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PSC 401D

15 May 2020

### **How A Pandemic Has Shifted The Nation**

The year 2020 took a turn that no one expected. In January, people were working hard to accomplish their New Year resolutions. February to early March, civilians were out caucusing and watching the primary elections. Then, what felt like out of the sudden, all states were on lockdown due to a pandemic outbreak. The Coronavirus also referred to as COVID-19, has shifted the United States into a new stage of federalism.

Federalism is when national and regional governments are considered to be independent equals because of the way they are able to share powers. A great example to understand what federalism is about is the legalization of marijuana in Colorado, Arizona. Marijuana is considered to be illegal federally, however, in specific states, like Nevada as well, the use and the purchase of marijuana are legal. The reason for this is the difference in state and federal law. States are allowed to make their own laws because federalism is what allows it to do so. Because federalism allows for shared powers and to be independent equals, we have laws that are federally illegal but in certain states legal.

There are many different stages of federalism. Some of these include the following: dual federalism, cooperative federalism, centralized federalism, new federalism, and ad hoc federalism. Dual federalism existed from 1789-1933. This is the idea that “state and federal governments have separate jurisdiction and responsibilities (Smith, Greenblatt, 2020, 34).” Dual

federalism allows levels of governments to do what they please without the trouble of interference. It seems pretty obvious why dual federalism was not practical. Despite the fact that state and federal governments are focused on their own interests, it's hard to imagine if a specific level of government was crossing the line for certain things and interference wasn't allowed, per se. Though conflict isn't what we always want, interference for the greater good is necessary. Interference allows state or federal governments to stay in check. Cooperative federalism existed from 1933 to 1964. Cooperative federalism is seen as a marble cake because of the fact that the different levels of government are so involved within each other, it makes it difficult to see the difference and separation between the different levels of government. The idea of cooperative federalism is the notion that "it is impossible for state and national governments to have separate and distinct jurisdictions and that both levels of government must work together (Smith, Greenblatt, 2020, 36)." Centralized federalism existed from 1964 to 1980. The notion of this stage of federalism is that "the federal government should take the leading role in setting national policy, with state and governments helping to implement the policies (Smith, Greenblatt, 2020, 38)." Though this seems like a good stage of federalism, it appears that because federal and state governments are likely to have conflicts with each other about what policies to implement, this stage of federalism does not seem to be practical. New federalism existed from 1980 to 2002. New federalism is about returning power back to the states. In 1968, candidate Richard Nixon had vowed the American people that he would return "true" federalism by returning power back to the states. That power would be referred to as new federalism. New federalism is "a federal system guided by a policy of returning power to the state and local governments (The Evolution of Federalism)." Lastly, we have ad hoc federalism which existed from 2002 and is the current

stage of federalism the United States is in. The notion of ad hoc federalism is “the process of choosing a state-centered or nation-centered view of federalism on the basis of political or partisan convenience (Smith, Greenblatt, 2020, 41).”

A crisis that is threatening people all around the world is called the Coronavirus. This virus, which is a virus that deals with the human respiratory system, has caused a stir to which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, declared a national pandemic. “The virus originated in bats and was transmitted to humans through yet unknown intermediary animals in Wuhan, Hubei province, China in December 2019 (Singhal, 2020).” This infectious disease attacks the elderly age group, however, that does not mean young adults are not able to contract the disease as well. Some symptoms noted include shortness of breath, high fever, dry cough, as well as sore throat among others.

Ever since the current administration took office in 2016, “political polarization has generated intense partisan conflict with respect to the vertical balance of power between states and the federal government (Greg, et al, 2019).” What this means is that states and the federal government have been in conflict because of the lack of balance of power. We have seen our current administration have too much control, or not care enough about the responsibilities they have. This leaves the states having to take control without much help from the federal government. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen states take more control than the federal government has. This again is because our administration lacks the proper advisors who would be able to help guide the president into a better situation for the American people. We have seen states take charge of what they think is best for the community in order to keep them safe. On May 13, 2020, Nevada’s governor, Steve Sisolak, stated “while we

appreciate the additional assistance from the federal government ... the state is now in a position where it will be forced to make very difficult decisions (Gov. Sisolak Declares State of Fiscal Emergency Due to COVID19 Pandemic)." This goes to show that Governor Sisolak will be making decisions that he thinks will be beneficial to the state of Nevada and its people.

It's unfortunate that people still do not have enough information about COVID-19. As the richest country in the world, the fact that we have not funded extensive research to be done is quite disappointing and one of the reasons Americans are struggling and losing their lives. The Hill reported that "Trump was warned early and often about the dangers of COVID-19: by the NSC in early January and by trade advisor Peter Navarro on Jan. 29. When Secretary Alex Azar tried to prompt the president into taking stronger action in late January, he was dismissed as "alarmist." (Schanzer, 2020)." It is crazy to think that this outbreak could have been easily prevented but instead, the American people had to take the hit of losing their jobs and financially struggle. We were informed about COVID-19 in December of 2019. If our current administration took the advice given to them seriously and declared the nation to go on lockdown and quarantine in January - the latest February, I do not think we would be in the situation we are currently in. It took over three months for the United States to declare a national state of emergency and for the federal government to take initiative for COVID-19. March 13th, 2020, we finally heard a "declaration of a national emergency, finally [seeing] the federal government fully engage in its efforts to hasten mass testing, improve the availability of medical supplies, and encourage all Americans to radically alter their behavior in order to arrest the spread of the virus (Wallach, Philip A., and Justus Myers., 2020)." The spread of viruses is inevitable and it was expected to reach the United States at some point. However, lack of research and knowledge

about this virus and seriousness taken is what caused the American people to struggle immensely as well as a declining economy.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, I believe that we have entered a different stage of federalism, that is, reverting back to cooperative federalism. I believe we have reverted back to cooperative federalism because the federal and state governments are going back and forth to work together and balancing out their use of powers. The federal government had quite a few failures in the judgment and actions taken to prevent this outbreak and help reduce the spread of the virus. Due to this, state governments have had to come into action in order to implement rules and regulations for states in order to help reduce the number of the virus spreading. States have had to take on the role to make decisions that have to include “use of robust social distancing measures, such as school closures or the cancellation of public meetings (Parmet, Wendy E., et al., 2020).” Parmet, Sinha (2020) article, *Covid-19 — The Law and Limits of Quarantin*, talks about how flattening the curve of the people infected by the disease will be a challenge. Because finding tests are already so difficult, this makes it harder for civilians to know whether or not they have been infected and how likely they are to infect others without the possibility of knowing.

COVID-19 has personally affected my family and me, just like millions of Americans throughout the nation. My father, who is the sole provider for my family and me, was unexpectedly laid off. On March 17th, Governor Sisolak stated “ ... Nevada’s top medical experts ... advised that the most effective course of action is to direct all Nevadans to stay home and for all nonessential businesses to close to the public for 30 days (Governor Sisolak Announces COVID-19).” All non-essential businesses had closed down abruptly, including

Treasure Island Hotel & Casino, where my father is employed, making it difficult to figure out a source of income. Though I think our governor made a decision that was absolutely necessary, I do wish our government had provided resources beforehand, that way we had a smoother transition. The fear and panic of a virus spreading was enough on its own, however, people losing their jobs suddenly became too much to handle at one point. I work at In-N-Out Burger and had to continue going to work, despite my beliefs of the fast-food restaurant not being “essential”. Though I am grateful to still be working, I have felt extremely unsafe going into work and surrounding myself with coworkers whom I have no idea who they are associating with and strangers that don’t know whether or not they have contracted the disease or not. I understand that no one was prepared for this at all, and it clearly shows, however, I think certain things could’ve been done differently to give reassurance to the people of Nevada. The only positive outcome I’ve noticed from this pandemic is how active people have become. I see people outside more than I ever had in the year 2019. I don’t recall seeing such a huge amount of people riding their bikes, going on a jog, or being active with their little children, but it is definitely refreshing to see.

The future of what this pandemic will lead us to is quite uncertain. I don’t think things will go back to “normal” anymore after we endure this pandemic globally. Meeting new people, having interactions, giving a stranger a handshake, will be more thought about, and different. What is concerning to me is how states are rushing to make things normal again and lift their lockdown restrictions. I understand people want to go back to work, get out of their houses, and go back to their old daily routines. However, during the fall, which happens to be flu season, I fear we will have this issue once again. STAT news asked experts what they believed the future

will be regarding COVID-19, to which they stated that “while the new coronavirus might settle down and simply cause colds like the other four human coronaviruses already in circulation, it was more likely to return year after year like seasonal flu, causing illnesses much more serious than sniffles (Begley, Sharon, et al., 2020).” This goes to show that we just don’t have enough information about COVID-19. Though we have more than we did at the start of this outbreak, we don’t have enough to determine what the foreseeable future looks like. One can only hope that things will get better sooner than later.

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