

Constitutional Politics in Multinational States

Université du Québec à Montréal
Pavillon Hubert-Aquin, bureau A-3620
1255, Saint-Denis, Montréal QC
H2X 3R9 Canada
514 987-3000 poste 1609



Thursday October 27

18:30 Welcome dinner (likely at hotel restaurant)

Friday October 28

9:00 Welcoming of participants and guests.

9:15-10:15

Panel 1

Jocelyn Maclure (Université Laval): "Quebec and Canada Beyond the Constitutional Angst."

Chair: François Rocher (University of Ottawa)

Discussant: Guy Laforest (Université Laval)

10:15-10:30

Pause

10:30-12:30

Panel 2

Matt Qvortrup (Coventry University): "Referendums and the Management of Multinational Societies."

Nicola McEwen (University of Edinburgh): "Between Independence and Interdependence: Exploring the Dynamics of Scottish Self Government."

Chair: John McGarry (Queen's University)

Discussant: André Lecours (University of Ottawa)

12:30-13:30

Lunch



Constitutional Politics in Multinational States

Université du Québec à Montréal
Pavillon Hubert-Aquin, bureau A-3620
1255, Saint-Denis, Montréal QC
H2X 3R9 Canada
514 987-3000 poste 1609



13:30-15:30

Panel 3

François Rocher (University of Ottawa) and Elisenda Casanas Adam (University of Edinburgh): “Responding to Secession Referenda: Constitutional and Quasi-constitutional change in Quebec and Scotland.”

David Sinardet (VUB): “Nationalism and socio-economic cleavages. Consequences for constitutional politics in Belgium.”

Chair: André Lecours (University of Ottawa)

Discussant: Nicola McEwen (University of Edinburgh)

15:30-15:45

Break

15:45-16:45

Panel 4

Soeren Keil (Canterbury Christ Church University) and Paul Anderson (Canterbury Christ Church University): “Bosnia and Herzegovina – Constitutional Politics in a ‘State of Minorities’”

Chair: Guy Laforest (Université Laval)

Discussant: Johanne Poirier (McGill University)

Dinner: 19:00 L’orée du bois (Chelsea). Leaving hotel at 18:30.

Saturday October 29

8:30-10:30

Panel 5

Jaime Lluch (University of Puerto Rico): “Constitutional Moments and the Paradox of Constitutionalism in Multinational Democracies: Comparing Catalonia and Puerto Rico.”

César Colino (UNED) and Angustias Hombrado (UNED): “Constitutional reforms under the Threat of Secession? Conditions and Options for the accommodation of Catalonia and a Renewed Federalism in Spain.”

Chair : André Lecours (University of Ottawa)

Discussant: Guy Laforest (Université Laval)



Constitutional Politics in Multinational States

Université du Québec à Montréal
Pavillon Hubert-Aquin, bureau A-3620
1255, Saint-Denis, Montréal QC
H2X 3R9 Canada
514 987-3000 poste 1609



10:30-10:45

Break

10:45-12:45

Panel 6

Martin Papillon (Université de Montréal): "Indigenous Peoples and Incremental Constitutionalism in Canada: Transforming the settler state from within and from without."

Janique Dubois (University of Ottawa): "A Nation-to-Nation Relationship between Canada and the Métis: An end to 150 years of Unfulfilled Promises?"

Chair : François Rocher (University of Ottawa)

Discussant: Geneviève Motard (Université Laval)

12:45-13:45

Lunch

13:45-15:45

John McGarry (Queen's University): "Centripetalism, Consociationalism and Cyprus: the 'adoptability' question."

Marie-Joëlle Zahar (Université de Montréal) : "Constitutional Debates In the Shadow of Violence."

Chair : Martin Papillon (Université de Montréal)

Discussant : André Lecours (University of Ottawa)

15:45-16:00

Conclusion

Dinner : 19 :00 Mama Teresa (Chelsea) Leaving hotel at 18 :30.



**Gatineau-Ottawa
October 28-29, 2016**

**Constitutional Politics in Multinational States
Authors' Conference**

**Organized by
André Lecours, Johanne Poirier and Guy Laforest**

Multinational democracies are by nature political communities permeated by a great deal of friction as the self-determination claims of minority national communities coexist with the defense by the state of its (national) unity and territorial integrity. This inherent and often on-going tension within multinational democracies cannot hide the fact that these communities, as well as its minority nation(s), can experience critical junctures. We might now be living one such critical juncture in Spain, the United Kingdom, and Belgium as these countries are currently, or may soon, experience a period of 'mega-constitutional politics' where the relationship between the various communities in the state is altered or redefined. Constitutional politics in multinational states is especially complex, involving issues of recognition and self-government, among others.

The idea that we are now living in a critical juncture seems to be the clearest in Spain where, since 2010, the Catalan's mass popular demonstrations in support of the 'right to decide', the 'popular consultation' on Catalonia's political future, and elections fought on the issue of independence have all put tremendous pressure on the Spanish state. Catalonia is also at a crossroads, having to decide how to proceed in the face of the Spanish government's staunch refusal to negotiate some type of settlement. Constitutional politics, either to specifically address the Catalan question or to reform the system of Autonomous communities more broadly, seem to be almost unavoidable.

The United Kingdom is also experiencing a critical juncture in its constitutional history as Westminster has had to deliver on a 'vow' made by all main British political parties to proceed with significant reforms, in the aftermath of the Scottish referendum on independence in September 2014. Moreover, the post-referendum speech of Prime Minister Cameron has signalled that change would touch all the nations of the United Kingdom. For each of these nations, and perhaps Scotland in particular, the current period seems critical as they have to decide how to manoeuvre within a changing Kingdom, now most likely exiting the European Union. In this context, various political actors have to position themselves within constitutional politics.

Belgium has experienced many apparent crises in recent years as the different views of the Flemish and French-speaking communities on the future of the Belgian state has made government formation a difficult process. The country has often said to be at a crossroads. With on-going Flemish pressures for state reform spurred by the popularity of N-VA and the seemingly growing difficulties of finding agreement with Francophones, a critical juncture may await Belgium, Flanders, as well as the French-speaking community. A future round of constitutional negotiations (a 7th reform of the state) appears unavoidable.

In Canada, the 'Québec question' is not as visible as it has been at certain times in the past and constitutional politics is not on the short-term agenda. However, the Parti Québécois is looking for new leadership that can bolster its chances to achieve independence for the province. The PQ will -short of a seismic and improbable change in the province's party system - form a government at some point in the future. When this happens, a renewed push for independence by the PQ would present another challenge for the Canadian government. If the PQ were to change to the point that it no longer sought independence, the province would then experience a critical juncture in relation to the future of its politics. Moreover, Canada's Aboriginal populations are also looking to develop a new nation-to-nation relationship with the Government of Canada as Aboriginal leaders seek to improve the political, socio-economic and cultural conditions of their people.

The four cases of Belgium, Spain, the United Kingdom and Canada are most comparable cases insofar as they share liberal-democratic and decentralized systems. Yet, the nature of their constitutional politics present important differences which we are hoping can be identified and explained in the context of this conference. We will also discuss other cases (for example, the Puerto Rico-United States association, Cyprus, Bosnia) that can shed additional light on constitutional politics in multinational liberal-democratic states.

Participants at this authors' conference will be asked to think constitutional politics and the related current challenges faced by multinational states and minority nations through theoretical exploration, comparison, or single case studies. There is flexibility as to the exact nature of the various contributions. We are interested both in understanding how we got here and assessing options concerning the way ahead. In this latter context, we are foremost interested in constitutional politics, its dynamics, form, process, and pitfalls. Participants will be asked to prepare a paper (of approximately 8,000 words) for the conference.