory of judicial interpretation in Charter cases, (where there is a rich theoretical legal literature) and the theory of interpretation applied to division of power cases.

Others interviewees emphasized that the growing diversity of Canadian society has been reflected by a type of “federalization” of politics within provinces, especially with respect to the urban/rural divide. It was suggested that researchers should focus much more on diversity management mechanisms, strategies and policies. In other words, the normative dimensions of federalism, considered alongside identity issues, should spark much more interest among legal scholars (even if these issues are extensively debated and discussed in the political science literature).

The law faculty we interviewed identified several additional themes they deemed to be neglected:

- the constitutional dimensions of issues that give rise to disagreements and conflict between the different orders of government;
- the interpretation of Article 36 of the Constitution which deals with equal opportunity and in particular the normative, prescriptive, and legal implications of this provision; and,
- the role of the wealth generated by natural resources in creating a horizontal fiscal imbalance between provinces and this both from a normative and a practical standpoint.

The legal scholars we interviewed also echoed the concern of political scientists as to the relative lack of comparative studies and some of the economists we spoke to also underlined the importance of increasing interdisciplinary studies, especially between scholars in their discipline and political scientists.

That said, economists were preoccupied with different issues than those mentioned above. Several noted that, in the recent economics literature, the impact of demographic changes on the evolution of fiscal federalism in Canada appears to be relatively unexplored. As one of our respondents noted, not only might the general ageing of the population create pressure to redirect resources towards health care, demographic changes are experienced differently and at a different pace across Canada. As a result, transfers programs that are based on equal per capita payments (e.g., Canada Health Transfer) may no longer be equitable insofar as federal transfers are not commensurate with the higher health care costs in some regions arising from their more rapidly ageing population. Other specific issues that were considered of the utmost importance for future studies include the:

- benefits of tax harmonization in the federation;
- impacts on fiscal arrangements of interprovincial migration and the mobility of capital and business;
- absence of a literature on fiscal competition, most notably with respect to how asymmetry in fiscal capacity increases the probability for this competition;
- fiscal dimensions of natural resource exploitation, especially in the West, as well as the feasibility of certain fiscal measures such a carbon tax being adopted in some provinces (i.e., British Columbia) and not others; and,
- repercussions of the Atlantic Accords of 2005 on the fiscal capacity of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

In addition, one economist noted that there was no single institution that generates comprehensive statistics relating to fiscal arrangements. As a result, there is little commonality in the way in which data on fiscal transfers are used and, as a result, different parties in the debate, especially think tanks, rely on different numbers. He called for a federal board to oversee an independent research institute that would be tasked with generating a standard set of numbers that would be generally recognized as the definitive source for analysis of intergovernmental fiscal relations. In other words, we need a common methodology, so governments can debate substantive issues rather than the statistics and the methodology used to generate those statistics.

One economist we interviewed also noted the absence of studies and established methods for analyzing the impact of federal spending across provinces. On this view, not only is it important to know how much was spent in each province, but also to do a dynamic analysis of where this spending goes and the overall economic effects

4.5 The next generation

We asked two questions relating to the degree to which studies on federalism seemed to inspire students. In this regard, opinions were mixed. For the majority of respondents

across the three disciplines, there was a perceived decline if not disappearance of student interest in federalism. In Quebec, one professor explained that this diminished interest followed the results of the 1995 referendum. Of the 14 students who are currently studying at the post-graduate level under the professors we interviewed, only two or three are working on federalism. Overall, in those universities where there was a doctoral program, few students were working on issues linked to federalism *per se*.

However, one professor of political science underlined that, in Atlantic Canada, there is ongoing student interest in federalism, even if it is weaker than in other areas of the discipline. Another noted that while federalism as such engenders less interest, it is of limited interest to students interested in public policy as one possible explanatory factor among many. The indirect impact of federalism is thus perceived as somewhat important by a few students even if, overall, students are less inclined to study federalism and intergovernmental relations for their own sake (thereby reflecting the general trends in the literature identified above). For the few graduate students doing federalism-related work, recent and ongoing research focuses on issues of fiscal federalism, Aboriginal peoples, multi-level governance and public policy, and the constitutional dimensions of federalism.

Keeping in mind that we spoke to only 16 professors (albeit a somewhat representative sample (see Appendix 1) and notwithstanding the fact that not all of their departments offered doctoral programs, it is clear there is a very weak graduate student interest in federalism, whether federalism is a dependent or an independent variable.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion the analysis presented here suggests a limited number of generalizations about the state of federalism studies in Canada. It also allows for a preliminary statement of what might be done to strengthen federalism studies in Canada.

First, our research suggests that while the total number of studies having something to do with federalism in Canada (defined broadly) is quite large (in the order of 1200 between 2000 and 2007 published in academic journals, released by think tanks, published in edited collections, etc.), the number of studies that deal with federalism *per se*, is quite small. In other words, there is a large and evolving literature in law, economics and in particular in political science where federalism is given at least some consideration. However our qualitative and quantitative review of the recent literature on federalism in Canada suggests that federalism is, very often, a contextual or explanatory factor not the principal object of study. Much less common are studies where federalism is the main focus of the research.

Second, this study suggests that federalism studies in Canada continue to be tied to current events and contemporary issues. This focus on what is more or less immediate has several advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, this suggests that students of Canadian federalism are engaged with the debates of the day and are, in a small way, willing and able to contribute to framing, understanding and, in some cases, advancing the debate. However, this focus on the here and now may mean that scholars of Canadian

federalism focus on the detail (e.g., how big is the fiscal imbalance?) or are, at least to some extent, captured by the particular framing that is dominant in the current debate (e.g., what does “open federalism” mean?). This makes it more difficult to explore the more fundamental questions. In fact, this lack of attention to some of the more enduring questions that underline contemporary debates may, in fact, make the short-term interventions of scholars less effective and compelling. In order for scholars to offer a truly original, insightful (not to mention challenging) assessment of the current practice of federalism they must chart the links between current preoccupations (e.g., Ontario as a candidate for Equalization payments) and longer term and deeper considerations (e.g., the status of Canada as a sharing community). A second disadvantage of this strong linkage to current events is that perennial issues (e.g., why is Canada a federation?); issues that are just over the horizon (e.g., demographic change and fiscal arrangements); or issues that will, sooner or later, return to the agenda (e.g., what are the necessary conditions to allow for constitutional change?), may not get the attention they deserve.

Third, our research reveals that federalism as such, is not garnering the attention of graduate students that one might expect or hope for. And to some extent students are simply reflecting and reinforcing both what they see in their respective disciplines as well as the dominant public and media framing of contemporary Canadian politics and government. While graduate students must be free to choose the subjects of their research, if, over time, fewer and fewer choose to focus on the institutions, theory and practice of Canadian federalism, we are collectively at risk of losing our capacity to understand a fundamental aspect of Canadian political life.

Fourth, this review suggests that while interdisciplinary work appears to be increasing, more such research needs to be done. As respondents from several disciplines noted, there are significant insights to be gained when key issues in federalism studies are considered from the perspective of several scholarly disciplines.

Finally, the results of this study confirm (or are at least consistent with), other research that has shown that in Quebec, federalism is an even less common subject of scholarly research than it is in the rest of Canada. Even more troubling, our research suggests that there are potentially two Canadian scholarly traditions on federalism, one written in French another in English, with far too little engagement between them.

Why does this matter?

At the outset of this paper it was suggested that, echoing the Supreme Court of Canada, federalism is among the core shared values of Canadians. It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that the Canadian academic community will be organized in such a way that there is continuing and high quality research, debate, and deliberation about federalism just as they exist for other core shared values (and much else besides).

However, federalism refers as well to questions of government, questions of representation and questions of public policy. As a result, the study of federalism and intergovernmental relations are one part of the scholarly enterprise that has brought

political scientists along with a smaller number of professors of law and economics, into direct and continuing partnership (if not employment) with the federal and provincial governments. Whether it is as informal advisors of government, authors of opinion pieces in the media, or as contributors to the work of Royal Commissions or other inquiries, commissions and task forces (to name but three examples), Canadian experts on federalism are routinely solicited to participate and inform political debate in Canada.

Thus, the relative weakness of federalism studies in Canada as well as the paucity of graduate students willing to become a new generation of experts on federalism represents a challenge to Canadian governments: federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and Aboriginal. Governments and other actors who need expertise, advice and insight risk being left unable to find it.

What is to be done?

A comprehensive statement of how we might go about strengthening federalism studies is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a few preliminary suggestions are in order.

First, the federal and provincial governments, as regular and sustained consumers of research on federalism, have an interest in building and maintaining research capacity in this area. The Federalism and Federations Program, a relatively short-lived partnership between the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Privy Council Office of the Government of Canada is an example of such support as is the Research Support Program on Intergovernmental Affairs and Québec Identity, sponsored by the *Secrétariat aux affaires intergouvernementales canadiennes* of the Government of Québec. The challenge is to ensure that such programs support research dealing with the core questions of federalism or, if you wish, federalism as a dependent variable, as opposed to research where federalism is but one explanatory or contextual factor among many. Moreover, building up research capacity and training a future generation of federalism experts takes time and may not be achieved if government support is not ongoing over several years.

Second, financial support and other incentives are required to encourage graduate students to devote themselves to federalism studies. However, while standalone grants and fellowships can make a difference, it is likely that student support will be more effective if it is integrated into a broader program of support and encouragement of federalism studies. Moreover, given that faculty are increasingly less likely to conduct research on the central issues of federalism, it is quite reasonable to assume that they are not encouraging their graduate students to do research on those issues that they themselves have largely abandoned.

This gives rise to a final suggestion. Carefully designed programs are required in order to not only to strengthen federalism studies in Canada but do so in a way that encourages interdisciplinary work, research on the core issues in federalism studies, more such studies in Quebec and, perhaps more importantly, begins to bridge the gap between what may be two distinct scholarly traditions. For example, in order to encourage English-language

students of federalism to engage on a regular and continuing basis with their French-language counterparts may require something more than a relatively passive granting program run by the SSHRC. Similarly, while it is relatively inexpensive to fund one or even several loosely integrated research networks on federalism, absent a strong central coordination function, the result risks being less than the sum of its parts. Passive funding programs risk encouraging scholars to do more of what they are already doing, not addressing gaps in the literature and/or engaging in multidisciplinary much less interdisciplinary research and scholarship. To ensure a continuing stream of research especially scholarship that is useful to governments and to other actors, true knowledge mobilization is required. The SSHRC has considerable expertise in this area. More broadly, the Metropolis Project sponsored in large part by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Security and Defence Forum funded by the Department of National Defence are possible models, even if federalism studies might be done on a smaller scale. The key may be a central coordinating capacity, willing and able to act as a bridge between scholars and governments, able to function in both French and English, willing and able to engage with scholars outside of Canada, and able to articulate short, medium and longer term research objectives. Whether this central coordination function exists inside government or in a university setting is open to discussion.

The creation of institutional capacity to strengthen the study of federalism in Canada assumes that it is worthy of study. Some might argue that federalism is not and need no longer be at the centre of our thinking about Canadian politics and government. After all, Harold Laski once declared federalism obsolescent and William Riker declared it trivial. In light of this why should interest in Canadian federalism not wane over time? However, absent a strong scholarly capacity to study federalism in Canada we can only speculate on its possible and relative decline. Yet this is too a dramatic a change to the Canadian political order for it to be left to mere speculation.

Appendices

- 1 – Analysis of Interviewees
- 2 – Interview Questions
- 3 – Detailed Quantitative Results of the Literature Review

Appendix 1 – Analysis of Interviewees

	Discipline			Gender		Professional Status		Region			
	Political Science	Economics	Law	M	F	“Established”	“New”	East	Ontario	Quebec	West
1.	X			X	X	X		X			
2.	X					X		X			
3.	X			X		X				X	
4.	X				X		X		X		
5.		X		X		X		X			
6.		X		X			X		X		
7.	X				X	X					X
8.			X	X		X			X		
9.			X	X			X			X	
10.	X				X		X		X		
11.	X			X		X					X
12.		X		X		X					X
13.		X		X		X		X			
14.			X		X		X			X	
15.			X	X		X				X	
16.			X		X	X				X	
TOTAL	7	4	5	10	6	11	5	4	4	5	3

Appendix 2 – Interview Questions

General Comment

For each question we are interested in both your response:

- based on your particular area of specialization; as well as,
- thinking about the study of federalism in more general terms.

1. What general trends do you notice in the evolution and direction of research and publications on Canadian federalism in the last seven years?
2. What themes or areas are fields which have developed as new or renewed areas of interest in this research on federalism?
3. What themes are showing signs of a decreasing interest among researchers of federalism?
4. Are there, according to you, any emerging fields of interest in federalism that merit greater inquiry and attention by researchers?
5. Have you noted any significant gaps in the literature produced in the last seven years or neglected aspects of the study of federalism?
6. As part of general trend do you notice an increase or decrease of federalism as a subject area of interest for doctoral students, or does it seem to reflect a stable and steady appeal?
7. Among the doctoral students under your supervision, how many study federalism? Which aspects of federalism are they most interested in?
8. Are there other issues in the study of federalism in Canada that you would like to raise with us?

Appendix 3 – Detailed Quantitative Results of the Literature Review

Table 3.1: Where is research on federalism being done in Canada?		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Newfound. & Labrador	6	1.0
Prince Edward Island	2	0.3
Nova Scotia	24	4.2
New Brunswick	11	1.9
Quebec	88	15.4
Ontario	188	32.9
Manitoba	9	1.6
Saskatchewan	25	4.4
Alberta	61	10.7
British Columbia	73	12.8
NWT/Yukon/Nunavut	2	0.3
Foreign	83	14.5
Total	572	100.0

Table 3.2:
For each of the major subfields of federalism research, where was research being done?

	Intergovernmental Relations		Fiscal Federalism		Public Policy		Identity Sub-state nationalism		Multi-level Governance		Regionalism		Philosophy and Theory	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Newfound. & Labrador	2	0.7	2	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.1	6	8.0	0	0.0
Prince Edward Island	1	0.4	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Nova Scotia	13	4.6	5	2.4	7	2.9	7	3.2	2	2.2	1	1.3	2	2.8
New Brunswick	1	0.4	14	6.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.7	1	1.4
Quebec	55	19.4	16	7.6	40	16.5	58	26.9	1	1.1	2	2.7	23	31.9
Ontario	105	37.1	113	53.6	97	39.9	66	30.6	45	50.6	21	28.0	27	37.5
Manitoba	2	0.7	2	0.9	4	1.6	7	3.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Saskatchewan	10	3.5	2	0.9	5	2.1	14	6.5	9	10.1	1	1.3	1	1.4
Alberta	31	11.0	22	10.4	31	12.8	14	6.5	22	24.7	25	33.3	1	1.4
British Columbia	44	15.5	19	9.0	32	13.2	29	13.4	3	3.4	9	12.0	8	11.1
NWT/Yukon/Nunavut	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.1	1	1.3	0	0.0
Foreign	19	6.7	15	7.1	27	11.1	21	9.7	5	5.6	7	9.3	9	12.5
Total	283	100.0	211	100.0	243	100.0	216	100.0	89	100.0	75	100.0	72	100.0

Table 3.3:
For each province, what are the dominant subfields of federalism research?

	Intergovernmental Relations		Fiscal Federalism		Public Policy		Identity Sub-state nationalism		Multi-level Governance		Regionalism		Philosophy and Theory		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Newfound. & Labrador	2	18.2	2	18.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	9.1	6	54.5	0	0.0	11	100.0
Prince Edward Island	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
Nova Scotia	13	35.1	5	13.5	7	18.9	7	18.9	2	5.4	1	2.7	2	5.4	37	100.0
New Brunswick	1	5.6	14	77.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	11.1	1	5.6	18	100.0
Quebec	55	28.2	16	8.2	40	20.5	58	29.7	1	0.5	2	1.0	23	11.8	195	100.0
Ontario	105	22.2	113	23.8	97	20.5	66	13.9	45	9.5	21	4.4	27	5.7	474	100.0
Manitoba	2	13.3	2	13.3	4	26.7	7	46.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	100.0
Saskatchewan	10	23.8	2	4.8	5	11.9	14	33.3	9	21.4	1	2.4	1	2.4	42	100.0
Alberta	31	21.2	22	15.1	31	21.2	14	9.6	22	15.1	25	17.1	1	0.7	146	100.0
British Columbia	44	30.6	19	13.2	32	22.2	29	20.1	3	2.1	9	6.3	8	5.6	144	100.0
NWT/Yukon/Nunavut	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
Foreign	19	18.4	15	14.6	27	26.2	21	20.4	5	4.9	7	6.8	9	8.7	103	100.0

Table 3.4 For each of the subfields of federalism research, in what language is research being done? (%)						
	English		French		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	%	<i>Number</i>	%	<i>Number</i>	%
Intergovernmental Relations	216	76.6	66	23.4	282	100.0
Fiscal Federalism	188	90.0	21	10.0	209	100.0
Public Policy	209	78.0	59	22.0	268	100.0
Identity and sub-state nationalism	162	75.7	52	24.3	214	100.0
Multi-level governance	87	97.8	2	2.2	89	100.0
Regionalism	75	92.6	6	7.4	81	100.0
Philosophy and Theory	44	63.8	25	36.2	69	100.0
Total	981	80.9	231	19.1	1212	100.0

Table 3.5 In French and in English what are the dominant subfields of federalism research? (%)				
	English		French	
	<i>Number</i>	%	<i>Number</i>	%
Intergovernmental Relations	216	22.0	66	28.6
Fiscal Federalism	188	19.2	21	9.1
Public Policy	209	21.3	59	25.5
Identity and sub-state nationalism	162	16.5	52	22.5
Multi-level governance	87	8.9	2	0.9
Regionalism	75	7.6	6	2.6
Philosophy and Theory	44	4.5	25	10.8
Total	981	100.0	231	100.0

Table 3.6
In each of the disciplines which subfields of federalism studies are most prominent?

	Intergovernmental Relations		Fiscal Federalism		Public Policy		Identity Sub-state nationalism		Multi-level Governance		Regionalism		Philosophy and Theory		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Political Science	178	26.6	64	9.6	158	23.6	124	18.5	47	7.0	49	7.3	50	7.5	670	100.0
Economics	32	16.2	109	55.1	33	16.7	8	4.0	5	2.5	9	4.5	2	1.0	198	100.0
Law	37	25.9	9	6.3	31	21.7	30	21.0	18	12.6	11	7.7	7	4.9	143	100.0
Sociology	2	12.5	1	6.3	1	6.3	9	56.3	1	6.3	1	6.3	1	6.3	16	100.0
History	3	37.5	1	12.5	0	0.0	3	37.5	0	0.0	1	12.5	0	0.0	8	100.0
Native Studies	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	14.3	8	57.1	3	21.4	1	7.1	0	0.0	14	100.0
Philosophy	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	50.0	14	100.0
Others	15	20.0	11	14.7	28	37.3	17	22.7	3	4.0	0	0.0	1	1.3	75	100.0

Table 3.7
For each subfield, which are the most important disciplines?

	Intergovernmental Relations		Fiscal Federalism		Public Policy		Identity Sub-state nationalism		Multi-level Governance		Regionalism		Philosophy and Theory	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Political Science	178	66.7	64	32.8	158	62.5	124	60.2	47	61.0	49	68.1	50	73.5
Economics	32	12.0	109	55.9	33	13.0	8	3.9	5	6.5	9	12.5	2	2.9
Law	37	13.9	9	4.6	31	12.3	30	14.6	18	23.4	11	15.3	7	10.3
Sociology	2	0.7	1	0.5	1	0.4	9	4.4	1	1.3	1	1.4	1	1.5
History	3	1.1	1	0.5	0	0.0	3	1.5	0	0.0	1	1.4	0	0.0
Native Studies	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.8	8	3.9	3	3.9	1	1.4	0	0.0
Philosophy	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	3.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	10.3
Others	15	5.6	11	5.6	28	11.1	17	8.3	3	3.9	0	0.0	1	1.5
Total	267	100.0	195	100.0	253	100.0	206	100.0	77	100.0	72	100.0	68	100.0

Table 3.8
What was the distribution of studies by men and by women for each subfield?

	Male		Female		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	%	<i>Number</i>	%	<i>Number</i>	%
Intergovernmental Relations	229	80.9	54	19.1	283	100.0
Fiscal Federalism	181	85.8	30	14.2	211	100.0
Public Policy	184	76.0	58	24.0	242	100.0
Identity and sub-state nationalism	170	78.7	46	21.3	216	100.0
Multi-level governance	65	73.0	24	27.0	89	100.0
Regionalism	66	81.5	15	18.5	81	100.0
Philosophy and Theory	58	80.6	14	19.4	72	100.0
Total	953	79.8	241	20.2	1194	100.0

Table 3.9
Of all studies by men and by women what was the distribution by subfield?

	Male		Female	
	<i>Number</i>	%	<i>Number</i>	%
Intergovernmental Relations	229	24.0	54	22.4
Fiscal Federalism	181	19.0	30	12.4
Public Policy	184	19.3	58	24.1
Identity and sub-state nationalism	170	17.8	46	19.1
Multi-level governance	65	6.8	24	10.0
Regionalism	66	6.9	15	6.2
Philosophy and Theory	58	6.1	14	5.8
Total	953	100.0	241	100.0

Table 3.10
What was the distribution of studies by men and by women for each discipline?

	Male		Female	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Political Science	162	47.9	60	56.1
Economics	51	15.1	11	10.3
Law	53	15.7	15	14.0
Sociology	10	3.0	7	6.5
History	7	2.1	0	0.0
Native Studies	6	1.8	1	0.9
Philosophy	6	1.8	0	0.0
Others	43	12.7	13	12.1
Total	338	100.0	107	100.0

Table 3.11
For each of the subfields of federalism, what was the role of new and established scholars?

	New		Established		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Intergovernmental Relations	48	21.3	177	78.7	225	100.0
Fiscal Federalism	22	15.9	116	84.1	138	100.0
Public Policy	47	23.9	150	76.1	197	100.0
Identity and sub-state nationalism	28	15.9	148	84.1	176	100.0
Multi-level governance	10	17.5	47	82.5	57	100.0
Regionalism	8	15.1	45	84.9	53	100.0
Philosophy and Theory	7	11.5	54	88.5	61	100.0
Total of Publications	170	18.7	737	81.3	907	100.0

Legend:
New: Assistant Professor; lecturer or doctoral candidate
Established: Full or Associate Professor

Number of Established Scholars: 229
Number of New Scholars: 95

Table 3.12
Do new and established scholars publish work in the same subfields of federalism?

	New		Established	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Intergovernmental Relations	48	28.2	177	24.0
Fiscal Federalism	22	12.9	116	15.7
Public Policy	47	27.6	150	20.4
Identity and sub-state nationalism	28	16.5	148	20.1
Multi-level governance	10	5.9	47	6.4
Regionalism	8	4.7	45	6.1
Philosophy and Theory	7	4.1	54	7.3
Total of Publications	170	100.0	737	100.0

Table 3.13
For each of the subfields of federalism studies what is the division of labour between academic journals and think tanks?

	University Scholars		Think Tanks *		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Intergovernmental Relations	244	86.2	39	13.8	283	100.0
Fiscal Federalism	151	71.6	60	28.4	211	100.0
Public Policy	216	85.0	38	15.0	254	100.0
Identity and sub-state nationalism	198	91.7	18	8.3	216	100.0
Multi-level governance	63	70.8	26	29.2	89	100.0
Regionalism	58	71.6	23	28.4	81	100.0
Philosophy and Theory	69	95.8	3	4.2	72	100.0
Total of Publications	999	82.8	207	17.2	1206	100.0

*Includes Independent organizations

Table 3.14
With respect to the study of Canadian federalism, how do think tanks and academic journals compare?

	University Scholars		Think Tanks *	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Intergovernmental Relations	244	24.4	39	18.8
Fiscal Federalism	151	15.1	60	29.0
Public Policy	216	21.6	38	18.4
Identity and sub-state nationalism	198	19.8	18	8.7
Multi-level governance	63	6.3	26	12.6
Regionalism	58	5.8	23	11.1
Philosophy and Theory	69	6.9	3	1.4
Total of Publications	999	100.0	207	100.0