

Federalism

The US is one nation with many governments (over 83,000 units).
- Municipal - County - Regional - School District - Special-purpose district - States

The Framers believed that "divided" power protected liberty.

1. Division can delay reforms or prevent the achievement of social objectives ? child labor, civil rights
2. The federal idea derived from the prior existence of the states, and their power at the time the Constitution was framed
3. The federal arrangement can also be based on the idea that the people are sovereign and create different governments with different powers for different purposes.

The Federalism Paradox: by establishing two levels of gov't, the Framers reduced the overall size of the state. **More is less.**

The State's never had the power of nullification.

There are alternative structures of power to federal:

1. Unitary systems place all governmental power in the central gov't. For Example, Britain, France.
2. Confederations allow the central gov't. to make regulations for constituent governments. Example, Southern Confederacy, the Articles of Confederation.

Federalism today is still a KEY STRUCTURAL feature of American Government.

1. It deters the development of a completely unified political party system.
2. Federalism limits what Congress and the President can do in terms of public policy.
3. In the United States federalism may contribute to meeting a wide diversity of needs and conditions throughout the country.
4. Federalism does contribute to a closeness to the population because each states' government is closer to the population than is the federal (national) government.
5. Federalism does allow for state policy experimentation.
6. Federalism does allow more access points for minority office holders.