From UI to EI: Waging the War on the Welfare State
Georges Campeau (translated by Richard Howard)
Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005, pp. xiii, 235

Over the last two decades, much has been published about welfare state retrenchment and restructuring. No consensus has yet emerged regarding the scope and nature of social policy change occurring during the era of neo-liberalism and economic globalization. On the one hand, scholars argue that powerful institutional legacies and vested interests prevent policy makers from "dismantling the welfare state" (e.g., Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Retrenchment*, Cambridge University Press, 1994). On the other hand, a growing number of scholars recognize that, despite such institutional constraints, the combination of incremental change and path-departing reforms are reshaping major social programmes in advanced industrial societies. This is especially true as it concerns policies dealing with unemployment, which constitute a major target for neo-liberal "activation" (e.g., Robert H. Cox, "The Consequences of Welfare Reform: How Conceptions of Social Rights Are Changing," *Journal of Social Policy*, 26(1) 1998: 1–16).

Although it does not explicitly engage with this international literature on welfare state retrenchment and restructuring, Georges Campeau's *From UI to EI* provides more ground to those who claim that much has changed in the Canadian welfare state since the 1970s. More specifically, his book is a political and legal history of unemployment insurance in Canada, from the debates leading to the enactment of the programme in 1940 to the retrenchment era that began around 1975 and culminated in the 1990s. Adopting a comparative perspective on the political and ideological origins of unemployment insurance, the book starts with a discussion of the British debate leading to the enactment of the first national unemployment insurance scheme in 1911. Such historical discussion about the British case is crucial for two reasons. First, Canada borrowed extensively from the British model during the elaboration of the federal unemployment insurance scheme. Second, the British experiment underlines the central role of social insurance principles in the construction of the modern welfare state. For Campeau, even during the New Deal, the British influence was far more instrumental to the development of federal unemployment insurance than that of the US. In the end, Canada adopted a centralized scheme that contrasted with the fragmented US unemployment insurance system, which emerged largely as a consequence of the *Social Security Act* of 1935.

Despite the fact that Campeau does not discuss theories of welfare state development, his book clearly points to the central role of ideas in policy making. For Campeau, the development of unemployment insurance in the postwar era is largely about the clash between social rights and the so-called "actuarial ideology." On the one hand, labour unions stressed the need for unconditional social rights and the state's financial participation in unemployment insurance funding. On the other hand, business interests pushed for modest benefits and stringent eligibility criteria in the name of actuarial soundness, personal responsibility and lower contributions. Crucial aspects of this "actuarial ideology" are the concept of moral hazard and the idea that workers have clear obligations to fulfill in exchange for state protection. Consequently, according to Campeau, UI appeared as a political and ideological compromise. "The UI system looked like a compromise, not only between opposing interests, but also between two views of work. The labour movement was calling for an income security plan and jobless rights, while the employers insisted that the system would be an incentive not to work. This is why the system's recognition of a right to benefit was accompanied by labour market obligations" (72). Although the 1962 Gill report made a strong case for the "actuarial ideology," it was the social rights model that finally triumphed, both in the courts and on Parliament Hill. The

1971 *Unemployment Insurance Act* represented the culmination of the social rights model, which legitimized higher benefits and more liberal eligibility criteria. Beginning in the mid-1970s, however, neo-liberal "counterreform" emerged as a direct attack against the right to unemployment insurance. In the name of balanced budgets and personal responsibility, successive federal governments cut benefits, enacted stricter eligibility criteria and, in 1990, abolished the half-century-old federal participation in unemployment insurance financing. Furthermore, moving away from the logic of social insurance, these governments used the UI fund to finance training and welfare programmes that have little to do with its original mission. The UI fund also became a tool for deficit reduction. This is why Campeau argues that unemployment insurance has been "hijacked" in order to serve the global neo-liberal agenda grounded in "activation" and "competitiveness."

The book is well researched and, as far as I can judge, was translated with care. Yet, this major contribution to the scholarship on Canadian social policy suffers from four significant shortcomings. First, the comparative discussion concerning neo-liberal reforms is far less developed than the one about the origins of the system. There is a vast international literature on activation policies from which the author could have drawn to shed more light on the Canadian case. Second, in considering the international literature, Campeau should have discussed the idea of de-commodification so central in that area (e.g., Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Princeton University Press, 1990). Without paying attention to de-commodification, the profound meaning of unemployment insurance *and* of the neo-liberal attack against it remains in the dark. Third, the author's tone is sometimes too polemic, which can undermine the credibility of his academic project. And, although Campeau devoted his professional life to the defence of the unemployed, he should have recognized some of the post-war system's shortcomings instead of simply recalling the "good old times" when genuine social rights were fully acknowledged. Recognizing the negative consequences of the neo-liberal project should not lead progressive scholars to idealize postwar policies. Finally, the author's discussion about the impact of free trade and economic globalization on neo-liberal reforms is rather superficial and, ultimately, problematic. More work is needed to assess the impact of free trade and NAFTA on unemployment insurance and Canadian social policy at large. Overall, *From UI to EI* should be required reading for scholars in the field, and because the book is well written and translated, informed citizens could also find it stimulating.

DANIEL BÉLAND *University of Calgary*

The Territorial Politics of Welfare
Nicola McEwen and Luis Moreno, eds.
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Canada is the only non-European Union country included in this original collection about welfare regimes and nation building, sub-central states and supranational influences on solidarity. Individual chapters are also dedicated to the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium and the Nordic region. Included are two chapters on European influences on national practices.

In a thorough and well-constructed Introduction, the editors argue that "territoriality and welfare have too often lived separated lives" (1) and this collection seeks to overcome the divide. Using a "regime approach," they connect nation building and welfare state development patterns, in light of the challenges from neo-liberalism. These challenges are specified as globalization/continentalization, territorial minorities (sub-state claims) and marketization. While the Introduction celebrates the value