C. Anderson, “Regional Heterogeneity and Policy Preferences in Canada: 1979-2006,” *Regional and Federal Studies* 20:4-5 (October-December 2010)

**Overview:**

Paper reassesses the central findings from *Small Worlds*, presenting 3 central findings: (1) the presence of non-trivial levels of regional variation in public policy preferences; (2) policy preference heterogeneity tends to be comparable to or greater than differences based on other socio-demographic features of Cdn society; and (3) regional preference heterogeneity has increased since 1980 and remains prominent even when separating out Quebec effects

**Political culture (definition):** denotes underlying attitudes and values about the political system – this is not necessarily what this article (or the Simeon and Elkins article) get at, as they look at the ‘policy preferences’ of Cdns

**Analysis**

* Simeon and Elkins (Ch 3) in *Small Worlds* assessed citizens’ policy preferences from 1949-75 – found that despite strong decentralizing forces nationally, policy preferences were converging. Their three major findings were as follows:
  + Apparent convergence over time of regional preferences on issues of public policy
  + Apparent convergence in public preferences between Quebec and ROC
  + Exception being: views about F-E relations remained highly divisive and a source of sustained source of regional difference
* Work addressing regional variation in policy preferences tends to coalesce around 2 contrasting poles of opinion:

1. The view that either explicitly or implicitly region/territory is and continues to be a relevant source of heterogeneity in policy preferences (Mendelson, 2001; Gidengil et al, 1999)
2. The other end seeks to downplay the salience of regional differences in policy preferences (Ornstien et al., 1980; Ornstein and Stevenson, 1999; Clarke et al. 2002) looking instead at other cleavages (i.e. class), or suggesting that regional influences are generally overstated

* Anderson takes on the regional question

**Conclusions:**

* Overarching conclusion: regions and regional variation is a (perhaps key) feature of public policy preferences in Canada. Based on 3 sub-results:
  + Index of dissimilarity values suggest presence of non-trivial levels of preference variation based on region
  + The extent of this preference variation tends to be comparable to or greater than the heterogeneity based on other socio-demographic features of Cdn society
  + Regional variation over the last few decades has increased and remains prominent even when separating out effects of the Quebec issue