

# Parties And Federalism In Australia And Canada

## **Federalism and Fiscal Policy: The Politics of Equalization in Canada**

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### **Abstract**

Relatively few scholars have paid systematic attention to the political dimensions of Canada's federal equalization program, which provides support to provinces with a below-than-average fiscal capacity. Grounded in a long-term historical perspective, this article explores the politics of equalization policy in Canada, with a focus on the mid-2000s (from early 2004 to the 2008 federal election), a period during which equalization policy suddenly became a major source of intergovernmental conflict. The main objective of the article is to explain why and how such political struggles over equalization developed. The article is divided into four sections. The first section presents the program and discusses its historical evolution. The second section offers an analytical narrative of recent intergovernmental conflicts. The third section outlines a systematic explanation for these conflicts that stresses a combination of particular material, institutional, and ideational factors. The conclusion discusses the political future of equalization in Canada.

### **Keywords**

Equalization, federalism, fiscal policy, institutions, Canada

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