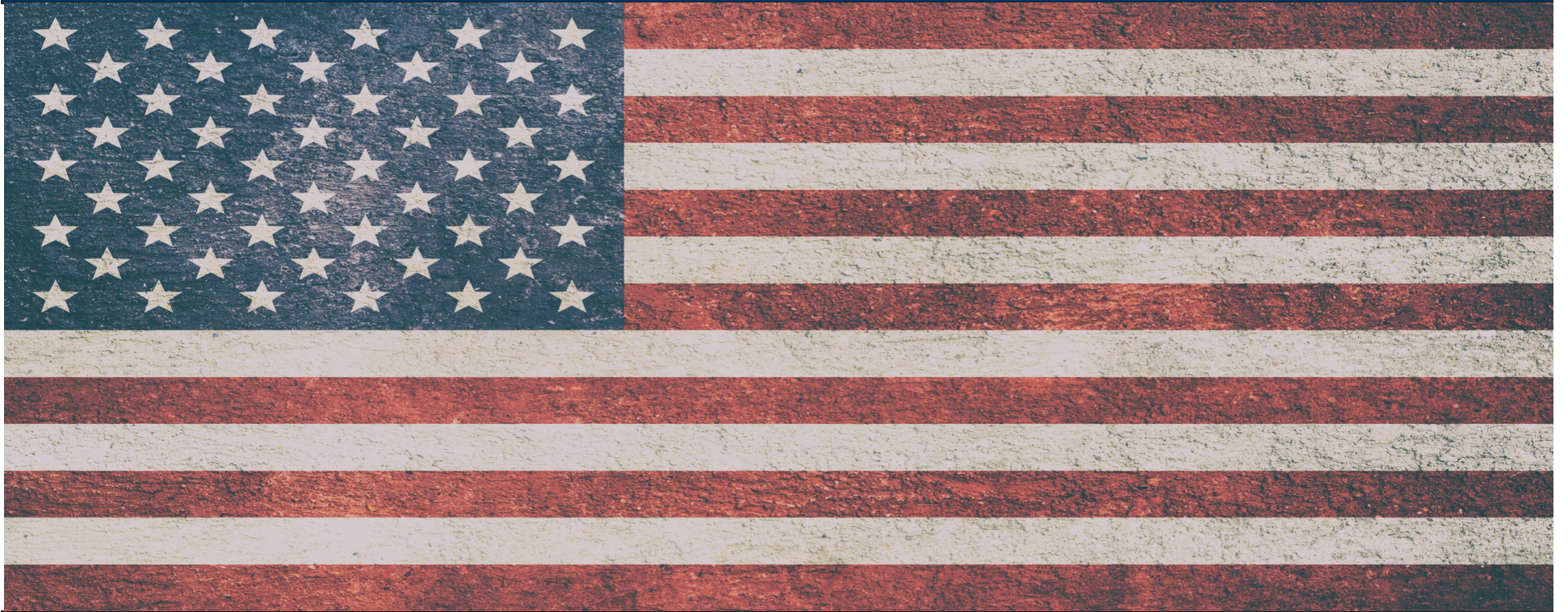


Government Analysis



Origins of the U.S. Structure:

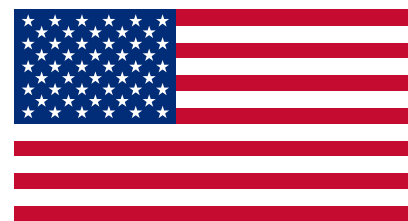
Look into the history of American politics, and you will find the fundamental disagreement that breaks us into our parties. Through the two and a half centuries of our free country, our leaders have debated, have defended, and have bled for their stances on this issue. How much power should be vested in our federal government, and how much should be distributed to the states? It may seem a simple question, but it is the foundation of our original party split, of the disputes that led to the Civil War, and of the issues Americans today struggle with. In order to further examine this question, one must examine the many benefits and drawbacks of both a more centralized government, as well as a more decentralized one. From there, we can know which system will help our country prosper.

Uses And Effects Known:



To begin with, let us take a look at the uses and effects of a more centralized government. In our United States, this would mean endowing the majority of power into the hands of the federal government. In a centralized government, the executive and legislature of the central government body, which, in the U.S., would be the president and Congress, make the majority of decisions for the nation. Often, the decision-makers in a very centralized government are free to factor the public opinion into their consideration as little as they like. A few hands moving at the top choose the laws, rules, and regulations for their land. Some nations with extremely centralized governments have what is known as a centrally planned economy.

This type of governing can have some advantages. For example, the law-making process is more efficient, with the choices being made having to pass through fewer hands before being officially denied or approved. Sometimes, because the people who make it to the top of the government tend to be a very select few, it can prevent the risk of majority-oppressing-minority that comes with pure rule of the people. In theory, it can decrease tensions and promote equality between the states, because decisions are made on behalf of the whole country. However, a centralized form of government can have its drawbacks. Firstly, it has a minimal amount of input from the public, linking it to authoritarianism. When the man on the top of the hill gains immense control of those around him, the aspiring tyrant will naturally be jumping to take his place. Additionally, high-up leaders are often unable to see from the eyes of the average citizens whose lives they aim to improve. This can lead to blunders of which the consequences are not noticed by the government, and are therefore never revised. All in all, decisions made by a centralized government can be largely unaligned with the needs of the people at a local, or even regional, level.



Various Types:

Now that we have examined the details and workings of a centralized government, we must observe those of a decentralized one. In a decentralized government, power is spread more evenly across the governed body. Rather than, say, the U.S. Congress making a decision that would apply to all states, each state's legislature would review the issue, and make a decision that would work with the conditions of their state and people. To take decentralization even further, states could choose to pass the problem onto the town government. Especially when considering levels of government as low as that of the town, much more of the public's opinion is considered in a decentralized government.

A decentralized government has many advantages. It allows for more context-sensitive resolutions and laws, which a centralized government may not be able to provide, due to their laws having to apply to all regions, regardless of factors such as crime rates, potential for natural disaster, or economic climate. Governments at the lower level are able to take these factors into consideration, and choose which areas need more restrictions, and where leniency would work better. For example, a city where many robberies take place could put extra restrictions on carrying guns inside stores, while a low-crime area could leave the choice to the store owners. Additionally, when a swift change overtakes an area, lower levels of government can respond quicker than the federal government can. When federal governments must respond to rapid changes in economic, crime-related, or even real climate, they must determine what works best for all areas, which prolongs the time taken to make appropriate provisions, allowing the crisis to grow. States and towns can quickly survey what problems have arisen with them specifically, take care of those, and allow other areas to do the same without interference. Generally, a decentralized government has the advantage of being a more democratic, context-sensitive system.





United We Stand!

The debate between those supportin centralization and decentralization is not bound to die anytime soon. Thus, it's important we know the characteristics, benefits, and defects of each.

Our country was founded by men that sought to balance these two systems to serve Americans as best as they possibly could. Perhaps, then, balance is a good ideal to pursue in politics. Reason should be a voice louder than any partisan instinct.

Compare And Contrast Structures:

However, a decentralized government still has its drawbacks. For example, during times of war, more power needs to be vested in the center of the nation, as a nation cannot be too scattered while defending itself. This can especially be true if regions are so used to decentralization that they turn their noses at banding together. This was a large problem during the Civil War, for the former Confederate States of America. Additionally, if a nation-wide law is urgently needed to be passed, it could take longer to get it through all of the states. Furthermore, intergovernmental relations relating to both politics and economics may be negatively impacted, because different regions may have wildly varying opinions on how these relations should be handled, causing incohesion. While decentralization is praised by some as being the most democratic way of handling government, we should be wary of its flaws.

As John F. Kennedy once said, "Let us not seek the Republican answer, or the Democratic answer, but the right answer." It is by strong principle, not partisanship, that democracy thrives.





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