

OUT OF CONTROL?: POLITICAL HISTORY IN CANADA AS WORLD-SYSTEMS THEORY

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Abstract

What would explain the political history in Canada as the initial question might ask, while the answers that follow range from the fairly unique to the rather ubiquitous. By applying then the principles from world-systems theory to those of “the control model,” recurrent paradoxes in Canada—about a centralized confederation, the “mature-dependent” economy, consensual democracy despite Westminster institutions, a two-party system without “alternation” (more liberal, less conservative regimes), and multiple sovereign nations (First, Francophone, Anglophone) amid one hegemonic state—could now resolve themselves consistently as a single case-study via the comparative and international, historicist, context. In the final analysis, while no one account could fare any better or worse than all others, preliminary findings from Canada’s political history amount to the very organized effects—about interdisciplinary scope and methods—whose causes are just “out of control.”

Résumé

Que expliquerais l’histoire politique dans Canada comme la question initial mai demander, pendant les réponses postérieur inclure assez unique et très univesel. Appliquant les principes dès théoïre systémique du monde avec du <<modèle du contrôle>>, les paradoxes continu dans Canada—confédération centralisé, l’économie <<mature-dependent>>, démocratie consensus, les institutions du Westminster, un bipartisme sans <<alternation>> (plus régime liberal, moins conservateur) et avec nations souverain multiple (Indien d’Amérique, Francophone, Anglophone) en un étate hegemonique—recommencerais maintenant conséquemment comme un l’étude de cas seul via comparé et internationale contexte historique. Dans l’analyse final, les résultants preliminarre de la historie politique cannadienne rendre les très organisèrent—de l’optique et methodologie interdisciplinaire—duquel causent sont <<dehors du contrôle>>.

OUT OF CONTROL?: POLITICAL HISTORY IN CANADA AS WORLD-SYSTEMS THEORY

The political history of Canada is a dialectical one synthesized by the multiplicitous desire for recurring rights and recognition versus those necessary realities that perpetually suppress via structural stratification. For as Hegel would reason, any political history must recount the metaphorical struggle of recognition between master and slave however transposed—by analogy—to real world individuals, institutions, instances, or interests, across time/space. So whether physical or philosophic, forms of conflict apparently compromise political history in Canada by subjecting such discursive perceptions to real objectivity. All told, however, it is never enough to identify (nor isolate) the general course of political history in Canada—by chronologizing people, periods, and places—without such specified terms and conditions.

The initial question to ask then, both here and elsewhere, is what could now distinguish the political history in Canada from all others such that the subsequent answers suggestively prove the one commonality about general scope and methods whose principles cannot apply their specifications. For as students and scholars of political history in Canada would know all too well despite their unfamiliar disciplinary differences (Cairns 1974; Guy 1986), such recurring themes—from democratic governance (Aucoin 1996) at home with pragmatic idealism (Melakopides 1998) abroad—cannot readily reconcile the subject itself by objective distinctions amid inept consistencies via any logical theory versus so many paradoxical realities (Williams 1989; Nossal 1994; Salee 1996/1997; Keating 2001; Honda 2007).¹ Strictly speaking, as Kenneth Waltz (1986:340) might otherwise recommend, “...concentrate on separate theories of internal and external politics until someone figures out a way...to enjoin...historical study...”

Whether in Canada or elsewhere, any idealist account of political history must always amount to the disconnected linkages about beginnings and ends that somehow intermediate—circular causes versus linear effects, ideology as methodology, with different agents via similar structures—across time/space. So despite any possible convolutions to the contrary (Popper 1957; Toynbee 1961; Spengler 1962; Lukács 1971; Braudel 1977; McNeill 1982; Cooper 1984; Fukuyama 1992; Hobsbawm 1997), the realities of political history seemingly reflect the marxist perspective on conflict—marked by the relationship between repression versus resistance—through developmental cycles that rise and fall with materialist pursuits.

While marxism is by no means the only theory of political history available, such ends about dialectical-materialism prove rather convenient despite the fairly incommensurable scope and methods in comparison to other perspectives. Since “political history” must begin at some departure point with a course and destination by which to take then arrive, economic-determinism arguably gives directionality through simplifying the complexities that abound the debate between subject and object, with concurrence versus contestation, as a “one way or the other” discourse. For as it

¹This would include “uncommon democracy” from one-party dominant regimes, decentralized federalism, Anglophone civic culture amid a bilingual, multiethnic, society, welfare capitalism which has somehow sustained a “hard currency” through “dependent-development,” and solid commitments to international norms despite such soft flexibility about “the just war doctrine,” peacekeeping operations, and selective sanctions.

happens, the political history of Canada ineludibly reflects the marxist perspectives via economic-determinism (Clement 1983; Kelebay 1993). All told, however, to say or surmise that political history in Canada yields the marxist account of dialectical-materialism (Ryerson 1960; McNally 1981:57) cannot be sound nor valid apart from specifying the general structure itself about how (and why) emancipation varies with exploitation via hegemonic discourses.

While repression and resistance are by no means thematically unique to the political history of Canada, such ends prove so ubiquitous that they just cannot suggest otherwise when or where simplifying those complexities—amid the hegemonic discourse itself—however understood with explanations about true class-struggle against false-consciousness. For as Gregory Kealey (1995:124) contends, “Hegemony has...to be renewed, recreated, defended...and challenged by pressures not all its own.” To say or surmise, however, that political history in Canada is narrated and written as some hegemonic discourse now means such ends (and beginnings) must ask then answer those questions about the dialectic itself—through the one “double-movement,” “war of position,” and “reciprocal siege”—henceforth anticipated by Polanyi (1944), Gramsci, and other fellow travelers.

All told, that is, what sort of dialectic (if any) could synthesize the political history in Canada consistently when or where the subsequent answers to such initial questioning must somehow establish those actors and factors—which triangulate the subversiveness, struggle, and salvation—through deconstruction across/time space. For as it happens, because no single actor nor factor (from the physical to the philosophic) has consistently predominated across time/space among multiple subordinative others, any account of the political history in Canada unavoidably yields more pragmatism with less parsimony about some unified paradigm that would synchronize theory and reality. It will never suffice, whether here or elsewhere, to connect the political history of Canada with conflictive cycles in development—that rise and fall across time/space—apart from isolating certain agents from various structures amid so much isomorphism.

Whether “political” or otherwise, any theoretical question to ask here is the initial point at which the history of Canada begins all the while such subsequent textbook answers produce the one bifurcation between those events before and after 1867(Morton 2001; Conrad and Finkel 2003; Bumsted 2004a, 2004b). For even though the political history of Canada cannot be so readily condensed, the oddity lies with true convenience rather than actual contemplation just to avoid such arduous details—about when or how the general discourse commenced amid specifications—that would otherwise yield hermeneutic cul-du-sacs through slippery slopes by semantical sleight. The political history of Canada—however defined or devoid—must start somewhere amid such unresolved debates about means and ends.

For better or worse, the political history of Canada always begins (if not ends) with Anglo-Franco relations—broadly defined, yet quite devoid—as a dialectic synthesized by various agents amid certain structures across/time space from the Seven Year’s War, to the Constitution Act(s),on

throughout the present day Confederation.² To understand then the political history of Canada as some discourse that originates from outcomes between English and French, such explanations should neither presume nor preclude the physical without the philosophized perspective—whether seen through language, culture, countries, provinces, people, governments, or otherwise—in now establishing these patterns by sporadic deconstruction. All told, the political history of Canada is inseparable from a sociology—that fuses different theories about agents, structure, and communicative action (Linklater 1990) amid similar realities—replete with interacting units and levels always disjointed by inert (if not unpredictable) directions (Buzan 1995) across time/space.

With so many possible actors and factors in the political history of Canada, hard is it to simplify any initial causes from all subsequent effects that might somehow reflect the semblances about consistency through such reoccurring themes despite the rather inconstant developments. For at the risk of much generalization, however, it might be said that such conventional narratives about political history in Canada always synthesize a specified dialectic—between expansion beguiling exploitation—through subtle movements, with bidirectional shifting, from “right” to “left” and back again. So whether figurative or literal, the political history of Canada constantly follows a right-left trajectory—through geographic, economic, ideologic, civic, and pedagogic developments—evident in the resultant Confederation (from European discovery to North American Dominion), industrial growth across sectors, ruling regimes who govern with pragmatic policy platforms (Chodos et al 1991), the way that the subject is itself objectified (Berger 1986; McKillop 1999; McKay 2000; Glassford 2002), then resisted by certain opposition parties, pressure groups, specialized interests, the general public, the media, academia, among various others. So to synthesize, then, the political history of Canada through one double-movement (against exploitation amid expansion) means that such ends about the dialectic itself now initiate subsequent directionalities with linear cycles—thereby understanding these explanations sequentially, as right-left, outside-in, and top-down, rather than any other way around—across time/space.

For given rather circular causes amid various linear effects which abound the course of political history in Canada, any logic at all taken from these patterns must be just as sporadic when or where theorizing reality itself after the fact with such thorough scope and methods that parsimoniously reflect much pragmatism well beforehand. Discursively, that is, all theories of political history originate from outcomes which just summarize details, without much surmising about design, through induction rather than any deductive logic whatsoever. So in terms of any agents and structure, then, the conditions abounding political history amid Canada itself would now lead to path-analysis, apart from all isomorphic circulations, that synthesize the dialectic via expansion versus exploitation across time/space. For the discourse of political history in Canada is a sociology constituted by various actors and factors that begins as “structural-functionalism,” but ends with *systemic-determinism*, through such inverted connections between nationalism and imperialism.

²The point here is not to trivialize specific details about people, places, and events in the discourse itself by telescoping the perspective through the very generalizations which no textbook nor discipline (political science, history, and others, perhaps), would ever disregard.

Nationalism and Imperialism: The Political History of Canada in the Modern World-System

It has often been thought—in both the study and statecraft of world affairs—that the actions which initiate the nationalist pathway seldom (if ever) detour from the subsequent route to imperialism as the search for self-determination loses directionality amid self-preservation when or where the idealized existence by any one country really means exploiting all others with such expansionist ends. So by no means disputing the ends of any such linkages at all between nationalism and imperialism, the discourse is itself dialectical in that circular causes cannot possibly synthesize alongside linear effects with apparent realities about disconnection via expansion versus exploitation. For as Kenneth Waltz would reason (1979: 35, 38), “The causes of...imperialism explain national and international politics by the effects ‘the capitalist world economy’ has on different...systems...that...shows in many interesting ways how...one...confuses theory with reality...”

To say or suggest, then, that nationalism and imperialism are dialectically synthesized amid disconnected linkages (in which one would either invert or instigate the other) now objectifies the subject with marxist explanations understood by those outcomes originating from capitalism itself, as Wallerstein (2004) might reason, despite the discursive paradox—about initial causes versus subsequent effects—whose agents and structure define yet defy the modern world-system across time/space. So logically speaking, any political history tied to the modern world-system—with expansionist means through exploitative ends—only proves sound if it validates the origins of capitalism, as both the subject and object, whose subsequent outcomes initiate nationalism and imperialism.

While not disputing world-systems theory at all as a possible explanation for any political history consigned by nationalism and imperialism amid a dialectical synthesis via expansion versus exploitation, such realities understood from capitalist causes and their effects generalize the right structure with the wrong specifications about the agents themselves. For it is not enough to sufficiently reason that the actualities abounding political history—with a dialectic synthesized by expansion through exploitation—analogs the capitalist discourse as some medium between nationalism and imperialism apart from those agents who structure such functional determinisms across the levels of analysis.

So if “the world-system” is the ultimate cause of political history as some would surmise, then such tertiary effects from expansion amid exploitation invariably place the structure before any (or all) agents by presuming an ethereal existence after the physical fact. For the teleological scope projected by world-systems theory (amid nationalism and imperialism) obscures the realities about political history itself through ontological methods that identify the general structure without specific agents all the while isolating the directionalities, across levels of analysis, from the “outside-in” to “the top-down” rather than any other transmissibility.

All told, that is, any complexities abounding the structure of political history—whether as world-systems theory or otherwise—must acquire real substance by which the agents themselves can only relinquish. Because, however, no one actor or factor consistently predominates across

time/space amid all subordinative others, any account of political history would amount to permanent permeability (amid expansion and exploitation) abounding the modern world-system as nationalism against imperialism. For given such complexities, political history can now be simplified with world-systems theory by literally taking out “the modern”—as a point of reference to the dialectic synthesized via expansion versus exploitation—which then actualizes those figurative allegories about nationalism and imperialism, in such deterministic functionalities amid agents and structure, despite what Gunder Frank (1998) and others (Schneider 1997; Hall and Chase-Dunn 1994) would reason.

So even though political history could be discoursed through linear cycles of exploitation and expansion, the oddity lies with the truth about generalizations versus specification—in that nationalism and imperialism provide the means to the ends however preempted amid the modern world-system—whose time/space (as functionally deterministic, circa late 19th century onward) structure both the physical and philosophic agents by ascription. For whether conflictual or cohesive, political history must begin at some point with certain means that end amid various actors and factors. In dialectical terms, the conditions abounding political history as a discourse across time/space synthesize at least five major levels, units, and cooperative/conflictual modes of analysis whose isomorphic interactions circulate linearly from expansion to exploitation (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Levels, Units, and Cooperative/Conflictual Modes of Analysis

Levels	Units	Cooperative/Conflictual Modes
Non-National	isms	Ideational
Sub-National	localized politics	Intersectional
Just-National	nations/states	Intergovernmental
Trans-National	NGOs and MNCs	Intercultural
Supra-National	IGOs	Institutional

Political history, written as such, thereby presupposes that something (or someone) narrates the discourse without absolutism, but abstainment instead, about idealized truths against factual realities. For it matters not who or what might dematerialize the course of political history in ways that exploit, rather than exonerate, the agents and structure theorized by those realities abounding the modern world-system through capitalistic expansion.

All told—if the winners, so to speak, do in fact write “political history”—any such discourse would now then lose itself fatalistically amid immaterial agents with indeterminate structure across time/space. For what Antonio Gramsci and others (Cox 1986; Gill and Law 1993) would term as “hegemony” yields the one condition that worsens the betterment of political history through a dialectic synthesized through multiplicatus forms and functions—across units and levels, from the existential to the ethereal, enervating with expansion amid exploitation—theorized by those realities in the modern world-system.

For any definitive logic at all that deduces the realities of political history lies with the true dialectical synthesis—amid nationalism as imperialism via expansion versus exploitation—so consigned by world-systems theory, contrary to such indeterminate inductions, about how (or why) outcomes originating from “core” and “periphery” intermediate the same structure despite different agents (Honda 2006). Equating then the discourse of political history with world-systems theory now means that such ends transcribed as reality subsequently initiate neither core nor periphery per se, but the “semi-periphery” instead, through the capitalist world economy. For as students and scholars alike of political history in Canada know rather well despite any unfamiliar disciplinary differences, the developmental departure from Crown Colony to Constitutional Confederation could only arrive at the matured destination point by mediating those subjugated dependencies amid British Imperialism/Commonwealth Status and American interests/investment against the sovereign discretions about domestic governance (civic/multiethnic, bilingual, democratized, society), sustainable economic growth through trade (capital imports/material exports), production (primary goods/tertiary services), finance (Keynesian/Neoliberalism), and foreign affairs that apply such principles (with just war/humanitarianism).

For the ultimate question to incessantly ask out of political history in Canada suggests its initial purpose amid the most abridged yet least mistaken narrations all the while any such subsequent answers prove otherwise—against pragmatist means for parsimonious ends—about circular linearity, transcribed as structural-functionalism rather than systemic-determinism, long (“Kondratiev”) waves and short (“Kuznet”) cycles (Thompson 1983; Modelski 1987; Goldstein 1988; Levy 1991; Goldfrank 1999), across various “stages,” (Rostow 1960; Organski 1965) through certain dialectical developments matured by synthesizing exploitation with emancipation. As Harold Innis (1950) and others (Bertram 1963; Watkins 1977; Richards 1985; Clark Jones 1987; Comor 1994; McAllister 2007:74) would reason, the structure of political history in Canada has been paradoxically held together by “the staple thesis,” that outs those causes and effects about matured development to meet industrial demand (whether at home or abroad) with raw material supply (fur, fish, lumber, grains, oil, aluminum) however torn apart from the given reality through interacting agents across the world-system.

So for better or worse, the political history of Canada thus written as a discourse—on how (and why) an exploitable crown dominion overcame such dependency by undergoing expansive constitutional development—could not have conducted its “drive to maturity” (Rostow 1960:8-9) without recurrent conflicts (whether physical or philosophic, at home or abroad) played out into a zero-sum game amid the modern world-system that equalizes gains and losses via the semi-periphery. For the long *durée* (if any at all) in the political history of Canada is shortened by not understanding developmental statism per se, but diplomatic statecraft instead, such that initiated explanations about how (or why) ascent and decline amid “the great powers” (Kennedy 1987; Schweller 1994; Chapnick 1999; Tammen et al 2000; Black 2007) subsequently effect lesser ones from their causes via more externalities versus less exploitations. As it happens, that is, the political history of Canada so transcribed—from colony to confederation—arrived at matured development through deliberate departures from great power, hegemonic, rivalries all the while reaping such spoiled rewards without much spillover or risk (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. The Stages of Growth in Canada: Hegemonic Rivalries as Maturated Development

The Stages of Growth in Canada	Hegemonic Rivalries		Developmental Spillovers
Traditional Society	War of Spanish Succession (1702-1713)		Nova Scotia and Rupert's Land
	French Indian Wars (1756-1763)		Province of Quebec
	American Revolution and Its Aftermath	(1776-1791)	PEI, New Brunswick, Upper and Lower Canada
Preconditions for Takeoff	War of 1812 and Its Aftermath	(1812-1816)	"Responsible Government"
	Rebellions of 1837 (1837-1840)		United Province of Canada
	Mexican-American War (1845-1848)		Oregon Territory (US), 49 th Parallel, British Columbia and Vancouver Island (UK)
	US Civil War Reconstruction and Fenian Raids	(1861-1867)	British North America Act
The Takeoff	Second Boer War (1899-1902) First World War (1914-1919) Mukden Incident (1931)		Autonomous Armed Forces "Staples" as Growth Strategy Balfour Declaration Statute of Westminster Ottawa Agreements
Drive to Maturity	Second World War (1939-1945) Korean War (1948-1952) Suez Crisis (1956)		Heavy Industry and Nuclear Power Welfare State Newfoundland (and Labrador) Multilateralism and Peacekeeping
Age of Mass Consumption	Cuban Missile Crisis (1963) Vietnam War (1965-1973) Yom Kippur War (1973) Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) Oka Crisis (1990) Persian Gulf War (1991) Bosnian Civil War (1992-1995) Kosovo Crisis (1996-1999) War on Terror (2001-)		Service Economy Oil Productivity Official Languages Act Constitution Act Charter of Rights and Freedoms Meech Lake and Charlottetown NAFTA Clarity Act Federal Accountability Act Québécois as "nation"

So irrespective of what political history in Canada actually portrays at any given time or space, such perceptions about matured development (from colony to confederacy) depict the parallax that abounds domestic governance amid foreign affairs all the while deflecting those lackadaisical “great power transitions” as the only viewpoint for alternative ascendancy and decline via the world-system. For as all students and scholars alike of political history in Canada would hereby concur despite any such disciplinary differences contended elsewhere, reference to *dependent-development* versus “mature-dependency” (Hammer and Gartrell 1986:205) via world-systems theory distances reality itself given more connotations taken from less conceptualizations amid actors and factors that depose those equal yet neutralized positions about “core” and “periphery.” Simply said, that is, the allusive complexities abounding the dearth of political history in Canada out themselves, so to speak, through the subtleties about development—as inseparable from the given economic-determinism despite the disjuncture taken amid agents and structure with isomorphic-functionalities—across the modern world-system quite defined by the rather devoid semi-periphery. .

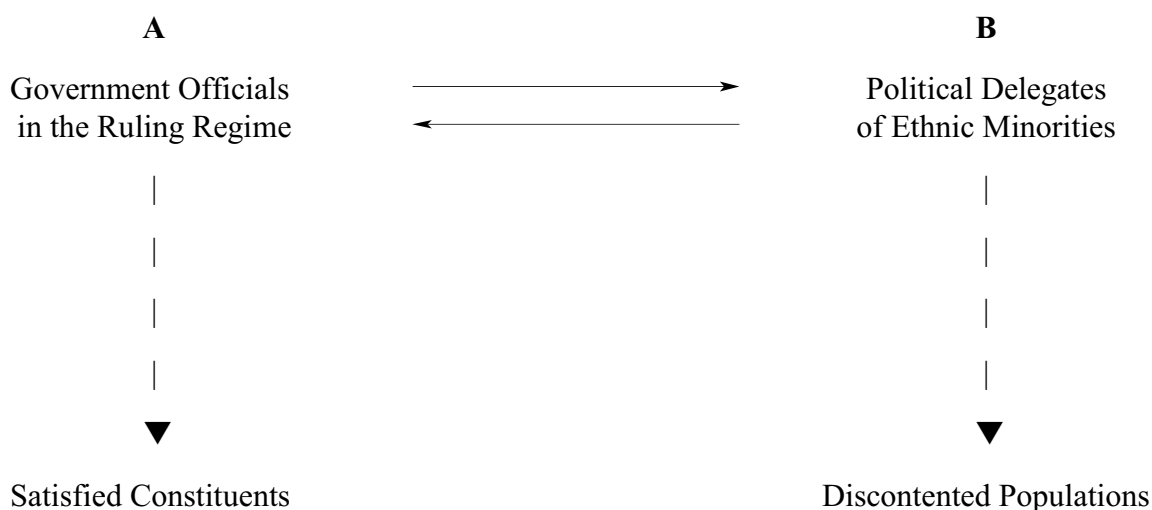
Obscurities aside, however, understanding the course of political history in Canada as world-systems theory means that such ends explained by reality would clearly revert themselves when or where they conjoin development with dependency through “core” and “periphery.” Logically speaking, that is, to ascribe the realities of political history in Canada as world-systems theory neither proves sound nor valid—amid ubiquitous terms and unique conditions—via class-structure versus capitalist-agents. For as it happens, the class-structure abounding the political history of Canada ineludibly lacks those capitalist-agents to suppress or usurp—that world-systems theory otherwise expects (Glenday 1989; Williams 1989; Resnick 1990; Shannon 1996:113-117) beyond the mere repressions and resistance—evident by more civic/ethnic consciousness with less economic concerns about conflict versus cohesion via liberal democracy, rather than any “transitions-paradigm” (Carothers 2002) at all from development, trapped somewhere between “core” and “periphery.” In the end, the political history of Canada can only make sense by synthesizing such dialectics—about matriculated development amid matured dependency—that paradoxically begin with transpositions from consensus to control.

Transpositions from Consensus to Control: Beginning the End of Political History in Canada

Years ago, at Cold War’s end, Francis Fukuyama (1989:3) proclaimed “...liberal democracy as the final form of human government.” For Canada, however, liberal democracy was never so simple but rather complex as the discourse of political history suggestively proves with just about ever writing or text objectified by the subject itself across time/space from agents to structure. The end of history as such thus means for Canada those beginnings that abound not the arrival per se, but the departure instead, given the lackadaisical course taken from colony to confederation. For as Fared Zakaria (1997:24) would say, “...liberal democracy might...be not the final destination...but just one of many possible exits.” All told, that is, the political history of Canada neither ends nor begins with liberal democracy written as such. So even though Canada was never “stuck in history” (Fukuyama 1989:15) nor ever outed by some “transitions-paradigm” (Carothers 2002), the oddity of its matured development always lies with the truth about consignment rather than any conformity to liberal democracy as the stationary paradox across time/space.

For over the past twenty years—ever since Arendt Lijphart introduced the “typologies of democratic systems” with the resultant *consociation* (1968; 1977; 1981; 1991; 1999)—the inability to place Canada in any comparative context at all recurrently complicates simplistic standardizations (Dobell 1986; Bakvis 1988; McRae 1991a; Lemieux 1996; Young 1998; Gaines 1999; Ulsaner 2000; Studlar and Christensen 2006; Honda 2007) about the state, the parties, the masses, the electorate (among others), under which this rather sporadic discourse warrants removal through political history writ as an open society closed off by multiple conflicts dividing consensus atop liberal/conservative, civic/ethnic, federal/provincial, cultural/constitutional, frameworks however shaken out against their very foundations.³ All told, that is, any normative account of political history written as “consensus” must amount to similar trust among different groups—ethnic, linguistic, civic, economic, ideologic or otherwise—through more collusion by elites with less consideration for the masses themselves given such interactions taken from the top-down rather than the bottom-up (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. A Depiction of Power-Sharing by Consensus



As several studies suggest, however, any political history written at all with the discourse of consensus proves conflictual when or where those responsible for such representations lose their credibility amid lucrative gains at which point those who once believed now mistrust such directions by following controversial ends rather than conventional means. For even though the course of political history in Canada has not been so objectified by radical, reactionary, extremism, the oddity lies with the truth about the subject itself outed amid the civic/multiethnic society such that the Quiet Revolution, 1969 White Paper, Meech Lake/Charlottetown Accord(s), Aboriginal Crises (Oka, Ipperwash, Burnt Church, Gustafsen Lake, Caledonia Land Rights) resonated loud enough to signal much discontent across the given consensus otherwise taken as liberal democracy.

³Truth be told, however, “consensus” as any political history so written always lies with the myth of equitable balances. For as Arend Lijphart constantly laments, the logic of consensus would apply to those societies structured by *fragmented* “political cultures” that need not in principle integrate when or where *coalescent* elite behavior (among group leaders, officials, and other representatives) can interact and simulate the ideal egalitarian effects—through inclusion or outreach, ethnic/regional autonomy, proportional representation, and the minority veto—without ever having the real pluralistic causes.

So dialectically speaking, that is, the political history of Canada writ as a synthesis—via people versus provinces about alienation amid assimilation—always recurs yet resolves itself with cohesion despite contention. For the ultimate question to ask of political history in Canada is just what causes those effects (about actors and factors, whether physical or philosophic) that would come together yet go apart all the while such subsequent answers out consensus by initiating control. For irrespective of whether political history would portray itself as either pedagogy given by scholars or policy taken from statesmen, such depictions abounding those terms and conditions lack any insights at all about the very outlook reflected via false-consciousness versus truthful consecrations. Any dialectic that would synthesize the political history of Canada at all must be reducible to English and French (whether by language, culture, communities, or otherwise) through competitive coactions about expanding consensus with control. So instead of looking at development in strictly economic terms as marxism would, such lax conditions focus upon the obscurities outed by political history amid the disconnected linkages with capitalism.

While by no means disputing “the conflict-as-usual thesis” (Rosencrance 1999:80-82), such extraordinary ends about reality itself—reflected through political history—compromises the maturated development of countries and cultures with nationalistic agents against imperialist structures. For as students and scholars alike of political history know all too well despite their unfamiliar disciplinary differences, any determinism that immobilizes maturated development in Canada is not “economic” per se but *ethnic* instead. For any time conflict arises amid the course of political history in Canada, consensus culminates with whatever space is given—via various actors versus certain factors, whether physical or philosophic—by simply taking control from one complex to another.

In principle, then, the practicalities of political history for Canada amount to ideas, identities, interests, and institutions such that those accounts (expressed as “isms”) now breakdown the dialectical setup by synthesizing the English (“Westminster”) civic culture with the French (*Québécois*) linguistic ethnicity as the subtle choice between compliance versus complacency. For as it happens, the course of political history in Canada has always led to immobility by outing the same difference amid cohesion and contention.

Paradoxes aside, that is, the political history of Canada understood thus far—by students and scholars alike, despite their differences—means explaining such recurrent ends logically through reality itself (about conflictive cohesiveness, from agents to structure, across time/space) as chaos theory amid the control model. For as some would suggest, the political history of Canada proves compatible with the control model despite such contentions modes about a limited expanse across time/space (Cannon 1982:55), positivist/normative discrepancies (McRae 1991a:101-102), or majority rule versus minority rights (Honda 2007), among others.

Notwithstanding, though, any difficulties amid the course of political history in Canada might just simplify all the meticulous details—otherwise encountered by such elusive textbook surveys—that would generalize the reasons as to how (or why) contentious coactions paradoxically recur through inequitable-power balances with the same differences about consensus and control (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Contentious Cohesion: The Same Difference of Consensus and Control

The Same Difference	Consensus	Control
1. Resource Allocation	Mutual Representation	Majority Rule
2. Group Linkages	Contractual/Concurrent	Expansionist/Exploitative
3. Reciprocity	Normal	Dysfunctional
4. Agents and Structure	Independent/Isomorphic	Dependent/Deterministic
5. Public Good	General Welfare	Specialized Interests
6. Social Stability	Plural/Egalitarian	Plutocratic/Elitism
7. Political Order	Level-Playing Field	Vertical Chain-of-Command

All told, what Robert Putman (2000) elsewhere designated *Bowling Alone* could hereby approximate the political history of Canada written as the really impossible “seven-ten split” (Dahl 1998:45; Studlar and Christensen 2006:840) devoid amid both definitive ends.

Abstract metaphors aside, that is, the actual message of political history in Canada so transcribed across time/space discourses itself by synthesizing the dialectics amid emancipation and enslavement played out as a zero-sum game via French versus English actors with factors contrary to all or any others. For even though the political history of Canada cannot possibly be reduced to just the contentious coactions between English and French (people, provinces, or otherwise), the oddity lies with the ultimate truth itself about the realistic expanse that amalgamates such disparate interests, identities, and institutions as one majority against all minorities.

So if political history ever amounted to anything at all—whether as study or statecraft—such accounts would subsequently initiate the struggle for power via structures of order versus agents with opposition that need not surrender their desires amid change and continuity. From a sociological standpoint, political history as such oscillates by obstructions that reflect the realities of individual units interacting with the collective system for domination rather than dependence. All told, what is political history (Stearns 1983:3; Garrard 1983:105; Wiseman et al 1985; Kousser 1990) as the question would ask suggestively proves the same difference—about the inequitable balance of power between disparate groups that coact (if not compete) for parity—writ by any such realistic answers possible across time/space.

While Canada is by no means unremarkable as a case-study, such ends—about political history itself—seem less so when or where comparing the more lucrative in which conflict amid the multiethnic society really plays out with just two groups that vie for their own majority rule against the representation (and rights) of all other minorities so objectified through subjectivity (Smooha 1980; McRae 1991b:197; Lusztig and Knox 1999; Honda 2008). For whether figurative or literal, “Liberal Democracy” comprises the ultimate aim of political history in Canada despite the mere mishaps compromised by conflict rather than consensus via repression versus representation.

Equalization—not equality—is the best possible means by which to summarize (if not surmise) the worst realistic ends about political history for Canada without any detailed proof whatsoever.

Presumptions aside, that is, such proprieties amid the political history of Canada lie with the truth about devolutionary development rather than just matriculated maturation. For however distorted political history may appear, Canada portrays itself with clear realities that paradoxically reflect the logic of expansion by enervation as something (or someone) always undergoes devourment all the while others manage to overcome such plight. So whether economic or otherwise, there is something to say about “consumption” as political history in that the search for various utility loses itself by certain aversion of risk through such bounded rationalities writ with uncertainty. For the actors and factors that compose the structure of political history in Canada simultaneously separate such interacting agents through deconstruction outed by centripetal centrifuges. All told, it is not the “compact theory” (Romney 1999) per se but the one about “the contract” (Lloyd 1901) instead that chronicles political history for Canada written as such amid the confusion of initial causes and subsequent effects circulating through linear realities with multiple directionality. In short, the long duree of political history for Canada means understanding those ends dialectically by the synthesis which explains how (and why) development as such—whether social, cultural, linguistic, economic, geographic or otherwise—would devolve from dominion to dominoes.

From Dominion to Dominoes: Political History in Canada Since 1867

All too often, any survey of political history in Canada is rarely (if ever) replete without referencing Quebec (Bercuson and Cooper 1991; Fournier 1991; Resnick 1991; Gagnon and Lachapelle 1996). For whether past or present, the realities of political history in Canada always seem to begin and end amid Quebec rather than anywhere else. From colony to confederation, that is, the political history of Canada writ as a discourse about development could not mature without Quebec. So given then the pivotal significance of Quebec to political history in Canada, any discourse on the subject at all is now immobilized by taking out those actors and factors written off as trivial despite their objectivity.

For affixed as such, the political history of Canada abates itself with those agents and structure that somehow go together all the while coming apart amid any dialectic synthesized via English versus French. So whether physical or philosophic, the reality of political history for Canada reflects those ambiguous amalgamations about English and French—as interests, identities, institutions, individuals, among others—that recurrently yield cohesion despite such episodic contentions from actors to factors.

For even though the political history of Canada cannot possibly be reduced to just Quebec alone, the oddity lies with the truth about the expanse itself through realities that assimilate Westminster institutions and Francophone identities amid liberal democracy all the while alienating any other interests from people, parties, or provinces across time/space. So if Quebec were to symbolize anything at all about the political history of Canada, such realities validate the paradox between compliance and complacency as contentious coactions that expand (and exploit) through social contraction.

While “satisfaction guaranteed” so to speak is never any realistic way at all of answering such questions about political history for Canada, “disavowed discontent” might just theorize the discourse itself writ amid the subtle impasse as the dialectic synthesized via matriculated development versus maturated devolution. Philosophical dispositions aside, that is, the realities of political history for Canada lie with the truth about liberal democracy as the very problem and solution abounding the discourse itself so lackadaisically written. So whether figurative or literal, the discourse of political history for Canada written off through rationalizations about liberal democracy at any “end” (Cooper 1984; Fukuyama 1992) whatsoever paradoxically begins by turning on itself with evolutionary enervations from the existential to the ethereal across agents and structure amid their disconnected linkages.

For as students and scholars alike of political history in Canada know quite well despite their unfamiliar disciplinary differences, the move from Colony to Confederation has been periodically immobilized by the Constitution itself such that sovereignty—or just those rights about self-determination—could prove incompatible amid the constant federalist arrangements agitated through majority rule despite minority representation with hegemony rather than reciprocity. So comparatively speaking, then, what some Americanists have elsewhere designated as their own political history amid *The Bittersweet Century* (Goldstene 1989) or *The Unfinished Nation* (Brinkley) might hereby approximate Canada much better now despite such worsening terms and conditions about absolutism itself ever since 1867. In the end, while no one survey could possibly begin to capture any or all perspectives on political history, such realities for Canada are written off by the discourse itself through constant generalizations specified sporadically with those contentious cohesions that seem just “out of control.”

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