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Special Issue: Federalism, Identities, and Nationalisms

Full Issue

Post-Colonial Federalism: Social Citizenship and New Identities
Ian Angus

Abstract

The main argument of the paper will be to analyze two logics: a logic of exclusion and devolution of social integration and a logic of inclusion and social citizenship. While contemporary politics is dominated by the former, the author argues that the latter is both possible and politically preferable. The argument for inclusion bases itself on two important precedents: the important conception of Canadian Federalism as an inclusion of particularities (rather than a homogenizing state) and the welfare state as a new stage of social citizenship. Building on these precedents, it argues for another stage of social inclusion that might emerge out of new social identities once they are considered in the context of their interaction. The argument thus rejects the thesis that new identities lead to fragmentation and suggests instead that it is the failure of Federalism to be sufficiently inclusive that has led to such devolution.

Citoyenneté incorporée et nouvel espace des nations
Jules Duchastel

Abstract

To the theme of the fragmentation of societies, the author adds the phenomenon of globalization. Over the last few years, we have been seeing a profound mutation of citizenship and political institutions. The Canadian concept of universalistic citizenship has bit by bit given way to a particularistic concept of the citizen. Moreover, we are also witnesses to the renewed questioning of the balance between political institutions and a privatization of public spaces. The model of a confederate union for Canada, able to take into account the complexities of national and cultural indentities, is of particular interest in this paper.

The Nisga'a Treaty: What Future for the Inherent Right to Aboriginal Self-government?
Claude Denis

Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of the treaty signed in August 1998 by the Nisga’a indigenous nation, the government of Canada and the government of British Columbia.

Widely seen and hailed as the model for dozens of unresolved treaty and self-government negotiations, the Nisga'a Final Agreement is the outcome of a century-long quest for recognition and autonomy by the Nisga'a people, who live in the northwest of present-day British Columbia. The Nisga'a treaty ostensibly recognizes the inherent right to Aboriginal self-government which, in the last several years of constitutional debate in Canada, has appeared as a key item on First Nations' lists of claims. After outlining the treaty's contents regarding in particular the proposed Nisga'a legal capacity, justice system and relation to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the analysis compares the treaty's terms with the discourse of inherent right, as it has developed in particular in the context of the Charlottetown Accord of 1992. It finds that the constraints imposed on the Nisga'a negotiators by the Canadian and B.C. governments alter beyond recognition the meaning of "inherent right." As well, it questions the extent to which such a system of self-government is likely to accomplish the stated goals of the First Nations' leadership, of re-establishing indigenous ways of life in Canada.

Collective Identity in the Canadian Eastern Arctic
André Légaré

Abstract

The author examines the symbolic and spatial construction of Nunavut, as well as the impact of the birth of a territory on the collective identity of the Inuit. Légaré tries to understand how a region is constructed from specific cultural traits and how such a region is used to create a collective identity. Then again, the author emphasizes the fact that the redefinition of the Aboriginal collective identity of Nunavut is carried out through a non-Aboriginal process, that is, through the Canadian government.

Citizen Supplicants?: Alain Carins' *Citizens Plus* and the Politics of Aboriginal/Constitutional Scholarship
Alexandra Dobrowolsky and Richard Devlin

Abstract

Alan Cairns' Citizens Plus is a significant intervention in the debate on Aboriginal rights that merits careful consideration. The authors advance three basic claims. First, Citizens Plus can only be fully appreciated when read in the context of Cairns' larger constitutional vision. Second, while there is much to be celebrated in Citizens Plus, because of Cairns' commitment to an ideology of "oneness" he is unable to provide a thick recognition of Aboriginal difference within the Canadian constitutional regime. Third, to be persuasive, the idea of "citizens plus" will require further elaboration, because in its current form Aboriginal peoples look more like citizens supplicant.

Obsèques Prématurées: la Disparition des Minorities Francophones et Autres Illusions Nationalists
Edmund A. Aunger

Abstract

The survival of the French-speaking communities outside Quebec is another question that has provoked considerable debate among scholars from both official-language groups. Many observers have confidently predicted the imminent extinction of these communities, however Edmund Aunger suggests that such dire predictions are premature and, frequently, self-serving. While recognizing the continuing vulnerability of the French-speaking minorities, he demonstrates nevertheless that they have experienced steady and largely uninterrupted growth since 1871. In addition, he refutes the oft-heard claims that they are socially impoverished and politically insignificant.

La Nation Québécoise et la Minorité Nationale Canadienne-Française
Michel Seymour

Abstract

According to Michel Seymour, the dynamism and the expansion of the Francophone communities is not enough to bridge the rift that has been dug between Quebeckers and the Francophone minorities. It is around the theme of the French-Canadian nation that the fissure began. For Quebeckers, it no longer exists, while for the majority of Francophones living elsewhere in Canada, it still exists. These two visions of identities are, at first glance, irreconcilable. In order to put an end to this mutual incomprehension, Michel Seymour advocates the depoliticization of the relationships that national minorities maintain with their respective national majorities.

An Elusive Search for Community: Globalization and the Canadian National Identities
Janine Brodie

Abstract

For over thirty years, the welfare state and liberalism have marked the political geography of Canada. The welfare state was perceived at the time as a sign of maturity, a necessary precondition to political stability and to a certain degree of social cohesion, while putting an end to “ideology.” However, this postbellum consensus was brought back into question, starting in the 1980s, giving way to what the author calls “the neo-liberal globalization” which includes notions such as privatization, deregulation, free markets and the erosion of the public sector. The author examines the elusive search for the Canadian identity in an era of liberal globalization. She proposes that the State has always been a central actor in the creation of the perceptions of self and of the collective and tries to determine if the Canadian national identity can be preserved and how it can be done in such a framework.

Mondialisation, démocratie et Questions Nationales Candiennes
Gilles Bourque

Abstract

In this new millennium, the longevity of the Canada/Quebec debate has had a tendency to overshadow two most important phenomena: the Neoliberal State and globalization. The author maintains that it is in reference to this new context that we must ponder the questions of federalism, identity and national issues in Canada. He adds that the sharing of sovereignty within a confederal union or a multinational state could eventually serve as the model for the formation of supranational democratic institutions.

La Politique de la Reconnaissance et les Nationalismes au Canada
Daniel Jacques

Abstract

Despite appearances, Canada remains a society with no political foundation. According to the author, this absence of a foundation is at the origin of the confusion of allegiances that affect this country. To escape the impasse, several projects have been proposed, including the politics of recognition. He believes that the language being used does not allow us to think of a nation and that there exists a considerable risk that the strictly political meaning of the idea of the nation will be obliterated. To achieve a real foundation for this country, it is imperative that minority groups be able to live their cultural differences. To do this, the transformation of the Canadian political space must necessarily go through a restructuring of institutions on the basis of an explicit recognition of the multinational character of the country.

Federalism, Pluralism, and Constitutional Faith: Canada in Question
Samuel LaSelva

Abstract

The author examines the political visions of John A. Macdonald and Pierre Elliott Trudeau. In reality, for the majority of Canadians, these two men were the only ones to successfully define the very essence of the country. Yet, Canada transformed itself into a country that is, so to speak, impossible to govern. If nothing changes, Canada is destined to be fragmented and will be made up of antagonistic cultural solitudes. For LaSelva, Québec is also destined for that fate because it is made up of significant minorities, Aboriginal nations, multicultural groups and large Anglophone population. So, how to reconcile the differences? By making way for a political vision as old as Confederation: that of Georges-Étienne Cartier.

La Cas Du Québec à la Lumière du débat Taylor-Habermas
Donald Ipperciel

Abstract

The fate of Quebec is of interest not only to political scientists and historians but also to philosophers. Charles Taylor examined this question, but he is not the only one, as the German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas also pronounced himself on the Quebec “case.” Consequently, Donald Ipperciel tries in his article to cover all the subtleties of the Taylor/Habermas debate.

Cultural Myths and Political Realities or Why Québec Will Never Separate
Barry Cooper

Abstract

Cultural conflict in liberal societies always looks much more serious than it ever actually becomes. Certainly the cultural conflict between Québec and western Canada looks grave indeed. One could say as much, however, about the cultural conflict between the west and the east, and the east, in the eyes of westerners, includes Québec. Indeed, the east occupies the same symbolic space in the mythology of the west as English-Canada does in Québec. The political reality — to say nothing of economics and business — is another matter. It is characterized in liberal societies as a realm of negotiation and compromise, of deal-making. Québec has enjoyed enormous success in its political achievements and will doubtless continue to do so. The only conditions under which Québec could seriously threaten Canada's political stability would entail a transformation of a liberal society in that province into a hostile and distinctly anti-liberal one. There is no evidence that such a transformation is under way. Accordingly, threats by sovereignists are, and will continue to be, a strenuous and assertive form of bargaining.

Mutations et limites de l'identitaire au Québec
Diane Lamoureux

Abstract

The author exposes the importance of the dimension of identity in the Quebec discourse. What particularly drew her attention was the “the transition of a project to justify Quebec sovereignty in terms of national oppression to a justification in terms of national affirmation”. She then proceeds to an “overview of the fluctuation of the Quebec identity and its conjugation as a result of distinct and entangled temporal registers” and ends her analysis on a more theoretical note by raising the political problems that such a recourse to identity poses.

Alternatives to Secession
Gordon Laxer

Abstract

The author proposes to consider the option of Québec’s asymmetry and explores the conditions that would render such an arrangement politically viable. He maintains that the formation of a tripartite national alliance (English Canada, Québec, First Nations) would make it possible to counter global corporatism and market forces.