

The Challenge of Cultural Pluralism

Stephen Brooks, ed.

Westport: Praeger, 2002, pp. ix, 190

During my time as a graduate student at Carleton University, Kenneth D. McRae stood out for his intellectual rigour, integrity, willingness to give advice and mentor a younger generation, and for having the office with the greatest number of filing cabinets. These cabinets housed materials for his on-going work on issues of cultural pluralism and linguistically divided societies. His oeuvre and example have clearly inspired many others too. This volume brings together an international group of authors who have been influenced by McRae as a teacher and a scholar.

The book begins with a helpful Introduction by editor Stephen Brooks in which the 10 chapters of the book are situated in the context of McRae's still prescient observation made in his 1979 presidential address to the Canadian Political Science Association that much of the political tradition of the West has been hostile to cultural pluralism ("The Plural Society and Western Political Tradition," this *JOURNAL* 12 [1979], 675-88). The chapters that follow are well-crafted and simultaneously intersperse the occasional personal observation about McRae with analysis of McRae's work, as well as new research.

The book is organized in three sections that represent major foci in McRae's writings on Canada and other liberal democracies: (1) the cultural fragment thesis of Louis Hartz that posits "new world societies" as ideological fragments of "old world societies"; (2) consociational theory and elite accommodation as developed by Arend Lijphart; and (3) constitutional reform and language policy. What makes this volume intellectually contributory is the fact that authors both draw from and grapple with these foci in light of contemporary theoretical and empirical developments. Thus for example, addressing the European Union, Liesbet Hooghe finds consociational theory useful for helping to understand the continued existence of national (as opposed to European) concerns amongst some top Commission officials. Likewise, André Bächtiger, Markus Spöndli and Jürg Steiner in a collaborative chapter that seeks to link normative and empirical political science traditions find that elements of consociational theory mesh well with the ideal of deliberative democracy. Yet, in a collaborative chapter, Can Erk and Alain-G. Gagnon, writing on Quebec, suggest consociational theory has little applicability in the Canada of today that is riddled by what they term "constitutional ambiguity" (101).

Consociational and fragment theories are also judged especially critically through the lens of contemporary postcolonial studies. Gordon T. Stewart argues that the Hartzian-McRae approaches assume a unidirectional influence from metropole to colony whereas much recent work on colonialism is better equipped to understand Aboriginal peoples and other minorities given the stresses on multidirectionality and divergent narratives as well as hybridity. In a particularly thoughtful chapter, Jill Vickers draws on postcolonial theory to argue that Western political thought, including fragment and consociational theories, is inadequate for understanding processes of racialization and regimes built on "race" in settler colonies like Canada.

This is a collection that will be of interest to specialists and graduate students in both Canadian and comparative politics, given chapters dealing with constitutional change in Belgium (by Kris Deschouwer), the history and legacy of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Canada (by Milton J. Esman) and language politics in Quebec (by A. Brian Tanguay). Political theorists dealing with issues of cultural diversity will also find much to interest them in this volume, such as Thomas O. Hueglin's chapter on Althusius and the post-Westphalian state. Some chapters might also be of use in undergraduate teaching—Stephen Brooks's amusing and provocative discussion of English-Canadian nationalism, the narcissism of minor differences, and Canada-United States relations being a key example.

To my mind, there is also a significant, though implicit, point made by the appearance of this volume about the vocation of political science in the country of Canada. Over the past decade, Canadian political theorists including Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka have gained international recognition for their philosophical contributions on liberalism, cultural diversity and the politics of recognition. This festschrift, devoted to Kenneth D. McRae, serves as a reminder of another ongoing and important Canadian contribution to the study of cultural pluralism in liberal democracies that while philosophically grounded, also emphasizes historically sensitive comparative analysis and theory testing. The diverse chapters in this volume exemplify this contribution, while simultaneously paying tribute to one of Canada's leading political scientists.

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Cultures at War: Moral Conflicts in Western Democracies

T. Alexander Smith and Raymond Tatalovich
Peterborough: Broadview, 2003, pp. 302

On the first page of this volume, the authors announce that the anonymous reviewers of their manuscript believed that they were "on the cusp of producing a significant work of scholarship" (9). With an advertisement for oneself like that, one had better produce. This volume comes up somewhat short.

The book offers a good survey of moral and value conflicts in a number of Western democracies, including Canada, and offers a number of interesting narrative accounts of the politics surrounding many of these value conflicts. The authors argue that morality policy is driven by elites, not the public. This is an interesting and compelling argument, for which the authors provide some evidence. They also argue that issues of morality politics are increasingly displacing economic issues, for which they present no evidence. They further argue that "cultural theory" provides a better framework than postmaterialism through which to understand morality politics, a claim difficult to evaluate because they offer no satisfactory definition of "cultural theory," and no actual falsifiable, well-defined test of the two competing frameworks.

In a well-written, compelling second chapter on "Status Anxiety," the authors introduce some of their theoretical architecture, arguing that moral conflicts are in fact conflicts over status; this is, status anxiety and status frustration drive value conflicts, and individuals have an emotive interest in having their values reflected in state policy. The authors then claim to use "cultural theory" as their theoretical framework. They state that cultural theory relates to the belief that individuals' "beliefs are not free floating, somehow adrift from our occupational lives, families, peer groups," and that "beliefs are framed within particular social contexts" (52). They identify three "cultural ways of life," competitive individualism, egalitarianism and hierarchical collectivism, and contend that morality conflicts in Western societies are between those seeking status differentiation and those seeking status equalization (60). Unfortunately, the concepts of status anxiety and cultural theory largely vanish after they are introduced and the authors' thesis in regards to their importance is not in fact tested.

The authors argue that morality politics cannot be understood through the lens of self-interest and must instead be understood through a symbolic framework. They claim that a wide variety of issues have nothing to do with self-interest: "How crying was the need for physician-assisted suicide or abortion in the United States? However compassionate we may feel towards women faced with an unwanted pregnancy or the desperately ill, in any given year those tragic victims do not number into the millions" (91). They provide no evidence that these issues have to do with symbolic constructions rather than self-interest, and others might disagree about whether the availability