Question: In Canada, is regionalism the cause of federalism? Or is federalism the cause of regionalism?

**Argument** – regionalism caused federalism, but now, federalism reinforces regionalism.

What do we mean by regionalism? We can conceive of regions as provinces, we can conceive of them as blocks of geography, linked by economic or demographic characteristics, This interpretation will rely strongly on the conception of regionalism as provincialism, as it relates more closely to how regions interact with the federal state.

Simeon (2002) writes that federalism in English Canada is seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it acts as a condition of unity, while on the other it contributes to disunity by institutionalizing and reinforcing territorially defined cleavages.

Cairns (1986) – 1867 federalism was a response to federalism

Strong push from the beginning – regionalism pushed for federalism.

Could start with a political culture consideration –fragment theory –

* Immigration to Canada in waves, settlers differentiated themselves based on identity (Americans in the West, British nationalists and Loyalists in upper Canada, French in Quebec, Acadians),
* In developing the Canadian state, these provinces (their political institutions informed by a distinct political culture) influenced the development of Canada as a federal state

Throughout Cdn history, then these two have interacted – with federalism now reinforcing the regional identities and political institutions

* Has been supported through JCPC decisions re: provinces and decentralization
* Province-building as a concept
* Federal institutions (SCC, etc) gave greater influence to provinces/regions
* Issues with regional representation within federal politics have manifested themselves in interesting ways, with regional political parties emerging – Reform and the BQ (though it is important to note that their intentions were very different – Reform came with the message that “the West Wants In” while the BQ came with the message “Quebec Wants Out”
* Thus has influenced party structure in federal systems
* Has also impacted the practices and process of federalism
  + Evolution of federalism linked strongly to provincialism and the rise of provinces
  + Weak intrastate federalism has placed pressures on provinces to act as regional representatives (as party discipline, weak Senate, etc in Ottawa undercut the ability of regional ministers)