



Comparing Federal Systems (Institute of Intergovernmental Relations)

Ronald L. Watts

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In this updated third edition Ronald Watts provides a clear analysis of the design and operation of a wide range of federations. There is much that can be learned from the experience of federal systems throughout the world. At present there are 25 functioning federations in the world (containing over 40 percent of the world's population). A distinctive feature of the popularity of federalism in the contemporary world is that its application has taken a variety of forms and has included some new variants and innovations. This third edition has been fully updated and now encompasses reference to a much wider range of federations and federal experiments including mature federations such as the United States of America, Switzerland, Canada, Austria, Germany and India; emergent federations such as Mexico, Malaysia, Pakistan, Spain, Brazil, Belgium, Russia, Argentina, Ethiopia, South Africa, Nigeria and Venezuela; micro-federations such as Micronesia, Belau, St.Kitts and Nevis, and Comoros; federal-confederal hybrids such as the United Arab Emirates and the European Union, and post-conflict federal experiments such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sudan, Iraq, and Congo; as well as examining federations that have failed. Watts compares the interaction of social diversity and political institutions, the distribution of powers and finances, the processes contributing to flexibility or rigidity in adjustment, the extent of internal symmetry or asymmetry, the character of representation in federal institutions, the role of constitutions and courts, the provisions for constitutional rights and secession, the degree of centralization and non-centralization, and the pathology of federations.

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