

connection, Bonotti starts by exposing, as others have done before, the key difference between parties and factions from a normative perspective: parties, unlike factions, are committed to the common good. The next step is to insist that, in liberal democratic societies characterized by reasonable pluralism, to be sincerely committed to the common good implies a commitment to public reasoning because this is the only way to treat all citizens as free and equal persons.

What is particularly interesting in Bonotti's argument is the way he fleshes out the specific role that political parties and partisans play as key intermediaries between ordinary citizens, who remain committed to different conceptions of the good, and public reason. Whereas Rawls expected each individual citizen to work out how their comprehensive doctrine relates to the political conception of justice, Bonotti argues that political parties have an important facilitating role to play in this regard.

In chapter 7, Bonotti makes two main arguments: firstly, he shows the importance of relaxing Rawls' conception of public reason to make it more inclusive towards the use of nonpublic reasons by ordinary citizens, while entrusting elected partisans with the task of finding public reasons to support the policies ordinary citizens support. Secondly, Bonotti defends a division of justificatory labour within parties between elected partisans who bear the duty to comply with the constraints of public reason and other partisans whose task is to engage in nonpublic reasoning with their constituents. The ability of parties and partisans to be effective mediators between the nonpublic reasons of citizens and the public reason of the institutions of the liberal democratic state is key to securing stability and legitimacy in diverse societies.

Bonotti's normative account of partisanship does not have much to say about contemporary pathologies like the rise of populist parties, aside from dismissing them as mere factions. This may come as a disappointment to those looking for answers to the many problems that tax political parties in existing democracies. What Bonotti does provide is a clear and convincing view of how political parties can fit within the normative horizon of political liberalism.

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At the Centre of Government: The Prime Minister and the Limits on Political Power

Ian Brodie

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Part scholarly critique, part memoir, Ian Brodie's *At the Centre of Government* is an accessible, often entertaining, sometimes scathing antidote to the narrative that Canada is subject to dictatorial power at the hands of the prime minister. Few people are better positioned to challenge academic orthodoxy about the relative power of the prime minister than someone who is both a political scientist and a former chief of staff to the prime minister (in this case, Stephen Harper).

The book tackles the idea advanced most famously by public administration scholar Donald Savoie and popularized by journalist Jeffrey Simpson that the modern prime minister has centralized power to the detriment—indeed, virtual irrelevance—of Parliament and even cabinet. The mix of academic thought and personal insight Brodie advances is compelling, though as I explain below, not always convincing. The book successfully alternates between scholarly analyses, such as a section on the history of cabinet government (13–25), and insider anecdotes about Harper era

events—a brief account of a disastrous meeting between Stephen Harper and former Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams is one of many highlights (43).

At the Centre of Government is persuasive at dispelling the idea that there was a golden age of democracy in Canada where Parliament prospered from robust, ideal-type deliberative and accountability capacity. Brodie also marshals evidence to push back at the centralization thesis, including an examination of the increased capacity of private members to advance their own bills and motions (96–101). The book is perhaps most effective at attacking an unstated premise of the prime minister-as-dictator thesis: that any one person could possibly micromanage a set of cabinet ministers, let alone all major governmental decisions. The practical realities of government Brodie draws from with his first-hand account show that cabinet ministers enjoy ample room to set priorities and make decisions, a point which is reiterated throughout the book (see, for example, 52).

While the book is framed as a critique of the centralization idea, it is also a staunch defence of certain aspects of the status quo. Brodie does not deny that prime ministers enjoy significant power; rather, he wants to convince the reader that neither responsible government nor democracy have become threatened by it. Prime ministers, Brodie explains, must always be involved in four key areas: fiscal policy, foreign relations, relations with provinces, and the management of business before Parliament (28). Sections on each of these in the book are both illuminating and engaging.

Brodie's defence of partisanship and strong leadership for parties are perhaps the most passionate parts of the book. Here, the author is convincing in parts and less so in others. His account of the necessity of team unity, particularly in messaging, rings true: quite simply, success in electoral politics, particularly in the case of the newly unified Conservative Party, hinged on competent and strong management. This did not mean that individual MPs were reduced to trained seals. Brodie writes that “[a]ttending caucus meetings restored my opinion of Canadian democracy each week,” (135) and although he acknowledges it is a shame that the confidential nature of those meetings means Canadians cannot see them in action, the influence of the party caucus is evident in other ways, and Brodie spells out the legislative influence of backbenchers during the Harper government (139).

Yet the question of whether there is *excessive* party discipline is as much a normative question as it is an empirical one, and the book becomes less convincing when it evinces more normative claims. In a section on partisanship, Brodie notes that “not every citizen is suited to being a partisan” and he basically reduces non-partisans to either “loners who prefer the unfettered liberty of living life alone ... without needing to be part of a larger human enterprise” or people who “feel so certain of their own righteousness that find they cannot make the kinds of compromises needed to work within a political party” (150). This is simplistic at best and a caricature at worst. Members of non-partisan legislatures like Nunavut and the ‘new’ Senate of Canada have demonstrated ample capacity for political compromise (Brodie has a section on recent Senate reform and is quite critical of it, but his appraisal is too short to be persuasive. In my view it has functioned smoothly and in a less activist manner than in the past, such as during the Mulroney era).

Further, many arguments to enhance the role of individual MPs are neither premised on the elimination of parties nor opposed to the spirit of compromise. In fact it is party discipline in Canada that is often uncompromising. In the first half of 2018 alone, MPs from each of the three major federal parties (NDP MP David Christopherson, Liberal MP Scott Simms, and CPC MP Maxime Bernier) were punished or threatened with punishment for acting or speaking out on long-standing matters of

principle. It is not self-righteous to believe that parties should better accommodate dissenting views rather than squash them.

Different readers will take exception to different parts of Brodie's argument. While it may not serve as the final word in the debate on the power of the prime minister, it is, overall, an excellent and much-needed contribution to it.

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The Wetiko Legal Principles: Cree and Anishinabek Responses to Violence and Victimization

Hadley Friedland

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Like most law professors in North America, I teach first-year students using the casebook method. The casebook method has, since the turn of the nineteenth century, been the dominant pedagogic method deployed in law schools across the continent. Boiled down to its core, the case book method uses edited versions of cases to illuminate legal principles. Each case in the casebook method is said to stand for a particular legal proposition. Law professors in virtually all common law jurisdictions use the casebook method to build principle upon principle and, in so doing, illuminate the contours and principles that make up the common law.

Hadley Friedland's masterful *The Wetiko Legal Principles: Cree and Anishinabek Response to Violence and Victimization* applies the casebook methodology to a corpus of stories about Wetiko. Some of the stories come from prior academic studies. Some come from primary research conducted by Friedland in a variety of Cree and Anishinabek communities and typically related to her by elders and other trusted knowledge holders. It is surely not the case that Friedland has compiled in her notes the complete list of every Wetiko story, but she has assembled a significant corpus of stories and from these stories she aims to draw a series of legal principles surrounding Wetiko.

Wetiko, or windigos, are typically people who are transformed into something they weren't before—something dangerous. I say typically, because in some stories the Windigos are described as giants, and the origin of these giant monsters is usually not elaborated. In extreme cases, Wetiko and Windigos become cannibals. In Friedland's research, it is important to point out that the corpus of stories are not "stories" in the sense that all the narratives are of an ancient past; some of the stories Friedland relies upon come from contemporary interviews with community members who have had experience treating persons who are at risk of turning Windigo.

Friedland organizes the stories about Wetiko around what she understands to be core legal principles creating obligations and rights of both community members who are healthy, and those who are becoming or who have become Windigo. That Windigo have rights, including rights to due process is crucial: traditional Cree and Anishinabek stories of Windigo that have advanced to the cannibalism stage, presenting a clear and present danger to the community, show that when all else fails, Windigo such as these are permanently incapacitated (that is, killed).

There is an inherent risk in applying the casebook methodology to stories instead of cases. Of course, legal cases and judicial decisions are a kind of story. Cases set out facts and provide judicial reasoning. Cases apply prior precedent and established principles to a set of facts for a determinate outcome. Each case only arises in court and leads to a judicial decision because there is something unique about the facts of the case; no one litigates a case where we know what the legal outcome will be. Lawyers are too