

Divided states: a dynamic federalism perspective

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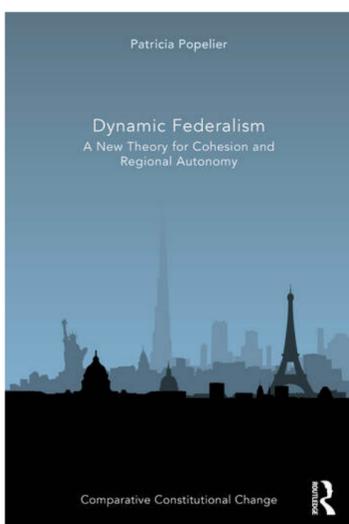


Traditional federal theory is anchored on old-time models of coming-together federations. As a result, it pays little attention to the challenges of contemporary multi-tiered systems, which are often multinational falling-apart systems that do not meet the strict criteria for the so-called ‘mature’ federations outlined in traditional theory.

Dynamic federalism brings a new theory that includes all types of multi-tiered systems in search of a specific,

constitutionally embedded but continuously contested balance between autonomy of the subnational entities and integrity of the entire country. This offers more alternatives for institutional engineering that fits the characteristics of a particular society, and new perspectives to find patterns and dynamics specific to different types of multitiered societies.

In this lecture, the theory will be explained with specific references to two ‘divided’ multinational systems: Spain and Belgium.



Patricia Popelier is full professor at the law faculty of the University of Antwerp and director of the research group of government and law. She is also senior research fellow at the University of Kent, Centre for Federal Studies, and co-promoter of the Centre of Excellence GOVTRUST. Her main research topics are federalism and multilevel governance, constitutional review, legislative studies, and issues of legitimacy and legal certainty. She is the author of more than 300 publications in the field of public law, including the monograph [Federal Dynamics. A New Theory of Regional Authority and Cohesion](#) (Routledge 2021).

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