

écologiques. Autrement dit, l'attitude de plus en plus fréquente des différents gouvernements fédéraux préconisant d'attendre les décisions des autres pays afin de prendre une décision concertée (face à un problème global) constitue une perte de temps et équivaudrait à rien de moins qu'une politique de laisser-faire, et ce dans un contexte d'urgence climatique. La section finale récapitule l'argumentation et revient brièvement sur certaines dichotomies déjà énoncées ailleurs comme la complémentarité pouvant exister entre le local et le global; l'auteur reprend des lieux communs sur le problème de la protection des frontières nationales, etc. Chose inhabituelle, Bruno Latour se permet de se présenter dans les dernières pages en fournissant des éléments plus personnels sur ses origines bourgeoises, ses préoccupations de chercheur, sa vision du monde et son idéal (126–134).

*Où atterrir ?* est un ouvrage engagé, bien documenté, rédigé clairement et accessible pour un large lectorat, au-delà des simples politicologues. Certains passages manquent parfois d'approfondissement et de nuance, mais ceux-ci gagnent en revanche en concision. On repense parfois en le lisant aux livres de Jeremy Rifkin comme *Who Should Play God?* (1977), mais aussi *Le rêve européen : ou comment l'Europe se substitue peu à peu à l'Amérique dans notre imaginaire* (Fayard, 2005), ou plus récemment *The Green New Deal: Why the Fossil Fuel Civilization Will Collapse by 2028, and the Bold Economic Plan to Save Life on Earth* (2019). Mais on pourrait aussi ajouter que ce dernier livre se situe en continuité des ouvrages précédents de Bruno Latour, penseur polyvalent et critique à l'esprit transdisciplinaire. Cette ouverture transdisciplinaire pourra instruire de nombreux politicologues.

## Democracy in Canada: The Disintegration of Our Institutions

Donald J. Savoie, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019, pp. 504.

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Donald Savoie describes his latest book, *Democracy in Canada: The Disintegration of Our Institutions*, as his magnum opus (9). Indeed, *Democracy in Canada* is an ambitious work that offers an extensive, sometimes incisive, critique of Canada's federal political institutions. The book has a broad scope; one of Savoie's many critiques of the state of democracy in Canada is the argument that the locus of decision-making power has shifted from the democratically elected House of Commons toward unelected bodies such as the Supreme Court and officers of Parliament. Savoie also returns to themes addressed in his earlier work, including the centralization of executive power in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), as well as accountability relationships between public servants and the government. However, his primary claim is that there is a lack of regional representation in Canada's federal political institutions.

According to Savoie, Canada's political structure was doomed from the beginning to neglect regional concerns and realities. He writes that Canada's political system was based on the blueprint of British institutions, which reflected a unitary state and a heavily class-conscious society, and so it did not take regional differences into account. At the time of Confederation, John A. Macdonald envisioned the Canadian government as a centralized federation with the provinces as subordinate governments, much to the dismay of the Maritime partners in Confederation. As a project to bring Canada West and Canada East together under a system that would balance power between the French and English population, Confederation did not reflect the needs of the regions, particularly Atlantic Canada.

Savoie argues that because of path dependency, decisions made at Confederation in 1867 have produced a federal system that continues to prioritize central Canada at the expense of the regions even today. For instance, the failure of the Fathers of Confederation to outline the federal government's spending power in the British North America Act means that the federal government has encroached on provincial jurisdiction in the areas of health and social services (after all, the founders could not foresee the dramatic increase in post-Depression government spending). This in turn has created a patchwork of federal-provincial agreements (for example, the Canada Health and Social Transfer) that have increased the level of federal-provincial bureaucracy involved in decision making and have obscured accountability. Further, the fact that central Canada holds more seats than Atlantic Canada in the House of Commons and the Senate means that federal governments prioritize the policy needs of Ontario and Quebec, where they can pick up seats to build a majority at election time. Savoie uses many examples to illustrate the policy prioritization of central Canada, including the instance in 2015 when the federal government awarded a shipbuilding contract to a firm in Quebec City rather than a shipyard in Halifax, even though the Halifax firm was more qualified to fulfil the contract.

Throughout the book, Savoie argues that Canada's democratic deficit exacerbates the problem of regional underrepresentation. He references his past work on the centralization of executive power in the PMO to argue that regional representation within the Cabinet has been undermined. The federal Cabinet is meant to represent the regions by virtue of being composed of ministers from different provinces. However, as Savoie demonstrated in *Governing from the Centre* (1999), Cabinet government has been weakened by the concentration of power in the PMO; this has, in turn, stifled regional voices in Cabinet. Further, Members of Parliament (MPs) are subject to strict party discipline when it comes to regional issues, as party leaders fear stoking national disunity or causing a controversy that might cost the government seats in the next election. Savoie notes, for example, that it was lawyers and academics who opposed the current government's musings on eliminating the Supreme Court seat for Atlantic Canada, not MPs from the region.

*Democracy in Canada* has a major shortcoming in that Savoie barely addresses territorial and Northern representation within the federation. The Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut are each represented by a single MP, despite their vast geography and diverse Indigenous populations. The territories also have a different relationship to the federal government than the provinces; the territories were created through acts of Parliament, whereas the provinces are based in the Constitution. It would have been helpful for Savoie to address the position of the territories within the federation, as well as their relationship to the federal government. For instance, does the federal government prioritize central Canada over the territories in policy decisions? Do the territorial governments play a subordinate role in territorial-federal agreements?

Despite this, *Democracy in Canada* is a worthwhile read that will suit a broad range of interests, including those who focus on Parliament, public administration, federalism and regionalism, as well as anyone who is concerned with the state of Canadian democracy.

## Reference

- Savoie, Donald J. 1999. *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.