



EDITED COLLECTION

Convergence and Divergence: The Shifting Dynamics of Comparative Law

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Preface

Comparative law today is no longer confined to the simple identification of similarities and differences between legal systems. It has become a vital method of understanding how societies respond to shared constitutional, institutional, and human concerns through distinct legal traditions. The present volume, *Convergence and Divergence: The Shifting Dynamics of Comparative Law*, is conceived in that spirit.

The essays collected in this edited work reflect a wide and intellectually rich range of comparative inquiry. Across the chapters, contributors engage with constitutionalism, judicial review, federalism, rule of law, delegated legislation, vigilance institutions, anti-corruption frameworks, victim rights, domestic violence, workplace harassment, hate speech, hate crimes, racial discrimination, anti-money laundering, cybercrime, and institutional accountability. The jurisdictions examined include India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Brazil, and South Korea, among others. Together, these studies demonstrate that comparative law is not merely about observing foreign legal systems, but about critically evaluating how law travels, adapts, resists, and transforms in different constitutional and social settings.

A central theme running through this volume is the tension between convergence and divergence. On the one hand, legal systems across the world increasingly confront common pressures arising from globalisation, migration, technology, democratic backsliding, financial regulation, gender justice, minority protection, and human rights. This often leads to convergence in legal reasoning, institutional design, and normative aspiration. On the other hand, each jurisdiction continues to respond through its own constitutional text, political culture, historical experience, and institutional structure. It is this simultaneous movement towards commonality and difference that gives comparative law its contemporary vitality.

The contributions in this volume are especially significant because they come from a generation of legal scholars attentive not only to doctrine, but also to

context. The chapters do not treat law as an abstract system detached from society. Rather, they show how law operates within conditions of inequality, identity, institutional power, and lived experience. Questions of dignity, liberty, accountability, substantive equality, access to justice, and democratic legitimacy recur throughout the book, giving the collection a coherence that extends beyond jurisdictional comparison alone.

This volume also reflects the growing importance of comparative legal method in legal education and research. In an era where constitutional courts cite foreign precedents, legislatures borrow regulatory models, and transnational norms shape domestic jurisprudence, comparative analysis is no longer optional. It has become indispensable to understanding both one's own legal system and the wider legal world. Yet comparison must be approached with care. A rule or doctrine cannot be understood apart from the institutional and historical setting in which it functions. The chapters in this book therefore encourage a form of comparison that is critical, contextual, and sensitive to legal culture.

We hope that this collection will be of value to scholars, teachers, students, practitioners, and researchers interested in comparative public law, comparative constitutionalism, criminal justice, and evolving questions of governance. It is intended not only as an academic contribution but also as an invitation to think more deeply about the role of law in shaping just, plural, and accountable societies.

We place on record our sincere appreciation to all contributors whose chapters have enriched this volume through careful research and thoughtful comparative engagement. We also acknowledge the institutional environment of CMR School of Legal Studies, CMR University, for fostering research in contemporary and comparative legal studies. It is our hope that this book will stimulate further dialogue, research, and reflection in the field of comparative law.

Prof. (Dr.) V.J. Praneshwaran
Dr. Seema Surendran
Ms. Nirmala R. Harish
Editors

About the Volume

Convergence and Divergence: The Shifting Dynamics of Comparative Law is an edited collection that examines contemporary legal questions through comparative analysis across multiple jurisdictions and legal traditions. The volume brings together contributions that engage with constitutional law, criminal justice, administrative law, human rights, anti-discrimination law, gender justice, institutional accountability, federalism, judicial review, rule of law, and financial regulation.

The chapters in this volume compare legal responses in India with those of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, and other jurisdictions. They address themes such as judicial review, constitutionalism, victims' rights, domestic violence, racial discrimination, hate speech, hate crimes, workplace harassment, anti-money laundering, cybercrime, delegated legislation, vigilance institutions, anti-corruption mechanisms, and the role of constitutional courts in preserving democratic governance.

Taken together, the essays reflect the dual movement of convergence and divergence that defines modern comparative law. Legal systems increasingly face common pressures arising from globalisation, technology, human rights discourse, democratic transformation, and social justice claims. Yet the legal solutions adopted in different jurisdictions remain shaped by local constitutional structures, historical experience, social realities, and institutional design. This volume therefore treats comparative law not as a simple catalogue of similarities and differences, but as a critical method for understanding how law evolves across jurisdictions.

The work is intended for scholars, researchers, practitioners, teachers, and advanced students who are interested in comparative constitutional law, comparative public law, and comparative criminal justice. It aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how different legal systems respond to shared challenges while preserving their distinctive normative and institutional identities.

Acknowledgement

The editors place on record their sincere gratitude to all the contributors whose research, effort, and academic commitment have made this volume possible. Each chapter in this collection reflects careful comparative inquiry and a serious engagement with contemporary legal issues across jurisdictions.

We express our deep appreciation to CMR School of Legal Studies, CMR University, for providing a stimulating academic environment that encourages research, writing, and comparative legal scholarship. The institutional support extended to faculty and students has been invaluable in shaping this work.

We also acknowledge the encouragement extended by colleagues, mentors, and well-wishers who have supported this editorial project at various stages. Our thanks are due to the publisher, Magestic Technology Solutions (P) Ltd., for bringing this volume into publication.

Finally, we thank all readers, researchers, and students who continue to engage with comparative law as a living and evolving discipline. It is our hope that this volume will contribute meaningfully to legal scholarship and inspire further study in the field.

Prof. (Dr.) V.J. Praneshwaran
Dr. Seema Surendran
Ms. Nirmala R. Harish
Editors

Glossary

Administrative Discretion The authority granted to administrative or executive officials to make decisions within the limits prescribed by law.

Adversarial System A system of criminal justice in which the prosecution and defence present their cases before an impartial judge, and the court acts as a neutral adjudicator.

Affirmative Action Legal or policy measures intended to improve opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups through targeted support or representation.

Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Laws, procedures, and institutional mechanisms designed to prevent, detect, and punish the laundering of illegally obtained money.

Basic Structure Doctrine A constitutional principle developed by the Supreme Court of India holding that Parliament cannot amend the essential features of the Constitution.

Bias A lack of impartiality or fairness in decision-making, whether actual, apparent, personal, pecuniary, or institutional.

Bill of Rights A formal constitutional or legal statement of fundamental rights and liberties guaranteed to individuals.

Colour-Blind Constitutionalism A theory that law should disregard race entirely and treat all individuals without any race-conscious distinctions.

Comparative Law The study of legal systems, doctrines, institutions, and methods across different jurisdictions in order to understand similarities, differences, and legal development.

Constitution The fundamental law of a State that establishes the structure of government, distribution of power, and basic rights of citizens.

Constitutionalism The principle that government authority must be limited by law and exercised in accordance with constitutional norms.

Cooperative Federalism A form of federalism in which different levels of government work together through shared institutions, coordinated policies, and financial arrangements.

Cybercrime Criminal activity involving computers, digital systems, networks, or cyberspace.

Delegated Legislation Rules, regulations, orders, or notifications made by the executive or administrative authorities under authority conferred by a parent statute.

Direct Discrimination Unequal treatment of a person explicitly on a prohibited ground such as race, religion, sex, caste, or ethnicity.

Due Process A legal principle requiring fairness, reasonableness, and procedural justice in the exercise of State power.

Equality Before Law The principle that all persons are subject to the same law and entitled to equal legal protection.

Equity A principle of fairness and justice used to supplement strict legal rules where necessary.

Federalism A system of government in which powers are divided between a central authority and regional units such as states or provinces.

Fundamental Rights Basic rights guaranteed by a constitution and enforceable against the State.

Hate Crime A criminal act motivated wholly or partly by prejudice against a person or group on the basis of identity, such as race, religion, caste, gender, or sexual orientation.

Hate Speech Expression that promotes, incites, or justifies hatred, discrimination, or violence against individuals or groups on protected grounds.

Human Dignity The inherent worth of every individual, recognised as a foundational constitutional and human rights value.

Indirect Discrimination A seemingly neutral law, rule, or practice that disproportionately disadvantages a particular group.

Inquisitorial System A system of criminal procedure in which judges play an active role in investigating facts and questioning witnesses.

Judicial Activism A judicial approach marked by a broad and assertive interpretation of the Constitution or law, often to protect rights or address institutional failure.

Judicial Independence The freedom of judges and courts to decide cases impartially without interference from the executive, legislature, or external pressures.

Judicial Review The power of courts to examine the legality or constitutionality of legislative and executive actions.

Jurisdiction The legal authority of a court or institution to hear and decide a matter.

Lokpal The national anti-corruption ombudsman established in India to investigate complaints against public officials.

Lokayukta A State-level anti-corruption ombudsman in India.

Money Laundering The process of concealing the illegal origin of money and making it appear legitimate.

Natural Justice Fundamental procedural principles of fairness, especially the right to be heard and the rule against bias.

Non-Arbitrariness The constitutional requirement that State action must not be irrational, unfair, or based on whim.

Partie Civile A French legal mechanism that allows a victim to participate in criminal proceedings as a civil party and seek compensation.

Parliamentary Sovereignty The principle, traditionally associated with the United Kingdom, that Parliament is the supreme law-making authority.

Procedural Fairness The requirement that decisions affecting rights or interests must be made through fair process.

Proportionality A standard of judicial review requiring that State action be suitable, necessary, and balanced in relation to the objective pursued.

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) A legal action brought to protect public rights or the rights of disadvantaged groups, often with relaxed rules of standing.

Race-Conscious Measures Legal or policy measures that explicitly take account of race or similar identity markers to remedy structural inequality.

Racial Discrimination Unequal or prejudicial treatment based on race, colour, descent, or ethnic origin.

Reasonable Restrictions Constitutionally permitted limits placed on rights in the interest of public order, morality, security, or other legitimate grounds.

Reservation A system of constitutionally permitted affirmative action in India providing representation to historically disadvantaged groups in education, employment, and legislatures.

Restorative Justice An approach to justice that seeks to repair harm by focusing on victims, offenders, and the broader community.

Rule of Law The principle that all persons and institutions, including the government, are subject to law.

Separation of Powers The constitutional distribution of legislative, executive, and judicial powers among different branches of government.

Shared Household Under domestic violence law, a household in which the aggrieved person lives or has lived in a domestic relationship.

Substantive Equality An approach to equality that seeks to address structural disadvantage and achieve real, not merely formal, fairness.

Transformative Constitutionalism The idea that the Constitution is an instrument for social change and the dismantling of entrenched injustice.

Ultra Vires A doctrine meaning “beyond powers,” used when a public authority acts outside the authority granted by law.

Vigilance Administrative oversight aimed at preventing corruption, misuse of authority, and misconduct in public office.

Victim Compensation Financial relief provided to victims of crime either by the offender, the State, or a statutory compensation mechanism.

Wednesbury Unreasonableness A traditional English standard of judicial review under which a decision may be struck down if it is so unreasonable that no reasonable authority could have made it.

Writ Jurisdiction The constitutional power of higher courts to issue writs such as habeas corpus, mandamus, certiorari, prohibition, and quo warranto.

List of Abbreviations

AC Appeal Cases

ACAS Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service

ADJR Act Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act

ADR Alternative Dispute Resolution

AI Artificial Intelligence

AML Anti-Money Laundering

Art. Article

Arts. Articles

BNS Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023

BNSS Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

BSA Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023

CBI Central Bureau of Investigation

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CERD Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

CJI Chief Justice of India

CPIB Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau

CrPC Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973

CVRA Crime Victims' Rights Act

CVC Central Vigilance Commission

CVO Chief Vigilance Officer

DPSP Directive Principles of State Policy

DOJ Department of Justice

DPDP Act Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

ED Enforcement Directorate

ECHR European Convention on Human Rights

ECtHR European Court of Human Rights

EEOC Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

ET Employment Tribunal

FATF Financial Action Task Force

FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation

FGTI Fonds de Garantie des Victimes des actes de Terrorisme et d'autres Infractions

FIU-IND Financial Intelligence Unit-India

GST Goods and Services Tax

HRA Human Rights Act, 1998

ICC Internal Complaints Committee

ICERD International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

ICRW International Centre for Research on Women

ICT Information and Communication Technology

ILO International Labour Organization

IPC Indian Penal Code, 1860

IRS Internal Revenue Service

IT Act Information Technology Act, 2000

IT Rules Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021

JIVAT Service d'Aide au Recouvrement des Victimes d'Infractions

LL.B. Bachelor of Laws

LL.M. Master of Laws

MLAT Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty

NCRB National Crime Records Bureau

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NIA National Investigation Agency

NITI National Institution for Transforming India

NSS National Security Strategy

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PC Act Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

PDF Portable Document Format

PIDPI Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers

PIL Public Interest Litigation

PMLA Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002

POSH Act Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

PWDVA Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

RBI Reserve Bank of India

SARVI Service d'Aide au Recouvrement des Victimes d'Infractions

SAR Suspicious Activity Report
SCC Supreme Court Cases
SC Scheduled Castes
ST Scheduled Tribes
UGC University Grants Commission
UK United Kingdom
UN United Nations
UNGA United Nations General Assembly
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USA United States of America
US United States
VAWA Violence Against Women Act
VIS Victim Impact Statement
WTO World Trade Organization

About the Editors



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Prof. (Dr.) V.J. Praneshwaran graduated in Law and then completed LL.M. in Constitutional Law, M.Phil in Law, and Ph.D from Bangalore University. After obtaining significant experience in practicing law, he decided to pursue his passion in teaching.

With core experience in practicing Law, Client Counselling, and Teaching, his lustrous experience spans over 23 years. His Ph.D thesis titled “A Study of Laws Relating to Armed Forces and the Protection of Human Rights in India” reflects his understanding of the need for equal treatment and respect for human rights in disciplined organizations like the Indian Armed Forces.

A core nationalist, he has consistently contributed to nation building by imparting, organizing, and encouraging legal literacy, education, and legal awareness initiatives at various levels. He also serves as a patron in Legal Aid Trust, a registered NGO.



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She has served as a resource person for legal workshops and has presented and published various articles and book chapters in reputed journals.

How to Use This Edited Book

This edited volume is designed to be read in more than one way. Readers may move through the book sequentially, following the broader development of comparative themes across chapters, or they may consult individual chapters independently depending on their research interest.

The volume brings together contributions from different areas of law, including constitutional law, criminal justice, administrative law, anti-discrimination law, gender justice, institutional accountability, and comparative public law. Since each chapter addresses a distinct theme and jurisdictional comparison, the book may be used both as a complete academic collection and as a subject-based reference work.

For students, the book may be used to understand how comparative legal reasoning operates across different jurisdictions and legal traditions. For researchers and scholars, it offers chapter-specific analyses that may be consulted for doctrinal study, comparative methodology, and further research. For teachers and practitioners, the essays may serve as accessible comparative readings on focused legal issues.

Readers are encouraged to use the table of contents to identify thematic areas of interest. Each chapter is self-contained in structure and may be read independently. At the same time, when read together, the chapters reveal broader patterns of convergence and divergence in the development of legal systems.

This volume is therefore intended not merely as a compilation of separate essays, but as a comparative legal resource that may be used flexibly for study, teaching, reference, and advanced academic engagement.

CONTENTS

Preface	iii
About the Volume	v
Acknowledgement	vi
Glossary	vii
List of Abbreviations	xii
How to Use This Edited Book	xix
1 A Comparative Study of American Dual Federalism and Canadian Constitutional Asymmetry	1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 The U.S. Model: Protecting State Power	3
1.3 The Anti-Commandeering Doctrine: <i>Printz v. United States</i>	3
1.4 The Canadian Model: Provincial Growth	4
1.5 The Labor Conventions Case and International Obligations	5
1.6 Division of Powers: Comparative Jurisdictional Lists	5
1.7 Quebec's unique status is expressed through several specialized arrangements	7
1.8 Rules for Staying (or Leaving) the Union	8
1.9 The Four Pillars of the Canadian Constitution	8
1.10 Comparative Methodology: Functionalism and Bricolage	9
References	10
2 Majoritarianism vs. Constitutionalism: A Comparative Analysis in Modern Democratic Constitutions	13
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Theoretical Framework	15
2.2.1 Majoritarianism	15
2.2.2 Constitutionalism	15

2.2.3	The Central Tension	16
2.3	India: The Basic Structure Doctrine	17
2.3.1	Constitutional Architecture	17
2.3.2	Origin and Content of the Doctrine	17
2.3.3	Evaluative Assessment	17
2.4	The United States: Judicial Review	18
2.4.1	Constitutional Architecture	18
2.4.2	Judicial Review: Foundation and Scope	18
2.4.3	The Counter-Majoritarian Difficulty	18
2.5	Germany: The Eternity Clause and Militant Democracy	19
2.5.1	Historical Context	19
2.5.2	The Eternity Clause	19
2.5.3	Militant Democracy	19
2.6	Comparative Synthesis	19
2.6.1	Convergence and Divergence	19
2.6.2	Legitimacy of Counter-Majoritarian Institutions	20
2.6.3	Constitutional Resilience Against Democratic Backsliding	20
2.6.4	Constitutionalism and Pluralism	21
2.7	Conclusion	21
3	A Comparative Study on the Adversarial and Inquisitorial Systems of Criminal Justice	24
3.1	Introduction	25
3.2	The Adversarial System of Criminal Justice	26
3.3	The Inquisitorial System of Criminal Justice	27
3.4	Comparative Analysis of the Adversarial and Inquisitorial Systems	28
3.5	The Indian Criminal Justice System: A Mixed Model	30
3.6	Conclusion	31
4	Hate Speech and Constitutional Limits on Freedom of Speech: A Comparative Study of India and USA	35
4.1	Introduction	36
4.2	Theoretical and Historical Foundation	37
4.2.1	Conceptual Framework	37
4.2.2	Historical Context in the USA	37
4.2.3	Historical Context in India	38
4.3	The United States: Robust Protection and Limitations	39

4.3.1	The First Amendment	39
4.3.2	Judicial Exceptions and the Brandenburg Standard	39
4.4	India: Freedom with Reasonable Restrictions	41
4.4.1	The Constitutional Framework	41
4.4.2	Landmark Judicial Rulings	41
4.4.3	Practical Issues and Selective Enforcement	43
4.5	Comparative Analysis	43
4.5.1	Key Differences in Approach	43
4.5.2	Structural and Philosophical Divergence	44
4.5.3	Assessment of Strengths and Threats	44
4.6	Conclusion	45
5	Judicial Review in India and the United States: A Comparative Study	48
5.1	Introduction	49
5.2	Constitutional Foundations of Judicial Review	50
5.2.1	The American Foundation: <i>Marbury v Madison</i> and Implied Power	50
5.2.2	The Indian Foundation: Express Constitutional Provisions	50
5.3	Institutional Design and the Structure of Judicial Review	51
5.3.1	The United States Supreme Court	51
5.3.2	The Supreme Court of India	51
5.4	Doctrinal Evolution: From Text to Principle	52
5.4.1	The Basic Structure Doctrine in India	52
5.4.2	Substantive Due Process and Evolving Standards in America	52
5.5	Scope and Standards of Review	53
5.5.1	Judicial Review of Legislation in the United States	53
5.5.2	Proportionality and Reasonable Restrictions in India	53
5.6	Judicial Activism, Restraint, and Democratic Legitimacy	53
5.7	Comparative Analysis: Convergences and Divergences	54
5.8	Conclusion	55
6	A Comparative Study of Workplace Sexual Harassment Redressal Mechanisms under POSH Act and UK Equality Act	58
6.1	Introduction	59
6.2	Legislative Frameworks	60
6.2.1	India: The POSH Act, 2013	60
6.2.2	United Kingdom: The Equality Act, 2010	60

6.3	Structural Design	61
6.3.1	Constitutional Foundations	61
6.3.2	The Internal Complaints Committee Model	61
6.3.3	The Employment Tribunal Model	62
6.4	Procedural Standards	62
6.4.1	Complaint Procedure and Time Limits	62
6.4.2	Evidentiary Standards and Burden of Proof	63
6.4.3	Remedies Available	63
6.5	Conclusion	63
7	Constitutional Protection of the Right to Trade and Business: A Comparative Study of India and Canada	67
7.1	Introduction: Meaning and Importance of the Right to Trade and Business	68
7.2	Constitutional Protection of Trade and Business in India	69
7.3	Constitutional Protection of Economic Freedom in Canada	70
7.4	Comparative Analysis: India vs Canada	71
7.5	Conclusion	72
8	Cyber Crime and Challenges to Criminal Investigation	75
8.1	Introduction	76
8.2	History of Cybercrime	76
8.3	Kinds of Cybercrime	77
8.3.1	Theft through Cyberspace	77
8.3.2	Cyberbullying	77
8.3.3	Malware	77
8.3.4	Phishing	77
8.3.5	Internet Extortion and Ransomware	78
8.3.6	Cryptojacking	78
8.3.7	Cyber Spying, Spyware, and Adware	78
8.3.8	Botnets	78
8.3.9	Dating Fraud and Hacking	79
8.4	Challenges in Cybercrime Investigation	79
8.4.1	Restricted Data Access	79
8.4.2	Location Challenge	79
8.4.3	Inconsistency of Legal Systems	79
8.4.4	Non-Cooperation by Private Entities	80

8.4.5	Complexity of Technology	80
8.4.6	Lack of Technical Expertise	80
8.4.7	Training Deficiencies	80
8.5	Legal and Regulatory Framework for Cybercrime	80
8.5.1	Information Technology Act, 2000	80
8.5.2	Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023	81
8.5.3	Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021	81
8.5.4	Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023	82
8.5.5	Other Relevant Statutes and Institutions	82
8.6	Case Analysis	82
8.6.1	<i>Shreya Singhal v Union of India</i> (2015)	82
8.6.2	<i>Aaradhya Bachchan v Bollywood Times</i> (2023)	83
8.7	Conclusion	83
9	Abuse of Public Office and White Collar Crime: A Study of Corruption in Public Administration	86
9.1	Introduction	87
9.2	Meaning and Definition of White Collar Crime	87
9.3	Types of Corruption in Public Administration	89
9.3.1	Bribery	89
9.3.2	Nepotism	89
9.3.3	Embezzlement	89
9.3.4	Misuse of Authority	89
9.4	Leading White Collar Crime Cases	90
9.4.1	Jain Hawala Scandal — India	90
9.4.2	Operation Car Wash — Brazil	90
9.4.3	Siemens Bribery Scandal — Germany	91
9.4.4	Corruption Scandal of Park Geun-hye	91
9.5	Impact on Governance, Economy, and Public Trust with Reference to Corruption in Public Office	92
9.5.1	Impact on Governance	92
9.5.2	Impact on the Economy	92
9.5.3	Impact on Public Trust	93
9.6	Conclusion	93

10	A Comparative Study of Federalism and Cooperative Federalism in India and USA	96
10.1	Introduction	97
10.2	Federalism and Cooperative Federalism	97
10.2.1	Federalism and Dual Federalism	97
10.2.2	Cooperative Federalism	98
10.3	The Constitutional Foundations of Federalism in India and the USA	99
10.3.1	United States: Constitutional Foundations	99
10.3.2	India: Constitutional Developments	99
10.4	Legislative Powers	100
10.5	Indian Supreme Court and Federalism	100
10.6	Institutionalised Forms of Cooperative Federalism	101
10.6.1	India: GST Council and Other Forums	101
10.6.2	United States: Grants, Programmes and Agencies	101
10.7	Disasters, State Politics and Federal Response	102
10.8	Democratic Accountability and State Autonomy	102
10.9	Comparative Observations	103
10.10	Conclusion	103
11	Victims' Rights and Constitutional Protection: An Analysis of India and the United Kingdom	106
11.1	Introduction	107
11.2	Theoretical Background of Rights of Victims	107
11.2.1	Procedural Marginalisation and the Adversarial System	107
11.2.2	Constitutional Values: Dignity, Fairness and Access to Justice	108
11.2.3	Striking a Balance Between Fair Trial Rights and Victim Protection	108
11.3	The Legal Landscape of Victimology in India	109
11.3.1	Court Recognition of Victims' Rights	109
11.3.2	Victim Rights under BNSS 2023	109
11.3.3	Structural and Implementation Problems	110
11.4	The Rights of Victims in the United Kingdom	110
11.4.1	Constitutional Structure and Parliamentary Sovereignty	110
11.4.2	The Human Rights Act 1998	111
11.4.3	Judicial Recognition of State Responsibility	111
11.4.4	Legislative Evolution: Victims and Prisoners Act 2024	112
11.5	Comparative Constitutional Analysis	112

11.5.1	Judicial Development and Legislative Structuring	112
11.5.2	Participation, Compensation and Enforcement	113
11.5.3	Towards a Constitutionally Balanced Model	114
11.6	Conclusion	114
12	Judicial Review as a Safeguard of Constitutionalism in India and United States	117
12.1	Introduction	118
12.2	Meaning and Scope of Judicial Review	119
12.2.1	Judicial Review as a Constitutional Mechanism	119
12.3	Concept of Constitutionalism	119
12.3.1	Meaning of Constitutionalism	119
12.3.2	Core Elements of Constitutionalism	120
12.3.3	Relationship Between Judicial Review and Constitutionalism	120
12.3.4	Supremacy of the Constitution	120
12.4	Development of Judicial Review	120
12.4.1	Origin of Judicial Review in the United States	120
12.4.2	<i>Marbury v Madison</i> (1803)	121
12.4.3	Development of Judicial Review in India	121
12.5	Judicial Review in the United States	121
12.5.1	Constitutional Basis of Judicial Review	121
12.5.2	Role of the U.S. Supreme Court	122
12.5.3	Judicial Review of Legislative and Executive Actions	122
12.5.4	Case Studies	122
12.5.4.1	<i>Brown v Board of Education</i> (1954)	122
12.5.4.2	<i>Roe v Wade</i> (1973)	123
12.5.4.3	<i>United States v Nixon</i> (1974)	123
12.6	Judicial Review in India	123
12.6.1	Constitutional Provisions Relating to Judicial Review	123
12.6.2	Role of the Supreme Court and High Courts	123
12.6.3	Judicial Review of Administrative Actions	124
12.6.4	Constitutional Amendments and the Basic Structure Doctrine	124
12.6.5	Public Interest Litigation as a Tool of Judicial Review	124
12.6.6	Case Studies	125
12.6.6.1	<i>Shankari Prasad v Union of India</i> (1951)	125
12.6.6.2	<i>Golaknath v State of Punjab</i> (1967)	125
12.6.6.3	<i>Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala</i> (1973)	125
12.7	Judicial Review as a Safeguard of Constitutionalism	125

12.8	Comparative Analysis: India and the United States	126
12.9	Challenges and Criticism of Judicial Review	127
12.9.1	Judicial Overreach	127
12.9.2	Delay and Case Backlog	127
12.9.3	Conflict with Popular Sovereignty	127
12.10	Conclusion	127
13	Role of Victims in Criminal Justice System: Comparative Analysis of India and USA	130
13.1	Introduction	131
13.2	Constitutional and Statutory Framework	132
13.2.1	The United States Statutory Framework	132
13.2.2	The Indian Constitutional and Statutory Framework	133
13.3	The Investigation and Prosecution Procedure	133
13.3.1	Informational Rights and Transparency	134
13.3.2	Interaction with the Prosecutor	134
13.4	The Trial Procedure	135
13.4.1	Procedural Framework and the Right to be Heard	135
13.4.2	The Role of Private Counsel	135
13.5	The Victim Impact Statement (VIS)	136
13.5.1	Institutionalisation in the United States	136
13.5.2	Judicial Developments in India	136
13.6	Victim's Involvement in Bail Hearings and Plea Bargaining	137
13.6.1	Bail Hearings	137
13.6.2	Plea Bargaining	137
13.7	Compensation and Restitution	138
13.7.1	The United States	138
13.7.2	India	138
13.8	Conclusion	139
14	Rule of Law as a Constitutional Principle: Germany's Rechtsstaat and India's Basic Structure Doctrine	143
14.1	Introduction	144
14.2	Historical Development of Rechtsstaat in Germany	144
14.3	Post-1945 Reinvention in the Basic Law	145
14.4	Federal Constitutional Court Role	146
14.5	Development of the Basic Structure Theory in India	146

14.5.1	Pre-Doctrine Context	146
14.5.2	Innovative Judicial Practices and Their Role in Evolution	147
14.6	Conceptual Study: Common Features in the Embodiment of the Rule of Law	147
14.6.1	Common Tenets	147
14.6.2	Theoretical Foundations	148
14.7	Comparative Applications of Judicial Intervention, Executive and Legislative Checks	148
14.7.1	Comparison: Stasis of Codification versus Dynamics of Intervention	149
14.8	Conclusion	149
15	Role of Vigilance Agencies: A Study of Commission in India	152
15.1	Introduction	153
15.2	Historical Evolution of Vigilance Institutions in India	154
15.3	Concept and Meaning of Vigilance in Public Administration	155
15.4	Legal Framework Governing Vigilance Agencies in India	157
15.5	Structure, Powers and Functions of the Central Vigilance Commission	158
15.5.1	Composition and Appointment	158
15.5.2	Powers and Functions	158
15.5.3	Advisory Role in Disciplinary Proceedings	159
15.5.4	Role in Preventive Vigilance	159
15.5.5	Relationship with Chief Vigilance Officers	159
15.5.6	Assessment of Institutional Role	159
15.6	Judicial Development on Vigilance Agencies	159
15.6.1	<i>Vineet Narain v Union of India</i> (1997)	160
15.6.2	<i>E.P. Royappa v State of Tamil Nadu</i> (1974)	160
15.6.3	<i>Manoj Narula v Union of India</i> (2014)	160
15.6.4	<i>Subramanian Swamy v Director, CBI</i> (2014)	160
15.6.5	<i>Subramanian Swamy v Manmohan Singh</i> (2012)	161
15.6.6	<i>Centre for Public Interest Litigation v Union of India</i> (2011)	161
15.6.7	The Alok Verma CBI Crisis (2018–19)	161
15.7	Challenges in Vigilance Administration	161
15.7.1	Advisory Power Only	161
15.7.2	Dependence on CBI and CVOs	162
15.7.3	Sanction-for-Prosecution Delays	162
15.7.4	Understaffing and Overload	162

15.7.5	Limited Independence and Public Perception	162
15.7.6	Overlapping Agencies and Institutional Confusion	162
15.7.7	Weak Whistleblower Protection	163
15.8	Comparative Perspective	163
15.9	Conclusion	164
16	Administrative Discretion and Application of Natural Justice: A Comparative Study of United Kingdom and Australia	167
16.1	Introduction	168
16.2	Origin and Development of the Principles of Natural Justice and Administrative Discretion	169
16.3	Core Principles of Natural Justice in Administrative Law	169
16.3.1	Rule Against Bias: <i>Nemo Judex in Causa Sua</i>	170
16.3.2	Right to Fair Hearing: <i>Audi Alteram Partem</i>	170
16.4	Administrative Discretion and Natural Justice in the United Kingdom	171
16.4.1	<i>Ridge v Baldwin</i>	171
16.4.2	<i>Padfield v Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food</i>	171
16.4.3	<i>Council of Civil Service Unions v Minister for the Civil Service</i> (GCHQ case)	172
16.4.4	<i>Chief Constable of North Wales Police v Evans</i>	172
16.5	Administrative Discretion and Natural Justice in Australia	172
16.5.1	Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977	173
16.5.2	<i>Kioa v West</i>	173
16.5.3	<i>Minister for Aboriginal Affairs v Peko-Wallsend Ltd</i>	173
16.5.4	<i>Annetts v McCann</i>	173
16.5.5	<i>Plaintiff S10/2011 v Minister for Immigration and Citizenship</i>	174
16.6	Comparative Analysis of Administrative Discretion and Natural Justice in the United Kingdom and Australia	174
16.7	Conclusion	175
17	Lokpal and Lokayukta in India: Effectiveness and Challenges	178
17.1	Introduction	179
17.2	Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013	179
17.2.1	Composition of the Lokpal	180
17.2.2	Appointment of the Lokpal	180
17.2.3	Jurisdiction and Powers	180
17.2.4	Lokayuktas at the State Level	181

17.3	Powers and Functions of the Lokpal	181
17.4	Powers and Functions of Lokayuktas	182
17.5	Procedure for Filing Complaints and Investigation	182
17.5.1	Filing of Complaints	182
17.5.2	Preliminary Inquiry	183
17.5.3	Investigation	183
17.6	Importance of Lokpal and Lokayuktas in Promoting Good Governance	183
17.7	Effectiveness of Lokpal in India	184
17.8	Effectiveness of Lokayuktas at the State Level	184
17.9	Impact on Transparency and Public Accountability	185
17.10	Major Challenges Faced by Lokpal and Lokayuktas	185
17.10.1	Delay in Implementation	185
17.10.2	Overlapping Jurisdiction	185
17.10.3	Limited Enforcement Powers	186
17.10.4	Variations in State Lokayukta Laws	186
17.10.5	Resource and Capacity Constraints	186
17.11	Recommendations for Strengthening the Lokpal and Lokayukta System	186
17.11.1	Strengthening Institutional Independence	186
17.11.2	Improving Coordination with Other Agencies	187
17.11.3	Strengthening Powers of Lokayuktas	187
17.11.4	Providing Adequate Resources	187
17.11.5	Promoting Public Awareness	187
17.12	Conclusion	187
18	Ink, Irony, and the Cartoonist's Dilemma: Satire vs. Hate Speech under Indian, German, and French Law	191
18.1	What is a Cartoon? Laying the Road to Its Inclination toward Hate	192
18.2	Satire in Cartoons vs. Hate Speech: Where Is the Line?	193
18.3	French Law: Secular Speech and the Sharp Edge of Satire	194
18.4	Germany: Balancing Freedom and Ordnung in the World of Satire	195
18.5	India: The Common Man, Cartoons, and the Balancing of Harmony	196
18.6	Where Should the Pen Stop? Comparative Reflections	197
18.7	Conclusion	198
19	Domestic Violence Against Women in India: Legal and Judicial Perspectives	201

19.1	Introduction	202
19.2	Knowledge on Domestic Violence	202
19.2.1	Forms of Domestic Violence	203
19.2.2	Socio-Cultural Roots	203
19.2.3	Psychological and Societal Effects	203
19.3	Constitutional Safeguards for Domestic Violence Protection	204
19.3.1	Right to Equality	204
19.3.2	Right to Life and Personal Liberty	204
19.3.3	Directive Principles of State Policy	204
19.3.4	Judicial Interpretation	205
19.4	Comprehensive Legal Framework Against Domestic Violence	205
19.5	Judicial Interpretation	206
19.6	Enforcement Challenges	207
19.7	Policy Recommendations	208
19.8	Conclusion	208
20	Legal Framework on Racial Discrimination: An Analysis of India and USA	212
20.1	Introduction	213
20.2	The American Architecture of Equality	214
20.2.1	The Constitutional Bedrock: The Fourteenth Amendment	214
20.2.2	Statutory Evolution: The Civil Rights Act of 1964	214
20.2.3	The Individual vs. The State: The Litigation Model	215
20.2.4	Recent Developments and the Retreat from Race-Conscious Policies	215
20.3	The Indian Model: Remedial Justice and Institutional Accountability	215
20.3.1	Constitutional Mandates: Article 15 and the Philosophy of Substantive Equality	215
20.3.2	The Reservation System: Addressing Lineage-Based Hierarchy	216
20.3.3	The UGC Promotion of Equity Regulations, 2026	216
20.3.4	Mechanisms of Accountability: Squads, Helplines, and Timelines	216
20.4	Comparative Synthesis: The Myth of the Neutral Citizen and the Burden of Lineage	217
20.4.1	Formal vs. Substantive Equality	217
20.4.2	Burden of Proof: Individual Litigation vs. Institutional Accountability	217

20.4.3	The Neutral Citizen vs. The Lineage-Shaped Person	217
20.4.4	Addressing Modern Exclusion	218
20.5	Conclusion: Toward a Humanised Jurisprudence	218
21	Comparative Analysis of Anti-Money Laundering Laws in India and the United States	220
21.1	Introduction	221
21.2	Anti-Money Laundering Laws in India	222
21.3	Enforcement Mechanisms in India	222
21.4	Landmark Money Laundering Cases in India	223
21.5	Anti-Money Laundering Laws in the United States	224
21.6	Enforcement Agencies in the United States	224
21.7	Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Cases	225
21.8	Challenges in Combating Money Laundering	225
21.9	Comparative Analysis	226
21.10	Remedies and Best Practices	226
21.11	The Anti-Money Laundering Glocalization Model	226
21.12	Conclusion	227
22	Comparative Study on the Scope of Judicial Review in India and the UK	230
22.1	Introduction	231
22.2	Historical Evolution	232
22.3	Legal Framework	232
22.4	Setting the Comparative Stage	233
22.5	The Human Rights Act 1998 and Proportionality in the UK	234
22.6	India's Parallel Trajectory: Proportionality Without Statute	234
22.7	Grounds and Scope	235
22.8	Landmark Cases	236
22.8.1	India	236
22.8.2	United Kingdom	236
22.9	Comparative Analysis	237
22.10	Conclusion	237
23	Racial Discrimination as a Violation of the Right to Equality: A Constitutional Perspective	240
23.1	Introduction	241
23.2	The Constitutional Architecture of Equality	241
23.3	Judicial Interpretation	242

23.3.1	The Landmark Case: <i>Karma Dorjee v Union of India</i>	243
23.4	International Standards and Domestic Gaps	244
23.5	The Present Scenario: Structural and Commercial Realities	245
23.5.1	The Housing Crisis	245
23.5.2	The Gig Economy and Algorithmic Bias	245
23.5.3	Institutional Accountability: The UGC Regulations 2026	246
23.6	Conclusion and Suggestions	246
24	A Comparative Analysis of the Victim Compensation in the Criminal Justice System with reference to India and France	249
24.1	Introduction	250
24.2	Theoretical Foundations of Victim Compensation	250
24.2.1	Social Contract theory	251
24.2.2	The Theory of National Solidarity	251
24.2.3	Restorative Justice and Human Dignity	252
24.3	The Indian Regime	252
24.3.1	The Failures of the CrPC,1973	252
24.3.2	The 2008 Amendment and Section 357A	253
24.3.3	The BNSS, 2023	253
24.3.4	The Role of Judicial Activism	254
24.4	The French Regime	254
24.5	The Procedural Agency of the Partie Civile	254
24.6	The Institutional Architecture: FGTI and SARVI	255
24.7	Critical Comparative Analysis	256
24.8	Funding resilience:	256
24.9	Party Status and Compensatory Access	256
24.10	State Subrogation v. Individual Burden	256
24.11	Conclusion and Way Forward	256
25	DELEGATED LEGISLATION AND SEPARATION OF POWER: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIA AND UNITED KINGDOM	260
25.1	Introduction	261
25.2	Meaning of Delegated Legislation	261
25.3	Development of Delegated Legislation in India	263
25.4	Separation of Powers in the Indian Constitutional System	263
25.5	Judicial Interpretation of Delegated Legislation in India	264
25.6	Limits and Control of Delegated Legislation in India	265

25.7	Development of Delegated Legislation in the United Kingdom . . .	265
25.8	Parliamentary Control of Delegated Legislation in the United Kingdom	267
25.9	Judicial Control and the Doctrine of Ultra Vires	268
25.10	Comparative Analysis of India and the United Kingdom	268
25.11	Challenges and Criticism of Delegated Legislation	269
25.12	Safeguards and Control Mechanisms	270
25.13	Conclusion	271
26	Rule of Law In India and United Kingdom: A Comparative Study	274
26.1	INTRODUCTION	274
26.2	ORIGIN	275
26.3	DICEY’S THEORY OF RULE OF LAW	276
26.3.1	Advantage And Disadvantage Of His Concept	276
26.4	RULE OF LAW IN UNITED KINGDOM	277
26.4.1	Parliamentary Sovereignty	277
26.4.2	Legal And Legal Certainty	278
26.4.3	Role Of Judiciary	278
26.5	Majesty’s Treasury v. Mohammed Jabar Ahmed and Others 2010	278
26.6	Council of Civil Service Unions v. Minister for the Civil Service,1984	279
26.7	RULE OF LAW IN INDIA	279
26.7.1	Constitutional Sovereignty	279
26.7.2	Role Of Judiciary	280
26.8	ADM Jabalpur v. Shivkant Shukla (1976)	281
26.9	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS	282
26.10	CONCLUSION	282
27	Constitution and Constitutionalism: A Comparative Perspective on Governance in India and Australia	285
27.1	Introduction	286
27.2	A Comparative Framework for Governance and Constitutional Restraint	286
27.3	The Architecture of Federalism: Centralization vs. Coordination .	286
27.4	India: Asymmetric and Centrally Biased Federalism	287
27.5	Australia: Coordinate and Cooperative Federalism	288
27.6	Frameworks of Rights Protection: Explicit Guarantees vs. Implied Freedoms	289

27.7	The Scope of Judicial Review: Activism vs. Legalism	290
27.8	Conclusion	291
28	The Position of Victims and the Accused in the Criminal Justice System: A Comparative Study of India and The United States	293
28.1	Introduction	293
28.2	Conceptual Framework: Victims And Accused Persons In Criminal Justice System	294
28.2.1	Victims in Criminal Justice System	294
28.2.2	Accused in Criminal Justice System	295
28.3	Need To Balance The Rights Of Victim And Accused Persons	295
28.4	Position Of Victims And Accused In The Criminal Justice System In India	296
28.4.1	Constitutional and Legal Framework	296
28.4.1.1	Rights of the Victims	296
28.4.1.2	Rights of the Accused	296
28.4.2	Role of Judiciary	297
28.4.2.1	Cases Relating to Victims	297
28.4.2.2	Cases Relating to the Accused	297
28.4.3	Limitations of Rights	298
28.5	Position Of Victims And Accused In The Criminal Justice System In The United States	298
28.5.1	Constitutional and Legal Framework	298
28.5.1.1	Rights of the Victims	298
28.5.1.2	Rights of the Accused	299
28.5.2	Role of Judiciary	299
28.5.2.1	Cases Relating to Victims	299
28.5.2.2	Cases Relating to the Accused	300
28.5.3	Limitations of Rights	300
28.6	Comparative Analysis Of India And The United States	301
28.7	Conclusion	301
29	Protecting Women from Domestic Abuse: A Comparative Analysis of India and the United States of America	304
29.1	Introduction	305
29.2	Domestic Violence as a Human Rights Issue and State Responsibility.	306

29.3	Legal Framework in India: Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.	307
29.4	United States of America, Violence Against Women Act, 1994. . .	309
29.5	The PWDVA and the VAWA Comparative Analysis.	310
29.5.1	Legal Approach Nature: Civil Remedies and Institutional Support.	311
29.5.2	Institutional Mechanisms: Protection Officers and Community Response.	311
29.5.3	Federalism and Governmental Systems.	312
29.5.4	Judicial Interpretation and Institutional Results	312
29.6	Conclusion	313
30	The Role of Bill Of Rights and Independent Judiciary in United States and India	316
30.1	Introduction	317
30.2	Conceptual Framework	318
30.2.1	The Nature and Purpose of the Bill of Rights	318
30.2.2	Judicial Independence	318
30.2.3	The Symbiotic Relationship	319
30.3	The United States Model	320
30.3.1	The Application of the Bill of Rights	320
30.3.2	Establishment of Judicial Review	320
30.3.3	Safeguards for Judicial Independence	321
30.4	The Indian Model	321
30.4.1	Fundamental Rights and Constitutional Remedies	321
30.4.2	The Doctrine of Basic Structure	322
30.4.3	Institutional Arrangements for Judicial Independence . . .	322
30.5	Comparative Analysis	323
30.5.1	Text and Structure	323
30.5.2	Scope of Judicial Review and Remedies	323
30.5.3	Safeguards and Pressures on Judicial Independence	324
30.6	Challenges and Prospects	324
30.7	Suggestions	325
30.8	Conclusion	325
31	Criminalising Hatred: A Comparative Study of Hate Crimes in India and the U.S	328
31.1	Introduction	328
31.2	Conceptual Framework and Legal Recognition	330

31.2.1	Recognition of Bias Motivation	330
31.2.2	Protected Categories and Scope	331
31.3	Statutory Provisions and Legal Architecture	332
31.3.1	United States Federal Framework	332
31.3.2	Indian Legal Provisions	333
31.4	Enforcement Mechanisms and Institutional Challenges	334
31.4.1	Police Documentation and Investigation	334
31.4.2	Prosecutorial Discretion and Charging Decisions	335
31.5	Victim Protection and Restorative Dimensions	336
31.5.1	Victim Support Mechanisms	336
31.5.2	Restorative Justice Considerations	337
31.6	Conclusion	338
32	Rule of Law and Judicial Review in Constitutional Democracy: A comparative Study with India, and United States	341
32.1	Introduction	342
32.1.1	Concept and Evolution of the Rule of Law.	343
32.1.2	Concept of Judicial Review	344
32.2	Correlation of Rule of Law and Judicial Review.	344
32.3	Comparison of India, and the United States.	346
32.3.1	The United State: Strong-Form Review and Constitution Supremacy.	346
32.3.2	India: Basic Structure Doctrine and Expansive Review. . .	346
32.4	The attempts to limit Judicial Review in Constitutional Democracies.347	
32.4.1	Separation of Powers	347
32.4.2	Democratic Accountability and Legitimacy.	348
32.5	Empowering the Rule of Law by the Judicial Review.	348
32.6	Conclusion	349
	Closing Note from the Editors	353

A Comparative Study of American Dual Federalism and Canadian Constitutional Asymmetry

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ABSTRACT. This paper offers a comparative legal and political analysis of "True Federalism" showing how the American example of dual federalism is quite different from the Canadian system of a strong executive coexisting with local authorities in decentralized arrangements. Whereas the U. S. Constitution is mainly about giving more power to the states (see the Tenth Amendment) Canada which was originally a very centralized country, has through court decisions become more of a decentralized and cooperative type of federalism. In fact, by studying fiscal independence, methods of resolving jurisdiction conflicts and amendment procedures, the paper finds that "True Federalism" is more of a changing spectrum than a fixed ideal. More importantly, this article contests the U. S. centered viewpoint that a single federalism model exists, arguing that the asymmetric and flexible Canadian solution is better able to accommodate regionalism and multiculturalism in democratic societies that are very diverse and therefore, serves as an excellent model for us all.

KEYWORDS. Constitutional Jurisprudence, Dual Federalism, Division of Powers, Subsidiary, Asymmetric Federalism.

1.1. Introduction

To govern diverse democracies is to manage the paradox of national unity and regional autonomy, which federalism strikes an effective balance in this regard. The United States has been the foremost example of "True Federalism," where dual sovereignty and the strict division of powers prevail; yet, Canada as a lesser-known alternative that is largely different, since executive federalism and constitutional asymmetry constitute Canadian federalism in Canada. This research confronts the U. S. centric viewpoint, among others, by looking at the constitutional origins, judicial interpretations, and practical usage of the functioning of both systems. In-depth examination of major cases, e. g. *Printz v. United States* and *Reference re Secession of Quebec* is utilized in this paper to prove that federalism is not only a theoretical concept but also a changing and living continuum.

What is Federalism?

Whare's federal principle involves splitting powers so that the central and local governments can work independently and as equals, thus maintaining law and order without a unitary hierarchy. The United States followed this pattern most closely, with dual federalism and the Tenth Amendment playing a significant role in the separation of powers. The amendment empowered both state-sovereignty proponents and nationalists, although cooperative federalism later on brought about some overlaps and sharing of responsibilities. Canada is a multinational federal state, giving Quebec an asymmetric status on account of its linguistic and cultural differences from the English-speaking majority of the country.

Key Differences at a Glance

U. S. - Canada federalism divergences: U. S. sovereignty "derives from We the People" whereas Canada's is Crown-in-Parliament; Tenth Amendment saves states' powers while POGG is federal residual; competitive/uncooperative states vs. executive collaboration; the original Constitution is structural in the U. S. whereas the "Living Tree" is a metaphor of evolution in Canada; strong Senate regionalism in the U. S. vs. First Ministers' Conferences in Canada.

How the Two Nations Started

U. S. Constitution 1787 fixed the issues of the Articles that did not give the central government the power to tax, defend or regulate commerce. It did so by establishing federal supremacy in certain enumerated areas (Art. I, s. 8) whilst leaving the states with residual powers (Tenth Amendment), thus limiting the possibility of a central government that could overreach.

1.2. The U.S. Model: Protecting State Power

The principle of "Dual Sovereignty" is a foundation of the American federal structure. It means that the states and the federal government are the two different political capacities and each one is shielded from the other's encroachment. Actually, this dualism is not only a matter of policy preference but also a structural necessity. It has been designed to minimize the risk of tyranny by maintaining a balance of power.

1.3. The Anti-Commandeering Doctrine: *Printz v. United States*

The modern interpretation of American federalism, particularly in the judiciary, hinges greatly on the "anti-commandeering" principle, which acts as a legal barrier against federal intrusion into state matters. It is this principle which was greatly escalated in *Printz v. United States* (1997), where the highest court of the land was tackling the issue of whether the federal government can compel local police officers to carry out background checks on gun buyers as per the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act. Justice Antonin Scalia, delivering the opinion of the Court, stated that the Federal Government's power would be 'augmented immeasurably and impermissibly' if it can conscript state officers into its service without the states bearing any cost.

The Courts logic behind *Printz* rested on a few fundamental pillars in its structural interpretation:

Historical Practice: It was pointed out by the Court that even though early Congresses had the power to require obligations from the state judges, they had not at the same time assumed the power of issuing command to state executive officers.

Dual Sovereignty: The Framers, instead of opting for a central government, which would treat the states as political bodies to be acted upon and through,

they rather decided upon a system whereby the federal government deals directly with the individuals.

Separation of Powers: According to Scalia, allowing Congress to disregard the President and order state officers to implement federal laws would be undermining the Federal Executive as a whole since the President would be deprived of the most significant control of law enforcement.

This ruling on the one hand shields the states from infringement by the federal government, but at the same time, it endorses a "strict-separationist" model that might hinder national efforts in dealing with interjurisdictional crises. Erin Ryan, among others, argues that such a model is overemphasizing the "check-and-balance" aspect at the cost of downplaying the "problem-solving" aspect of federalism, especially in the "interjurisdictional gray area" of modern governance. Congress can use its "spending power" to incentivize state cooperation under U. S. law, but within the limits of the law it cannot compel it.

Competitive Federalism and the Nationalist Thesis

Samuel Beer was one of those who looked at American federalism and argued that it has changed "national democracy" even though the government interactions (giving or taking power) and the changes of one feds resulted in the erosion of the separateness of dual federalism. Now the division of power reflects the weights of different units as voters decide and the state/federal level gets balanced. On one hand state competition of a horizontal nature (to lure residents/businesses through taxes/regulations) results in efficiency but on the other hand it goes against the uniformity of the federal level which is the Kincaid's "competitive challenge to cooperative federalism."

1.4. The Canadian Model: Provincial Growth

The historical development of the Canadian Constitution really demonstrates how powerful court interpretations can be. Although the Constitution Act of 1867 gave the federal government many direct powers, including the right to disallow provincial laws and the residual peace, order and good government (POGG) power, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) in London, which was the supreme court of Canada until 1949, changed the division of powers in its rulings.

The Reversal of Founders' Intent

Guided by a team of legal scholars including Lord Watson and Lord Haldane, the JCPC created a legal philosophy which chose to give prominence to the rights of provinces while the federal government's rights were declined. This was done by: **Narrowing the POGG Clause:** The federal residual power could only be exercised in the case of national emergencies or for things of "national concern" that were not listed by the other powers.

Expanding Section 92(13): The True to Supreme Court supremacy, prior rulings had actually strengthened provincial independence unlike U. S. Courts' federal enlargements. Canada's courts remain impartial among regionalism; according to Warren J. Newman, its "flexible cooperative federalism" has to honour ss. 91/92 exclusivity.

1.5. The Labor Conventions Case and International Obligations

The 1937 Labor Conventions case represented a turning point for Canada's decentralization: the JCPC decision was that while Ottawa, can negotiate treaties, it can only implement them within its powers-matters regulated by provinces (e. g. labor standards) are with provinces. This treaty "disadvantage" as compared with the U. S. is a reason for federal-provincial talks, giving power to the provinces internationally. Peter W. Hogg and other experts condemn the bifurcated court jurisdiction as "lamentable," resulting in a plethora of suit disputes.

1.6. Division of Powers: Comparative Jurisdictional Lists

The real way federalism works depends on the actual things assigned to each level of government. Canada's Constitution Act, 1867 has two complete lists of exclusive powers, but the U. S. Constitution only has a federal list and leaves states with a broad reservation.

Jurisdictional Distribution in the Canadian Constitution

Section 91 gives the federal government of Canada an exclusive control over trade and commerce currency banking, criminal law and procedure defense militia and navy, marriage and divorce, Indigenous affairs and reserves, navigation and shipping. Section 92 provides provinces with the power to levy direct taxes,

public lands and timber municipalities local works, property and civil rights, education (s. 93), and local or private matters. While the two sets of powers are exclusive, there are some areas of overlap (e. g. agriculture and immigration with federal paramountcy); the courts have abandoned the idea of "watertight compartments" in favour of cooperative federalism which allows for concurrent regulation without operational conflict.

Executive Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations

One key feature of the Canadian system that distinguishes it from the U. S. one is "Executive Federalism". The term was invented by Donald Smiley and it refers to the processes of intergovernmental negotiation which are the prerogative of federal and provincial government executives. Smiley considered it "the relationship between elected and appointed officials of two orders of government," and he added that it "usually operates through the meetings of permanent public officials at both levels. " The procedure is a natural result of the coming together of federal and parliamentary institutions.

The Logic of Parliamentary Federalism

U. S. presidential system allows regional interests to be represented through the Senate while the Canadian Senate, being appointed, is seen as providing only a "sober second thought." Ronald L. Watts considers "executive federalism" as one of the consequences of federal-parliamentary combinations, with inter-executive discussions replacing the role of strong regional bodies. In terms of main venue, it is the First Ministers' Conferences (FMC) where the Prime Minister and the premiers meet and discuss various issues such as healthcare, the economy, and reforms. The conference has been praised for its flexibility in accommodating the diversity of Canada while at the same time, is being criticized for its lack of transparency and accountability since it sometimes comes off as "summit diplomacy".

Quebec and Special Rules

American federalism is premised on the notion of "constitutional symmetry" where each of the 50 states, has the same formal powers. On the other hand, Canada has evolved into a system of "asymmetric federalism" in order to recognize

and accommodate its multi-national character. This asymmetry acknowledges that Quebec is a "distinct society" which leads to its unique institutional and legal requirements.

Manifestations of Canadian Asymmetry

1.7. Quebec's unique status is expressed through several specialized arrangements

Legal Bi-juridicalism: Quebec is the only province with a civil law system for private matters, while the rest of Canada uses common law.

Immigration Control: The Canada-Quebec Accord grants Quebec the right to select its own immigrants and manage their integration, recognizing the province's role as the primary contractor for its societal culture.

Opt-Out Rights: Provinces in Canada, and Quebec in particular, have frequently secured the right to "opt out" of federal shared-cost programs with financial compensation, allowing them to design their own social services while receiving federal tax transfers.

In a practical sense, asymmetrical federalism acts as a deterrent to secessionist impulses. According to Harihar Bhattacharyya, since a multi-ethnic state signifies diversity, such states require different types of federal structures for the purposes of not only diversity but also stability. Canada's approach of giving different treatment to Quebec is a guarantee that "Quebec will not be divided but instead will move forward united." While some opponents argue that it lessens the power of the central government, proponents believe that it is vital for the purpose of maintaining unity in the face of different loyalties.

Fiscal Autonomy and the Equalization Principle

The strength of a federation can often be measured by its "fiscal federalism", the degree to which constituent units possess independent revenue-raising power and the mechanisms for redistributing wealth.

Comparative Fiscal Metrics

Canadian provinces, according to Fenna, collect approximately 40% of the income tax, independently finance 80% of their expenditure, retain resource revenues,

and apply s. 36(1982) equalization to provide uniform services without high taxes. This position is anti-exceptional. On the contrary, Bland and Lecours view this as a citizenship equalizer. On the other hand, U. S. federal government is the main player in income tax collection; states heavily depend on sales and property taxes along with sharing resources; block/conditional grants on one hand redistribute implicitly but on the other hand widen disparities (Ruggeri), formally there is no equalization in the U. S. which is considered an "American exceptionalism."

1.8. Rules for Staying (or Leaving) the Union

The most significant legal analysis of Canadian federalism in the modern era occurred in Reference re Secession of Quebec (1998). This landmark judgment by the Supreme Court of Canada addressed whether a province could unilaterally secede and, in doing so, defined the "unwritten" principles of the Canadian Constitution.

1.9. The Four Pillars of the Canadian Constitution

The Court held that the written text of the Constitution must be interpreted through the lens of four fundamental, interlocking principles:

Federalism: A principle that seeks to reconcile diversity with unity by protecting the autonomy of constituent units while providing for shared national action.

Democracy: This principle recognizes that there are "equally legitimate majorities" at the federal and provincial levels, and that the will of the people must be expressed through clear processes.

Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law: This ensures that all government action is subject to the supreme law of the land and protects individuals from arbitrary state action.

Protection of Minorities: A principle that is "independent and fundamental," ensuring that the country does not operate on simple majority rule and that minority voices are fairly considered.

The Court concluded that while unilateral secession is illegal, if a clear majority of a province's population votes for secession on a clear question, the rest of the federation has a "reciprocal obligation" to negotiate constitutional changes to respond to that desire. This "duty to negotiate" is a unique feature of Canadian constitutional law that recognizes the negotiated, pact-like nature of the federation.

1.10. Comparative Methodology: Functionalism and Bricolage

The study of federalism benefits from Mark Tushnet's methodologies for comparative constitutional law. Tushnet posits that by looking at foreign constitutional experience, one can identify "false necessities" in one's own system. Sujit Choudhry extends this analysis, arguing for a "dialogical mode" of interpretation where courts identify factual assumptions in their own jurisprudence by engaging with foreign case law.

Tushnet's Three Modes of Inquiry

Functionalism: This approach examines how different constitutional provisions serve the same function. For example, the U.S. Tenth Amendment and the Canadian POGG/Property and Civil Rights framework both aim to balance national and local power, despite their different textual origins.

Expressivism: This uses comparison to illuminate a nation's own values. The American rejection of federal "commandeering" expresses a deep commitment to state dignity, while the Canadian acceptance of asymmetry expresses a commitment to pluralism and reconciliation.

Bricolage: This refers to the more or less random adaptation of constitutional tools that are "at hand". Tushnet suggests that constitutions are often a mix of inherited traditions and pragmatic solutions rather than coherent systems.

This perspective suggests that the Canadian and American systems are not "pure" types but are evolving assemblages. Bruce Ackerman notes that this "global transformation" of constitutionalism has begun to impact even American thought, traditionally more insular. For instance, Canada "borrowed" the federal idea from the U.S. but "mixed" it with British parliamentary traditions, creating a hybrid that is unique.

Mechanisms for Constitutional Amendment

The stability of a federal state (or federation) to a large extent depends on its "amending clause," since this is what governs the alteration of the most fundamental rules. In his view, Dave Gunette considers these procedures as the "DNA" of a state, that is, they reflect the nervous system or epicenter of the constitutional mechanism.

Rigidity vs. Flexibility

The 2/3 Congress + 3/4 states rule in Article V of the U. S. Constitution is considered by some as the strictest amendment rule in the world. This has led to the phenomenon of "judicial amendment" by the Supreme Court where the Court changes the Constitution without the people participating. Canada's 1982 amendment formulas are added by s. 33 "notwithstanding clause" for legislative Charter overrides as per Paul Bender collective minority rights are better safeguarded than in U. S. Bill. Its 7/50 division-of-powers rule requires provincial consent, but not unanimity; thus, it is somewhat more flexible than U. S. for structural changes.

Conclusion

"True federalism" is about being responsive to the changing needs of society rather than sticking to a fixed model: The United States' dual system of federalism that limits the central government has become a protective standard recognized worldwide; The use of asymmetry/executive federalism in Canada is a way of managing multinational states which is achieved through collaborative instruments such as equalization/negotiations. The key to success lies in the willingness to change in response to the public's expectations, rather than a strict reading of the constitution: Canada is a case in point of how a strong and flexible federation can thrive while remaining uniformly united in diversity.

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