



Polycentric Constitutionalism

By Nathan Brown with Dr. Jacob Eisler



Background

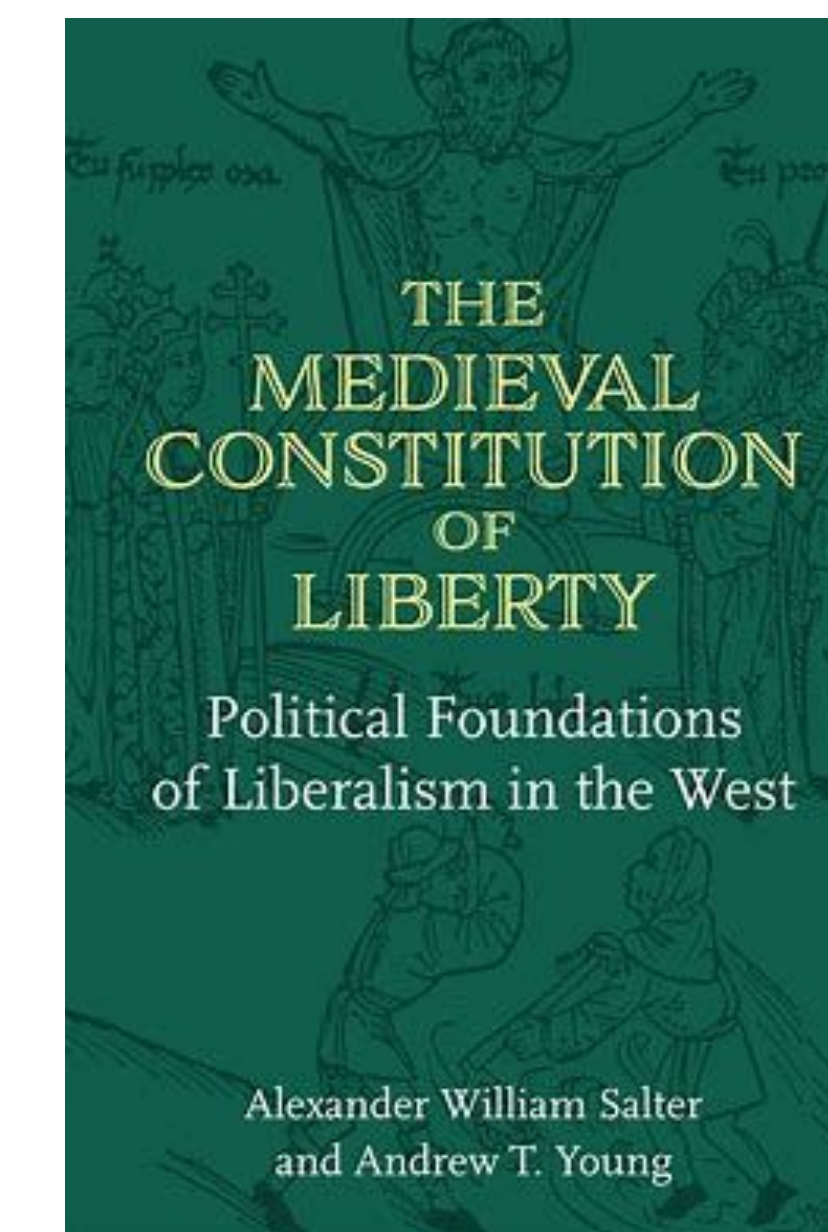
Polycentric constitutionalism is an ever-evolving concept that is rooted in political theory and national governance. The most common interpretation of the subject is that it is a decentralized approach to a constitutional authority and power distribution within a nation. This is in direct contrast to traditional unitary systems where authority is centralized in a single government agency or a few separate tiers of government, polycentric constitutionalism advocates for the dispersal of governing powers among multiple centers or levels of authority. This concept comes from the central understanding of polycentric constitutionalism, which recognizes the complexity of the modern world and the diverse needs of their citizens. This diversity of thought is meant to be accommodated for via the dispersal of decision-making power to various local and regional government actors. This spread of power is meant to foster a system that is more adaptable and responsive to the preferences of citizens.

Results/Conclusion

Throughout my time spent researching polycentric constitutionalism and its history throughout politics, both nationally and internationally. I have come across a couple themes that seem most prevalent in its applications throughout different governments. The first theme is the use of polycentric constitutionalism as a means to spread political power to different government actors. This concept and use of polycentric constitutionalism first began in medieval times and maintains its relevancy in many different countries throughout the world. The reason for this is the ability that polycentric constitutionalism has to spread out power and the rights of decision making throughout politics. Another theme that seemed particularly relevant in my research was the application of polycentric constitutionalism for intergovernmental cooperation. This means that different countries can come together through the use of polycentric constitutionalism to decide things that require the attention of the entire globe, rather than issues that effect countries on an individual basis. This could be the solutions to things like climate change and world war. The last theme that continually recurred throughout my research was polycentric constitutionalism as an element of public goods. The application of polycentric constitutionalism when it comes to public goods is in reference to the different types of public goods. There are excludable and non excludable goods and these both require polycentric constitutionalism to ensure that government actors have an incentive to maintain these public goods. The culmination of my research shows how relevant polycentric constitutionalism has been throughout time and how it will still be relevant in the world of politics for the foreseeable future.

Methods

The research that I performed regarding polycentric constitutionalism was very reminiscent of any kind of legal research. Most legal research is performed by doing broad research into a subject and then synthesizing specific concepts that are contained in the subject. This means that rather than compiling information based off the source, I would organize it solely based on the specific concept. Examples of these concepts in polycentric constitutionalism are public goods, climate change, and spread of power. The memo is meant to compile the current scholarly understanding of these concepts in regards to polycentric constitutionalism. This method of research means that the memo reads much more-naturally because the focus should be on the subject of research, not the scholars that wrote about the past research. I found most of my sources on HeinOnline or JSTOR. I found that JSTOR was usually more helpful as it contains full works, whereas HeinOnline often only has shortened paragraphs of similar synopses.



References:

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