S. Dupré, “Reflections on the Workability of Executive Federalism,” in Olling and Westmacott, *Perspectives on Canadian Federalism* (1988)

**Overview**

The workability of executive federalism is to an important degree a function of the manner in which the executives of our federal and provincial govts operate – Chapter suggests that things are unbalanced in executive federalism, and provides prescriptions – procedural and substantive directions – for executive federalism to follow.

**Background**

* In recent years, the interaction among federal and provincial first ministers has fallen into disarray – and fed-prov relations have become so varied and complex they defy generalization
* Whether executive federalism works does not involve whether governments agree, but whether it provides a forum (or forums) that is conducive to negotiation, consultation, or exchange of info
* Two tales of executive federalism:
  + Until mid 1960s, federal-provincial functional relations had sufficient commonality to be explained by simple conceptual model
  + Following this period, functional relations split off into numerous directions –
* Moral of the story: when all is said and done, the formation and maintenance of networks (i.e. trust ties) between appointed officials of the two orders of govt play a fundamental role in the workability of federal-provincial interaction
  + These trust ties can be:

1. A function of shared professional trainings and norms (as in the functional relations model);
2. They can be a function of geographical proximity and of shared desire to extract results from a vague mandate (as in case of de-concentrated DREE); and
3. They can be a function of the shared vocabulary of macroeconomic analysis and a common interest in managing the spending ambitions of operating depts. (as in the fiscal relations model)
   * Trust ties are communicable to ministers, even more so when ministers possess a measure of independent decision-making autonomy in their portfolios instead of being oriented to collegial decision-making processes within their cabinets

* Dupre’s reflections may invoke a “good old days” feeling of nostalgia for departmentalized cabinets, when operating department ministers enjoyed decision-making latitude and finance ministers presided over a horizontal portfolio