R. Simeon, “Many Small Worlds,” *Regional and Federal Studies* 20:4-5 (October-December 2010)

**Overview:**

Questions explored in *Small Worlds* and in this journal issue were as follows:

* What is the balance between ID with central state and local units?
* How do cultural/political orientations vary across units and why?
* How do citizens in different regions vary in their support for difference elements of PP?
* What is the variation between units on level of voting and parties? To what extent are parties integrated between levels and able to bridge regional differences?
* To what extent to policies of sub-state units vary and why?
* Is there a convergence or divergence between states/provinces over time and why?

Simon suggests 3 important advances made in the issue:

1. Comparison – *Small Worlds* focused on just Canada (was an exercise in intrastate comparison). This journal issue expands number of cases outward.
2. Replication – an essential tool in confirming, rejecting, or expanding original conclusions
3. Change over time – replication makes this possible – lots of time-series data

Can’t say Simeon’s piece is resoundingly positive of the contributions made.

**Conclusions:**

1. There is nothing unique about Canada. As E. Hepburn’s article shows – as she compares Canada, Scotland, and Germany – “party systems have emerged at the regional level that are quite distinct from that at the state level… territory has (re)emerged as a major cleavage in party politics”
2. Anderson (in replicating *Small Worlds*) finds that “region and regional variation is a (perhaps key) feature of public policy preferences in Canada”
3. Blake and Simeon (using data from 1949-75) found Canadians seemed to be becoming more alike in their expectations of government. Anderson shows that from 1979-1993 the trend was divergence. From 1993+ there appears to be a stabilizing trend (with the exception of French-English relations).
   1. Reasoning suggested for this – was that in the 70s, provinces were becoming increasingly activist (province-building) and resistant to federal intrusion (\*\*assumption refuted by Young, Faucher and Blais).

Take-aways:

* Notes the persistence of small local and provincial worlds
* None of the new divisions/social movement activity (gender, ethnic diversity, etc) have *displaced* local small worlds
  + Suggests a *coexistence* of multiple small worlds
* There is a potential cost – and that is accountability. Fundamental policy issues (especially shared policy issues) get lost in the shuffle, as “watertight compartments” no longer really exist.