

Intergovernmental Relations: an Analytical Overview

By DEIL S. WRIGHT

ABSTRACT: The distinctive features of American intergovernmental relations (IGR) are specified, and the last half-century of policy trends in the United States are viewed through the conceptual lens provided by the IGR perspective. Several distinctive features of IGR set it apart from the more commonplace term, federalism. These features include a multiplicity of units, the primacy of public officials' attitudes and actions, informal working patterns, the prominence of administrators, and a policy emphasis. Five phases of IGR form a matrix for classifying recent United States political developments. The phases are: (1) conflict, (2) cooperative, (3) concentrated, (4) creative, and (5) competitive. The challenges presented by the complexity and interdependencies of IGR point toward a management emphasis. Intergovernmental accomplishments appear to hinge on the successful management of complexity.

Deil S. Wright holds A.B., M.P.A., and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Michigan. His teaching career includes membership on the faculties of Wayne State University, the University of Iowa, the University of California at Berkeley (as visiting professor) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He joined the University of North Carolina faculty in 1967 as Professor of Political Science and as Research Professor, Institute for Research in Social Science. He has authored or coauthored books, monographs, research reports and articles in the fields of state and local government, public administration, intergovernmental relations and public finance.

WILLIAM Anderson, one of the intellectual parents of the intergovernmental relations field, once claimed that "intergovernmental relations is, I believe, a term indigenous to the United States, of a relatively recent origin, and still not widely used or understood."¹ Since Anderson's assertion in 1960, the phrase intergovernmental relations (IGR) has experienced wider usage, but whether the term is clearly or adequately understood remains questionable. Brief attention to the definition and features of IGR is therefore appropriate if not mandatory.

GAINING FORCE BY UNUSUALNESS: THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF IGR

We need look no further than the author quoted above for a starting point in clarifying IGR. Professor Anderson says that IGR is a term intended "to designate an important body of activities or interactions occurring between governmental units of all types and levels within the [United States] federal system."² It is possible to use his general definition as a starting point to elaborate the concept of IGR.

First and foremost, IGR occurs within the federal system. American federalism is the context, not the totality, of IGR. IGR encompasses more than is usually conveyed by the concept of federalism, where the emphasis is chiefly on national-state relationships with occasional attention to interstate relationships. IGR recognizes not only national-state and interstate relations, but also

national-local, state-local, national-state-local, and interlocal relations. In short, IGR includes as proper objects of study all the permutations and combinations of relations among the units of government in the American system.

Anderson also assists us in making a second important point about IGR. "It is human beings clothed with office who are the real determiners of what the relations between units of government will be. Consequently the concept of intergovernmental relations necessarily has to be formulated largely in terms of human relations and human behavior . . ."³ Strictly speaking, then, there are no intergovernmental relations, there are only relations among officials in different governing units. Individual interactions among public officials is at the core of IGR. In this sense it could be argued that federalism deals with the anatomy of the system, whereas IGR treats its physiology.

A third notion implicit in IGR is that relations are not one-time, occasional occurrences, formally ratified in agreements or rigidly fixed by statutes or court decisions. Rather, IGR is the continuous, day-to-day pattern of contacts, knowledge, and evaluations of government officials. A major concern is with the informal as well as with the formal, the practices as well as the principles, pursued in both competitive and cooperative interjurisdictional patterns. This third facet of IGR reads into the concept those activities—as well as research studies—that have previously gone under the title of cooperative federalism, which the late E. S. Corwin defined as one in which governmental units "are regarded as mutually complementary

1. William Anderson, *Intergovernmental Relations in Review* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960), p. 3.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

parts of a single governmental mechanism all of whose powers are intended to realize the current purposes of government according to their applicability to the problem at hand."⁴ These words from a constitutional law scholar provide the desirable emphasis on the working, problem-oriented informalities of IGR and at the same time are a reminder of the formal, legal, institutional context within which those relationships originate and flourish.

It has been shown that IGR recognizes multiple unit relationships, that it respects the primacy of public officials acting in an interjurisdictional context, and that it is concerned with informal working relationships in institutional contexts. A fourth distinguishing characteristic of IGR is its awareness of the role played by all public officials. Automatically assumed as integral and important to IGR are mayors, councilmen, governors, state legislators, members of Congress and others. But in recent years more attention has been paid to the actions, attitudes and roles of appointed administrators. The increased focus on administrators as relevant IGR participants is a natural outgrowth of the increasingly important role played by public bureaucracies in government. The concern for the administrative aspects of IGR also arises, however, from attention to informal working relationships and from the academic leanings of most of the writers who have staked out claims to the IGR field. A majority of these persons have been oriented toward public administration and have also held a strong interest in state and local government.

A fifth and final distinctive feature of IGR is its policy component. Federalism has, to a large extent, translated questions of policy into questions of law and relied upon the courts for their resolution. Economic and political complexities, combined with rapid rates of social and technological change, have greatly reduced the capacity of courts—and legislatures—to deal with continuous pressures for policy change. The secular shift from regulatory politics to distributive and redistributive politics signaled new power relationships and configurations to which the term federalism could be applied only with awkward and ambiguous modifiers, such as direct, private, functional, economic. From its origins in the 1930s, IGR was recognized as anchored in politics and suffused with policy. It retains those features in the 1970s.

IGR cut its teeth on the massive political and policy issues that remained following the Supreme Court decisions on the social welfare legislation of the New Deal. It reached early adolescence in grappling with federal aid to education, urban development and civil rights. It is now attempting to claim maturity on issues related to citizen participation and effective services delivery systems. Near the policy core of IGR have been fiscal issues. These have been dominated by allocational issues: Who shall raise what amounts by what method from which citizens, and who shall spend how much for whose benefit with what results? This "fiscal fixation" has sometimes skewed diagnoses of and prescriptions for IGR problems, but the main point stands: IGR is centrally concerned with policy. As the Kestnbaum Commission noted in 1955, "The crucial questions now are questions of policy: What level ought

4. E. S. Corwin, *The Passing of Dual Federalism*, VIRGINIA LAW REVIEW 36 (February 1950), p. 19.

to move? Or should both?"⁵ These questions, the commission added, are ones on which the criteria for judgment "are chiefly political, economic, and administrative rather than legal."⁶

The five distinctive features of IGR are summarized in table 1. These characteristics combine and interact to produce new directions, vectors, and results in the conduct of public affairs in the United States. A new term or phrase to describe these special features therefore seems amply justified. The term IGR alerts one to the multiple, behavioral, continuous and dynamic exchanges occurring between various officials in the political system. It may be compared to a different, novel and visual filter or concept that can be laid on the American political landscape. It permits one to observe, classify and cumulate knowledge without obscuring other relevant data which prior political concepts have provided.

5. Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *A Report to the President for Transmittal to the Congress* (Washington, D.C., June 1955), p. 33.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

PHASES OF IGR

"To follow still the changes of the moon," Shakespeare

To say that the American political system has evolved and changed is trite. The significant questions in dealing with change are ones centering on the frequency, mechanisms, direction, and effects of change. It is possible, for example, to understand aspects of the solar system by studying carefully the phases of the moon. Similarly, a better grasp of the American political system may hopefully be gained by identifying and analyzing five phases of IGR.

In each of the five IGR phases, three main components are considered. First, what were the main problems dominating the public agenda during each phase? Second, what were the perceptions held by the main participants that seemed to guide or direct their behavior in each phase? Third, what mechanisms and techniques were used to implement intergovernmental actions and objectives during each period? Additional elements will help describe each phase, orient the reader, and reveal the effects of changing in-

TABLE 1
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

1. ALL UNITS (MULTIPLE ENTITIES)		4. ALL PUBLIC OFFICIALS (ADMINISTRATORS)
National	Municipalities	Elected officials
States	Special districts	a. legislators
Counties	School districts	b. executives
		c. judges
2. INTERACTIONS OF OFFICIALS (INFORMAL)		Appointed administrators
Behavior	Perceptions	a. generalists
Beliefs	Preferences	b. functional specialists or program professionals
3. CONTINUOUS AND CUMULATIVE (REGULARITIES)		5. POLICY EMPHASIS (FISCAL FOCUS)
Day-to-day contacts		Financial issues
Working relationships		Anchored in politics
Cumulative patterns		Suffused with policy

tergovernmental behavior patterns. These elements are a one-word descriptor, a metaphoric or graphic characterization, and an indication of the approximate dates in which each IGR phase peaked or climaxed.

The five phase descriptors employed here, together with rough date designations are: (1) conflict (pre-1937); (2) cooperative (1933-1953); (3) concentrated (1945-1960); (4) creative (1958-1968); and (5) competitive (1965-?). A condensed and summary chart of the successive phases is offered in table 2. Added to that overview are verbal and graphic expositions of the phases with important caveats. The phases are clearly indicated as successive ones with some overlapping of dates among the periods. While the dates have been selected with deliberateness, they are not sharp and arbitrary cutting points. Forces and tendencies bringing one or another phase

to its climax were present or had antecedents in prior periods. Also, caution is necessary on terminal dates. None of the phases ends in any exact or literal sense. Each phase produces carryover effects beyond the years designated in table 2. Indeed, it is probably most accurate to think of the current state of intergovernmental affairs as resulting from overlaps of the cumulative and successive effects of each IGR phase.

Conflict (pre-1937)

The chief concern of the conflict phase of IGR was the effort to identify and implement "proper" spheres of governmental jurisdiction and neatly defined boundaries for officials' actions. This emphasis operated at the state-local level as well as between national and state governments. Dillon's rule, as a principle for interpreting narrowly the

TABLE 2
PHASES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (IGR)

PHASE DESCRIPTOR	MAIN PROBLEMS	PARTICIPANTS PERCEPTIONS	IGR MECHANISMS	FEDERALISM METAPHOR	APPROXIMATE CLIMAX PERIOD
Conflict	Defining boundaries Proper spheres	Antagonistic Adversary Controversy Exclusivity	Statutes Courts Regulations	Layer cake federalism	pre-1937
Cooperative	Economic stress International threat	Collaboration Complementary Mutuality Supportive	Policy planning Broad formula grants Open-ended grants Tax credit	Marble cake federalism	1933-1953
Concentrated	Program needs Capital works	Professionalism Objectivity Neutrality Functionalism	Categorical grants Service standards	Focused or channelled federalism (water taps)	1945-1960
Creative	Urban-metropolitan Disadvantaged clients	National goals Great society Grantsmanship	Program planning Project grants Participation	Fused-foliated federalism (proliferated)	1958-1968
Competitive	Coordination Program effectiveness Delivery systems Citizen access	Disagreement Tension Rivalry	Revenue sharing Reorganization Regionalization Grant consolidation	Picket fence federalism (fragmented)	1965- ?

powers of local governments, was not only an assertion of state supremacy but also a consequence of the search for the exact limits of local power. Guiding this search was an expectation of exclusive powers. Public officials' perceptions reflected these adversary and antagonistic patterns of interaction.

These conceptions and attitudinal postures by participants were anchored in deeper societal values of competition, corporate organizational forms, profit and efficiency. Residual elements of this phase remain today on the urban-metropolitan scene in the so-called market models of metropolitanism and in the search for the political jurisdiction to perform most efficiently a particular function—for example, should an activity be assigned to a city or to an areawide body?

The manner in which problems of jurisdiction were resolved in the conflict model of IGR was through statutes and the courts. Growing social and economic complexity subsequently brought regulatory agencies and commissions into being to referee jurisdictional boundary disputes. The Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 created the first of the great regulatory commissions and was a major breach in the century-old "administrative settlement" between the national government and the states.⁷ It broke the long-standing presumption against the creation and growth of a national administrative establishment. Attempts to locate the scope of federal regulatory power under the commerce clause and other authority have persisted to the point that under a recent court ruling *all* electric generating and

transmission companies fall under the rate-making authority of the Federal Power Commission.

Other illustrations of the continued adversary, conflict-oriented pattern of national-state relations abound. Environmental and health concerns recently precipitated a jurisdictional dispute over the spheres of national and state power to regulate the safety levels of a nuclear generating plant in Minnesota. National standards set by the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) specified one level of allowable millirems of radiation escaping from the reactor into the atmosphere. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency set the permissible level of millirems at only two percent of that sanctioned by the AEC. The Northern States Power Company brought suit in the federal court challenging the state standards and requesting permission to construct the nuclear power plant without regard for the Minnesota regulations. At issue in the case was the application and intent of federal statutes dealing with atomic energy. The court ruled in favor of the exclusive jurisdiction of the national government and invalidated the more restrictive state regulations.⁸

These recent court decisions probably come as close to reflecting current economic realities, social interdependencies, and technological necessity as pre-1937 courts and legislatures thought they were reflecting economic, social and technological separatism. That supposed separatism—however limited, qualified or restricted in practice—gave

7. Leonard D. White, *The States and The Nation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), pp. 9–10.

8. *Northern States Power Co. v. State of Minnesota*, 447 F. 2nd 1143 (1971); see also, *Science* 171 (8 January 1971), p. 45, and Harry Foreman, ed., *Nuclear Power and the Public* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970).

credence to the metaphor of “layer cake federalism” as a crude means of describing national, state and local disconnectedness.

Cooperation (1933–1953)

Several authors have ably argued and amply demonstrated that inter-governmental collaboration in the United States existed throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.⁹ That such collaboration was of major significance or the dominant fact of our political history is less clear. It does seem possible, however, to point to one period in which complementary and supportive relationships were most prominent and had high political significance. That period is the cooperative phase from 1933–1953. The prime elements of national concern during those two decades were the alleviation of widespread economic distress and response to international threats. It seems logical and natural that internal and external challenges to national survival would bring us closer together.

The means by which increased collaboration occurred were several and varied. Most pertinent for our concerns were such approaches as national policy planning, tax credits, and categorical grants-in-aid. Most of the dozen or so grant programs enacted during the depression period were broad formula grants, with a few being open-ended. Special emergency funding arrangements were instituted during the depression years and repeated in selected federally-impacted areas in wartime. As one observer noted in 1943:

9. Morton Grodzins, *The American System: A New View of Government in the United States* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966); Daniel J. Elazar, *The American Partnership: Intergovernmental Cooperation in the Nineteenth Century United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

Cooperative government by federal-state-local authorities has become a byword in the prodigious effort to administer civilian defense, rationing, and other war-time programs. . . . Intergovernmental administration, while it is a part of all levels of government, is turning into something quite distinct from them all.¹⁰

The IGR collaboration that persisted during these years was present on such unusual occasions as the 1952 steel seizure confrontation; prior to his seizure effort, President Truman polled state governors for their views.

The prime IGR mechanism, as well as the major legacy of this cooperative period, was fiscal. Substantial and significant fiscal links were firmly established. These established conduits were harbingers of more to come. They also served as important illustrations of a new and differently textured model of inter-governmental patterns, the well-publicized “marble cake” metaphor. The marble cake characterization appears to have been coined by Professor Joseph McLean of Princeton University in the early 1940s for the visual or contrast effect with the layer cake conception. Professor Morton Grodzins probably had the greatest impact in popularizing and elaborating the marble cake concept.

Concentrated (1945–1960)

The descriptor employed for this IGR phase stands for the specific, functional, highly focused nature of intergovernmental interaction that evolved and dominated the Truman-Eisenhower years. From 1946 to 1960, twenty-nine major new grant-in-aid programs were established, a

10. Arthur W. Bromage, “Federal-State-Local Relations,” *American Political Science Review* 37, no. 1 (February 1943), p. 35.

number that doubled the total number of programs enacted before and during the depression and wartime eras. The expanded use of categorical grant programs was accompanied by increased attention to service standards and program measurement.

Guiding this growing functional emphasis were corps of program professionals in each of the specialized grant fields, such as airport construction, hospital construction, slum clearance and urban renewal, urban planning, waste treatment facilities, library construction, and so on. The pervasiveness of professionalism enhanced the service standards emphasis by covering the domain with a cloak of objectivity and neutrality. These fit comfortably into Professor Herbert Kaufman's conception of the autonomy accompanying "neutral competence" in public administration contrasted with the control over policy by a strong executive leader.¹¹ The professionalism, specialized grants and growing insulation also coincided neatly in time, as well as thematically, with Professor Frederick Mosher's view that the 1950s confirmed the triumph of the "professional state" in the public service.¹²

What aims or ends guided and provided the rationale for this surge of activity? Two appear to be most prominent. One was a capital works, public construction push. Between 1946 and 1960, state and local capital outlays increased twelvefold while current operating expenses

rose by a multiple of four. Federal grants for highways, hospitals, sewage plants, and airports underwrote much of the state-local effort to meet deferred wartime needs and respond to changing technology and population configurations, especially its suburbanization.

A second motive force propelling intergovernmental action in this period was the political realization that government generally, and IGR especially, was capable of responding to particularistic middle class needs. The New Deal may have had its most telling political effect in making the American middle class acutely aware of the positive and program-specific capabilities of governmental action. Effective political action based on this awareness came after World War II and was reinforced by several conditions.

One condition already mentioned was suburbanization. It constituted the urban frontier and reinforced the myth of Jeffersonian ward republics. Another was the predisposition for using intergovernmental mechanisms because they also meshed with the historical political tradition of localism. In addition, IGR techniques fitted middle class values of professionalism, objectivity and neutrality. It appeared that objective program needs rather than politics were being served. Like reform at the turn of the century, IGR appeared to take a program out of politics.

Those political values coincided with an important structural change at the national level: the legislative reorganization of Congress in 1946. The most significant result of this event for IGR was the creation and stabilization of standing committees with an explicit program emphasis. These congressional committee patterns soon became the

11. Herbert Kaufman, "Emerging Conflicts in the Doctrines of Public Administration," *American Political Science Review* 50, no. 4 (December 1956), pp. 1057-1073.

12. Frederick Mosher, *Democracy and the Public Service* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), esp. ch. 4, "The Professional State."

leverage points and channels through which influence on program-specific grants flowed. Furthermore, the committees developed their own cadre of professional staff members with functional and programmatic inclinations.

The flow of influence combined with the concentrated or focused flow of funds in the 1946-1960 period prompts one to employ a hydraulic metaphor in depicting this phase of IGR. The national government had become an established reservoir of fiscal resources to which

a rapidly increasing number of water taps were being connected. The functional flows of funds could be facilitated by those knowledgeable at turning on the numerous spigots, that is, the program professionals. Cooperation was prominent during this period, but it occurred in more concentrated and selectively channeled ways.

A crude effort to express the water tap phase of IGR is made in figure 1. The intergovernmental flow of funds for 1950 is shown by the lines connecting the national-state and state-

FIGURE 1

PUBLIC EXPENDITURES BY TYPE AND BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT AND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FLOW OF FUNDS, FISCAL YEAR 1950
(in billions of dollars)

Total Expenditures (all governments) : \$ 70.3
(excludes duplicate transfers)

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT (40.4)*

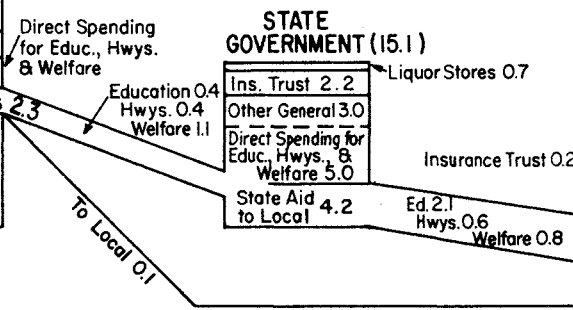
National Defense/International Relations	18.4
Insurance Trust	4.5
Postal	2.3
	2.6
Fed. Aid to States	2.3
Other General	10.3

STATE GOVERNMENT (15.1)

Ins. Trust	2.2
Other General	3.0
Direct Spending for Educ., Hwys. & Welfare	5.0
State Aid to Local	4.2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (17.0)

Utilities	2.0
Other General	5.9
Direct Spending for Education, Highways, & Welfare	8.9



Scale: 1 cm. = \$ 5 billion
Source: Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics on Governmental Finances and Employment (GPO, 1969)

* Excludes interest on the national debt (\$ 4.4 billion)

local spending sectors. This phase of IGR confirmed the interconnected and interdependent nature of national-state-local relations.

Creative (1958–1968)

The foundations for the creative phase of IGR were formed and filled in the cooperative and concentrated periods. The dates delimiting this phase are again somewhat arbitrary, but they mark a decade of moves toward decisiveness rather than drift in American politics and public policy. The election of a heavily Democratic Congress in 1958 and the 1964 presidential results were the political pegs to which this phase of IGR was attached. An added input that contributed to direction and cohesiveness, if not decisiveness, was the report of the Eisenhower-appointed President's Commission on National Goals. The commission, appointed partially in response to the Russian challenge of Sputnik, was created in 1959 and reported in 1961.¹³

The term Creative Federalism is applied to this decade because of presidential usage and because of the novel and numerous initiatives in IGR during the period. Three mechanisms are prominent: (1) program planning, (2) project grants, and (3) popular participation. The sheer number of grant programs alone is sufficient to set this decade apart from the preceding periods. In 1961 the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) identified approximately 40 major grant programs in existence that had been enacted prior to 1958. By 1969

there were an estimated 160 major programs, 500 specific legislative authorizations, and 1,315 different federal assistance activities, for which money figures, application deadlines, agency contacts, and use restrictions could be identified. Federal grants jumped in dollar magnitude from \$4.9 billion in 1958 to \$23.9 billion in 1970. At the state-local level, state aid to local governments rose from \$8.0 billion to \$28.9 billion over the 1958–1970 span.

Numbers and dollars alone are insufficient to distinguish the creative phase. Planning requirements, for example, were attached to 61 of the new grant programs enacted between 1961 and 1966. The tremendous growth in project grants as contrasted with formula grants increased the diversity of activities supported by federal funds and increased further the autonomy and discretion of program professionals. Project grant authorizations grew from 107 to 280 between 1962 and 1967, while formula grants rose from 53 to 99 in the same period. Finally, the public participation requirements tied to some grants increased the complexity, the calculations, and occasionally the chagrin of officials charged with grant allocation choices.

To what ends or aims were these federal initiatives directed? What were the chief problems addressed by this activism? At the risk of great oversimplification, two major policy themes are identified: (1) an urban-metropolitan emphasis and (2) attention to disadvantaged persons in the society through the anti-poverty programs and aid to education funds. The latter problem needs little documentation. Only one supporting item is mentioned for the former. Between 1961 and 1969 the percentage of all federal aid that went to urban areas increased from

13. Report of the President's Commission on National Goals, *Goals for Americans* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Spectrum Series and the American Assembly of Columbia University, 1960).

55 percent to 70 percent, as total dollar amount so allocated went from \$3.9 billion to \$14.0 billion.¹⁴

Supporting the urban and disadvantaged emphases of this phase were selective but significant views held by important actors. President Johnson's speech first mentioning Creative Federalism also contained a phrase of larger and more popular political importance, that is, "The Great Society." As one observer has noted: "The Great Society was, by definition, one society; the phrase was singular, not plural."¹⁵ How much this consensus politics pushed to the popularity of national goals efforts in the late 1950s and early 1960s is unknown. The unitary emphasis was evident, however. The president's preference on the need for centralized objective-setting made his 1965 moves toward planning-programming-budgeting a natural offshoot of views which held that our governmental system was a single system. Indeed, the basis for such revisionary thinking had been spelled out in a 1961 speech by Senator Joseph Clark entitled "Toward National Federalism."¹⁶

Accompanying these national and unitary sets of participants' perspectives was a subsidiary theme. It grew out of the expansion and proliferation of federal grants. This was the grantsmanship perspective that formed around the poverty and project grant programs. Playing the federal grant game became a well-

known but time-consuming activity for mayors, managers, governors, universities, and, of course, for the program professionals.

This creative phase of IGR contains a paradox. Federal grants expanded massively in number, scope, and dollar magnitudes. The diversity that accentuated grantsmanship tendencies, however, moved from political and policy assumptions that were common—if not unitary—in their conception about the aims of society. The paradox is one of proliferation, participation, and pluralism amid convergence, consent, and concord. The prominence of the latter set suggests that "fused" is an appropriate metaphor by which this IGR phase can be characterized. An effort to show visually the coalesced character of IGR at the end of the creative period is provided in figure 2. The ties between national-state and state-local sectors are broad and weld the segments into a closely linked system. The visual contrast between figures 1 and 2 helps confirm the shift from a focused to a fused model of the IGR system.

The contrasting component present in this creative phase has not yet been noted. Figure 2 conveys the impression of intense interconnectedness and interdependence. What it does not convey is the diversity, proliferation, and fragmentation of the national-state fiscal links. There may be a superficial appearance of fusion, but the scores of specific and discrete categorical grants require additional adjectives to describe this period, such as the fused-foliated or proliferated phase.

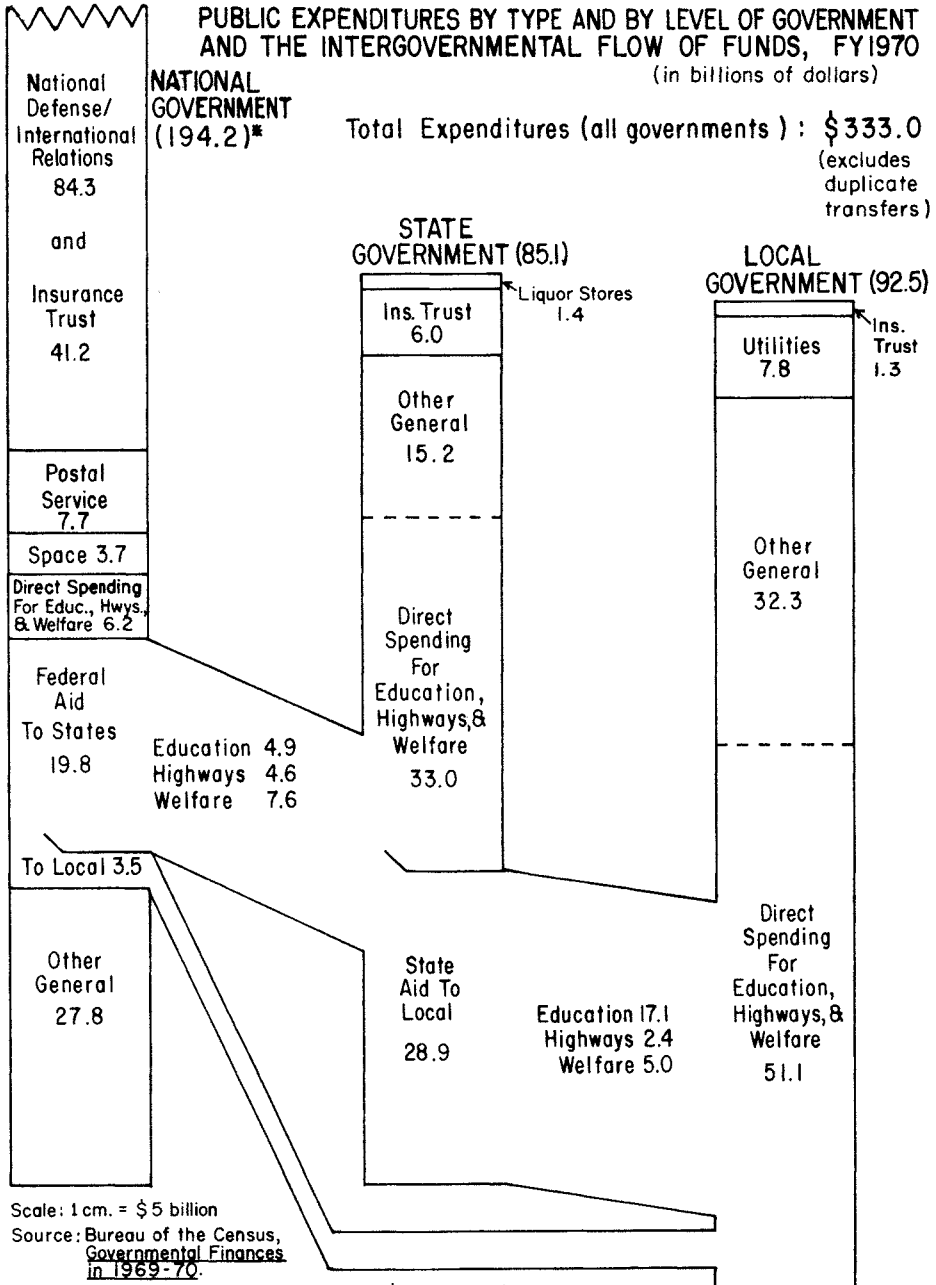
Other, more crude metaphors that could be used are flowering federalism and spaghetti federalism. Both terms attempt to capture the elaborate, complex, and intricate features of IGR that developed in this phase.

14. *Special Analyses, Budget of the United States, Fiscal Year 1971* (Washington, D.C., 1970), pp. 228–229.

15. James L. Sundquist, *Making Federalism Work: A Study of Program Coordination at the Community Level* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1969), p. 12.

16. George Washington University, *The Federal Government and the Cities: A Symposium* (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1961), pp. 39–49.

FIGURE 2



* Excludes interest on the national debt (\$14.0 billion)

Competitive (1965-²)

The proliferation of grants, the clash between professionals and participation-minded clients, the gap between program promises and proven performance, plus the intractability of domestic urban and international problems, formed a malaise in which IGR entered a new phase.

A different statement of central problems emerged when the administrative consequences of prior legislative whirlwinds became the center of attention. Issues associated with bureaucratic behavior and competence came to the forefront. One talisman earnestly sought was coordination. Others in close association were program accomplishment, effective service delivery systems and citizen access. Attention shifted to administrative performance and to organizational structures and relationships that either hindered or helped the effective delivery of public goods and services.

A sharply different tack was taken regarding appropriate IGR mechanisms. Pressure grew to alter and even reverse previous grant trends. Grant consolidation and revenue sharing were mentioned, popularized, and ultimately proposed by a Republican president on the basis of both program effectiveness and strengthening state and local governments. Some progress was made in the grant consolidation sphere, but as of 1973 the ACIR reported 69 formula grants and 312 project grants in existence. On the federal administrative scene, moves were made toward regionalization and reorganization. With the strong support of mayors, governors and county officials, general revenue sharing slipped through a divided Congress.

A flood of other developments in

the late 1960s and early 1970s underscored the competition present in the system and also signaled efforts to reduce it. Perhaps the more visible actions and initiatives came at the national level, but in numerical terms and potential significance, important policy shifts occurred at the state and local levels. It is impossible to compress the numerous trends that were competition-inducing and to acknowledge some that eased competitive tendencies. Only three policy patterns will be mentioned as illustrations of tension-promoting developments: (1) economic opportunity programs and their chief implementation mechanisms—community action agencies; (2) “white flight” and the polarization of central city-suburban relationships, especially along racial lines; and (3) elimination or funding reductions in several grant programs by the Nixon administration in 1973—some of which were achieved by the impounding of funds.

Countervailing tendencies in the direction of reduced tensions and increased cooperation appeared during this competition-dominated phase. At the local level, prompted and supported by national action, councils of governments sprang into existence in large numbers. One major aim was to foster metropolitan and regional coordination, especially through the A-95 grant review process. At the state level, herculean tax efforts were made to: (1) expand state services, (2) greatly increase state aid to local governments, and (3) meet the enlarged state-level funding requirements to match the vastly expanded federal grant monies.¹⁷ Tension-reducing aims can

17. For example, state funds to match federal aid increased from \$5.1 billion in 1964 to an estimated \$18.4 billion in 1972;

also be attributed to such national-level actions as new departures with interstate compacts, the Partnership for Health Act (P.L.89-749), the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 (P.L.90-577) and the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (P.L.91-648).

The developments noted above reflected contrasting sets of perspectives that old as well as new participants brought to IGR. A statement by Senator Edmund Muskie—Democrat, Maine—in 1966 will serve as one example: “The picture, then, is one of too much tension and conflict rather than coordination and cooperation all along the line of administration—from top Federal policymakers and administrators to the state and local professional administrators and elected officials.”¹⁸ Similar views about the unwarranted degree of disagreement, tension, and rivalry among and between officials prompt the use of “competitive” for this phase of IGR.

The competition, however, is different in degree, emphasis, and configuration from the interlevel conflict of the older, layer cake phase. It is more modulated, and it acknowledges the lessons learned from the intervening periods of cooperation, concentration and creativity. For example, the current competitive phase appears reasonably realistic about the interdependencies within the system and the inability to turn the clock back in IGR. The three statutory enactments cited above bear witness to reasoned and

reality-oriented approaches to IGR.

The nature of the competition in the present IGR phase is indicated in part by Senator Muskie's remarks. He mentions professional program administrators and state-local elected officials. It is the tension between the policy generalist, whether elected or appointed, and the program-professional-specialists that currently produces great static and friction in IGR. This cleavage is another reason for describing this phase of IGR as competitive. A visual representation of the fractures and rivalry characterizing this phase is offered in figure 3. The metaphor of the picket fence, referred to in former Governor Sanford's book, *Storm Over the States*,¹⁹ was the original stimulus for this formulation. The seven public interest groups, often called the Big Seven, have parted ways from the functional specialists. Their common interest in revenue sharing, grant consolidation and similar proposals represents a reassertion of the executive leadership doctrine and a challenge to the program professionals' doctrine of neutral competence.

A second type of competition can also be discerned from figure 3: the competition between the several functional program areas. Each vertical picket represents an alliance among like-minded program specialists or professionals, regardless of the level of government in which they serve. As early as the mid-1950s these interlevel linkages of loyalties were identified and criticized as “vertical functional autocracies.”²⁰

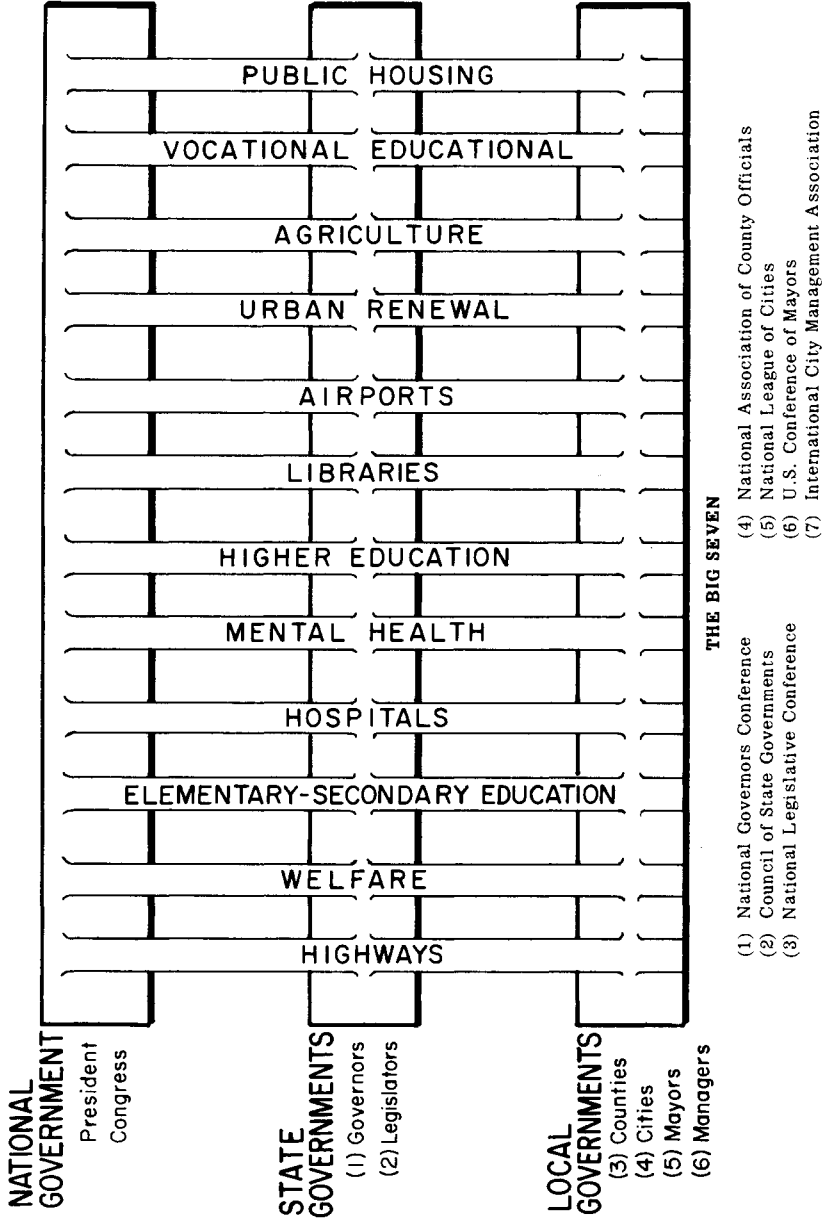
see, Deil S. Wright and David E. Stephenson, “The States as Middlemen: Five Fiscal Dilemmas,” *State Government* 47, no. 2 (Spring 1974), pp. 101-107.

18. U.S., Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 89th Cong., 2nd sess., 1966, 112, p. 6834.

19. Terry Sanford, *Storm Over the States* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 80.

20. Advisory Committee on Local Government, *An Advisory Committee Report on Local Government* (submitted to the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Washington, D.C., June 1955), p. 7.

FIGURE 3
 PICKET FENCE FEDERALISM: A SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION



DSW 6/15/74

Other epithets used against these patterns are: balkanized bureaucracies, feudal federalisms and autonomous autocracies. These terms emphasize not only the degree of autonomy that the program specialists have from policy control by political generalists, but also the separateness and independence that one program area has from another. This lack of horizontal linkage prompts interprogram, interprofessional and interagency competition. The cross-program competition combined with the generalist-specialist split helps confirm the contention that the competition depicted by the picket fence model best describes the current and most recent phase of IGR.

Both competitive patterns were captured in the words of local officials as quoted by James Sundquist. Speaking in the late 1960s, the director of a local model cities program contended that "Our city is a battleground among federal Cabinet agencies."²¹ Similar sentiments came from mayors and city managers whose limited control and coordination powers over federal programs caused them to feel like spectators of the governmental process in their own cities. If, in fact, this competitive model is applicable to IGR today, then a recognition of these tensions and cleavages would seem to be the first-order task of those seeking changes and improvements in IGR.

21. Sundquist, *Making Federalism Work*, p. 27.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

IGR has become a distinctive dimension of activities in the American political system. It refers to a significant domain of political, policy and administrative actions by public officials. An acknowledged emphasis was made in this discussion on the meaning, features and trends in IGR (as a term or phrase). Concept explication and clarification have their uses; but they also have limits. There is much more to be said about the realities, practices and problems of IGR. Subsequent articles are appropriately addressed to these types of concerns.

One concluding comment on this exposition is offered in anticipation of the analyses that follow. This is an era when the *management* of IGR is a matter of major moment. James Sundquist observes that "The federal system is too important to be left to chance."²² His book can be seen as an effort to critique and reconstruct the organizational philosophy undergirding effective intergovernmental action. Sundquist's treatment and the mood of this essay move toward a similar conclusion: intergovernmental achievements hinge on coping successfully with complexity. Complexity is an inherent and persistent characteristic of the several features of IGR. Accomplishments in the intergovernmental arena therefore depend on the successful management of complexity.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 31.