

On his website, [Stephen Goldsmith](#) reviews current academic research that is most relevant to practitioners, policy advisors and policy makers.

This document summarizes: Grell, Jan M. and Gary Gappert. “The Future of Governance in the United States: 1992-2002.” *The Annals of the American Academy*, Vol. 522 (July 1992) 67-78.

*Any policymaker or practitioner interested in the evolution of governance would enjoy reading this past attempt—from 1992, the year I became Mayor of Indianapolis—to predict the future of governance in the U.S.*

In their 1992 article “The Future of Governance in the United States: 1992-2002,” Jan Grell and Gary Gappert explore a number of political, social, and cultural changes that they predicted would occur over the coming decade. The authors also present recommendations as to how government can best cope and adapt to these changes. Four particular insights are among the more interesting and relevant: the implications of ‘new federalism’; changes in the role of leadership on the national and community level; rapid changes in technological innovation and demographics; and government as steward of public values. A few of their predictions were fairly accurate: they saw early on the move towards collaborative governance and away from traditional institutions of government.

According to the authors, the ‘new federalism’ would continue to displace FDR’s New Deal philosophy on federal policy. The federal government has indeed been devolving power back to states and localities. The burden of responsibility on state leaders, however, can become overwhelming. Especially in situations in which there are more demands and fewer resources, which is now all too common. The authors did overstate the impact of globalization, predicting that it would take over state political leaders’ agendas at the expense of mitigating local economic and societal conflicts.

Grell and Gappert predicted changes in the role of leadership. Legislators would necessarily become more reliant upon their congressional staff (which would grow exponentially) as managing information and making decisions become more complex. In addition, there would be concern among the American public as to who represents their interests. Many would become more proactive in their own governance. New concerns over sensitive topics such as immigration and transnational labor would force leaders to stand more for issues than a particular party alignment. The authors also predicted that successful leadership would derive from a network of people and interests working together towards a common goal. We have seen this to be true.

With ever vast and expanding technological innovation, manual jobs would eventually be rendered obsolete. People seeking employment would find themselves urgently needing to decipher and master new technologies. The authors also accurately predict that demographic changes in cities would engender a new approach to urban politics, although we are still waiting to see what this shift will look like. Latinos, for example, will become the majority in some large cities by the close of the century. Political leaders will have to account for this demographic shift in evaluating the education, healthcare, and employment they provide for their citizens whose first language is not English.

Finally, as the “Steward of Public Values,” Grell and Gappert write that government will have to keep in mind what drives the success of the United States: solid public values and moral judgment. For example, family and family values are stabilizing forces for future leaders. As a larger percentage of females enter the workforce, government will have to consider this shift in budgeting for family health and child care. Government at all levels will foster a culturally sensitive environment in which people are more community-driven and adaptive to global immersion at home.

The authors intended to help prepare current and future leaders for the changes they predicted will be most critical to transforming government. Today, we would be wise to heed this message above all: government will continue to move from a centralized, highly bureaucratic institution to one that reflects significant citizen involvement, constant innovation, and collaboration between the private, non-profit and public sectors.