

nous ajouterions à la très pertinente liste d'idées de recherche élaborée en conclusion de l'ouvrage par Garneau.

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**Policy Governance in Multi-level Systems: Economic Development and Policy Implementation in Canada**

Charles Conteh

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013, pp. xii, 280.

doi:10.1017/S0008423916000925

Research having to do with governance deals with what is, by definition, difficult terrain. A term devised to reflect the mystique and ambiguity of the modern application of public policy, the study of governance systems is resistant to conventional tools of social science. This is the impression given by Charles Conteh's *Policy Governance in Multi-level Systems*, which aims to reconfigure our understanding of regional economic development policy by demonstrating that policies are not only designed and implemented at multiple levels of government but that these levels are integrated in complex ways and involve multiple actors representing a variety of government and non-state interests.

Approaching regional economic development policy from a federal perspective, Conteh investigates the ways in which four federal agencies—the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Western Economic Diversification Agency (WD), the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) and the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev)—implement economic development policy in New Brunswick, Manitoba, Northern Ontario and Southern Ontario. The book is topical for many reasons, not least because there has been a marked increase in policy language having to do with economic planning in the wake of the global financial crisis. Yet, given that many commentators have since argued that little has changed aside from a shift toward greater fiscal austerity (see Mark Blyth, "Paradigms and Paradox: The Politics of Economic Ideas in Two Moments of Crisis," *Governance* 26, 2013: 197–215), claims as to the significance of any change in the mode of governance since 2008 have remained speculative.

For his part, Conteh does an excellent job of investigating the paradox that, despite a great deal of discussion and debate about economic liberalization, regional development policy has been a persistent feature of post-war public administration. Contending that economic development policy is again on the rise, Conteh emphasizes a "paradigm shift" among OECD governments toward "the new economy" and "the new regionalism," which came to be reflected in the policy programs of provincial governments and federal agencies around the turn of the millennium. Linking this ideational shift to the structural changes whose investigation is the focus of the book, Conteh's central argument is that ideas surrounding regional development policy in Canada have come full circle since days of the "growth pole" concept in the 1960s, in that there now exists an imperative to share responsibility for policy formulation and implementation across the three levels of government, albeit with a special role afforded to local governments and citizen groups. What is intrinsically new about this approach, argues Conteh, is that the mantra of policy governance is now one whereby sectoral targeting is forsaken in favour of encouraging knowledge diffusion and skills development so that positive synergies may be captured in the creation of regional innovation systems.

Combining insight from public administration, organizational theory and governance theory, Conteh develops a "multi-actor framework" that guides his empirical

analysis, which focuses squarely on network and systems design, not on specific policies or policy outputs and outcomes. The book is therefore primarily descriptive, gaining most of its strength by painstakingly detailing the nuances of the new approach to administering regional economic development policy. Comparisons of relative policy inputs (such as money and personnel) and outputs (such as performance measurements) over time are absent from the text, precluding a precise evaluation as to what is new or different about the current governance context in these regards. With respect to charges that contemporary focus on innovation and planning is mere rhetoric, Conteh demonstrates, however, that the approach to multi-level governance in Canada has evolved considerably in terms of federal agencies' willingness to gradually abandon many of their "top-down" tendencies to become much better integrated with provincial governments and local actors.

Given its focus on structure, the analysis is fairly apolitical and optimistic, perhaps overstating the degree of subsystemic consensus and consequently failing to analyze the extent to which state actors operate as brokers in emerging formulation and implementation networks. Related to this point, despite the fact that an optimistic tone pervades much of the contemporary literature on knowledge diffusion and innovation, and although it is often less direct than in the past, sectoral targeting has been a persistent feature of regional development policy and invariably favours some subsystemic interests over others. *Policy Governance in Multi-Level Systems* can nevertheless be commended for providing a convincing alternative to mechanistic conceptions of public administration and policy delivery. In the face of overt speculation, Conteh is able to dispel myths reflective of dichotomous thinking related to top-down versus bottom-up governance, nation building versus province building and states versus markets. Conteh's empirical work is invaluable to understanding governance arrangements in Canada and the multi-level structure of Canadian public administration in particular. The tendency toward simultaneous devolution and greater integration among levels of government is a significant finding that will be welcomed across the social sciences.

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### **L'Aveuglement. Une autre histoire de notre monde**

Marc Ferro

Tallandier,

Paris, 2015, 427 pages

doi:10.1017/S0008423916001013

Le prolifique historien français Marc Ferro nous offre dans son récent ouvrage *L'Aveuglement* une lecture du XXe siècle en plaçant à l'avant-scène ces acteurs qui n'ont pas su ou n'ont pas voulu voir les horreurs de ce siècle violent que nous percevons d'une manière si évidente aujourd'hui. Le propos est d'autant plus sonore que, comme nous le rappelle l'auteur, ce siècle était supposé voir triompher la raison scientifique, y compris dans les affaires de la Cité. Il n'en fut rien.

Ferro revient sur des moments-clés en y appliquant différents types d'aveuglement. Il n'y a pas ici d'élaboration analytique, ni même de définition formelle du concept d'aveuglement. Nous retrouvons des idées reliées à l'aveuglement comme la dénégation, la crédulité, la propagande, l'« esprit doctrinaire » (titre du chapitre 5), et quelques autres. Ferro se sert de ces formes de l'aveuglement comme fil conducteur pour raconter l'histoire politique surtout européenne du XXe siècle. Assez souvent, il plonge dans l'Histoire pour nous en ramener les moindres détails (l'auteur est manifestement très érudit) mais en s'éloignant de sa thèse. Nous sommes en présence d'un livre d'histoire avant tout, et secondairement d'un traité sur l'aveuglement.