

Federalism

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>1. Political activity is easily mobilized. The various levels of government provide many alternatives for a citizen to be heard regarding a concern. If a local official won't listen, a citizen may appeal to someone on the state or national level.</p>	<p>1. Political activity is confusing to citizens. The various levels of government can be confusing to a citizen, so that he or she does not know which official to contact. As a result, political activity is discouraged.</p>
<p>2. Interest groups cannot easily take over the government. Powerful interest groups cannot force their will upon less powerful groups, because in order to control, they would have to take over not only the national government, but state and local governments as well. Small groups of people have a chance to be heard and influence legislation.</p>	<p>2. Small but motivated interest groups can block the will of the majority for extended periods of time. Sometimes small groups of people can impose their will for extended periods of time on the majority. For example, a relatively small group of southern senators blocked civil rights legislation for many years after most citizens favored such legislation.</p>
<p>3. Diversity of policies among states encourages experimentation and creativity. 50 different state governments tackle similar issues, and a good solution in one state can be modeled in another. For example, if a state finds a good way to finance public education, other states can mimic the plan, altering for special needs. On the other hand, if a state tries something that fails, at least it affects only one state, not all.</p>	<p>3. Diversity of policies among states creates inequality between citizens of different states. Because states provide different levels of support, citizens in some states have more advantages than those in other states. For example, welfare benefits vary widely among the states, as do funding levels for public education.</p>
<p>4. Diverse policies among states are good because uniform laws don't make sense in many areas. For example, speed limits on highways should be under state and local control, as should the minimum age for obtaining a driving license. Crowded New Jersey should not have the same speed limits as does wide-open Montana.</p>	<p>4. Diverse policies among states even for speed limits and driving ages creates confusion and inequality. Although speed limits obviously need to vary, arbitrary differences in state laws are confusing and outdated in this era of interstate highways. Differences in driving ages are not fair to young people in states with higher age requirements.</p>