Alain-G. Gagnon & José María Sauca (eds.)

Negotiating Diversity

Identity, Pluralism and Democracy

DIVERSITAS

Introduction

Alain-G. Gagnon & José María Sauca

This book on *Negotiating Diversity* builds on a research programme pertaining to Identity, Pluralism and Democracy that has been financed by the *Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación de España* (DER 2009-12683) and the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and it is part of a larger joint initiative led by the Research Group on Plurinational Societies (Université du Québec à Montréal) and the Research Group on Democracy and Justice (Carlos III University of Madrid). Since 2007, members of our research groups have been in constant dialogue and have organized a series of scientific activities both in Madrid and Montreal. Our two research groups have teamed up in developing a scientific discourse that stresses concepts such as Culture, Identity, Diversity, Pluralism, Trust, Civil Society, Citizenship and Governance. Members of our research teams have not only shared conceptual tools but they have also taken a stand on many fronts including respect to deep diversity, strengthening democratic practices, and empowering political communities.

The last two decades have witnessed an increase of interest in the domains of identity politics, legal and constitutional pluralism as well as in the implementation of democratic practices in complex societies. This is why we decided to concentrate on those key issues to improve present-day political life.

Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, we have experienced the emergence of new themes pertaining to cultural identity that brought to the fore not only religion, nationality, and gender but also historical trajectories, memory, migration, issues related to inclusion and exclusion and by extension citizenship. Minority and majority nations have been busy working on these fronts so as not to lose any ground, as if everything about these issues could reduced to a zero-sum game. In short, in addition to usual debates pertaining to community tensions and redistributive policies inspired by a theory of justice, there has emerged a field still to be plowed in the areas of recognition and empowerment.

Such political changes have led researchers to embark on a new journey and go beyond questions that are essentially descriptive and often times technical. Instead of examining qualitative dimensions linking political bodies, specialists have too often portrayed power relations from

a quantitative perspective. Scholars have generally focused on who is best positioned to find a solution that would concern the entire country. Responses have generally favored the central state. Other times, authors have focused on the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judiciary branches, failing to explore political dynamics between those powers or, in the cases of federal states, between orders of government.

Subsequent to an intense workshop, hosted in May 2010 by the Universidad Carlos III, we mandated conference speakers to write original contributions that took into account up-to-date materials and to cross-examine the literature. Contributions to this volume benefitted greatly from interactions with several professors involved in the conference. Many thanks to Xavier Arbos, Jesús Prieto de Pedro, Luis Rodríguez Abascal, Andrés de Francisco, Rainer Nickel, Francisco Colom, Carlos Thiebault Louis-André, José María Rosales, Maria José Fariñas and Alicia Cebada.

Colleagues took on the challenge and revisited their contributions with inspiration and drive. In addition to these original contributors, we invited Ramón Máiz (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela), Gérard Bouchard (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi) and Isabel Wences (Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales and Carlos III University of Madrid), three well-established scholars, to join this book project. These specialists study complex societies from three distinct vantage points, namely political philosophy, history, and political science, and innovate by providing an ambitious multi-dimensional approach to tackle issues of identity, pluralism and democracy.

The book is organized around four parts. In part I, Ramón Máiz and François Rocher explore political and social dynamics in plural societies and reflect on a series of normative issues that ought to be considered by political actors in the management of federal and non-federal societies. This is followed in Part II by studies conducted by Alain-G. Gagnon, José María Sauca and Jocelyn Maclure of a growing literature pertaining to governance, recognition and empowerment as it applies to countries experiencing tensions with respect to identity politics, majority/minority cultures and religion. In Part III, José Woehrling, Ascensión Elvira and Eduardo Ruiz team up in proposing an in-depth exploration of human rights, political rights and institutional pluralism in Europe and Canada with a special interest in the protection of rights and freedoms, the role of supranational bodies in upholding national and sub-national political rights as well as the evolving nature of self-determination from a human rights angle. In Part IV, Gérard Bouchard, Joxerramon Bengoetxea and Isabel Wences address a central concern in the politics of diversity by putting to test approaches founded on multiculturalism and interculturalism. Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland constitute relevant

experiments for societies seeking to advance models of deep diversity in advanced liberal democracies.

In connection with this international initiative, it is worth pointing out some recent publications produced by our respective research teams that provide foundational elements to the present endeavour.

Members of the Research Group on Plurinational Societies (www. grsp.uqam.ca) have released several important studies among which is included *Multinational Democracies*[1] that provided theoretical and normative considerations for three structuring projects. In 2009, GRSP published an important volume entitled *Dominant Nationalism, Dominant Ethnicity*[2] in which contributors explain how nation-states proceed to impose their own nationalism and how minority nations resist or not or even renegotiate their place within a given state. A parallel endeavour led to the publication of *Contemporary Majority Nationalism*[3]. This book illustrates the extent to which minority nations do not have a monopoly over the incarnation of nationalism and that, often times, majority nations have advanced their own nationalist agenda through the implementation of targeted public policies. These two previous studies have led GRSP members to launch into a new project addressing trust and mistrust[4] between majority and minority nations that bring together European and Canadian scholars specializing on divided polities.

Similarly, members of the Research Group on Law and Justice (www. derechoyjusticia.net/en) have been working on pluralism in its different dimensions: cultural diversity, human rights, cosmopolitanism, religion, immigration, and gender. Their collectives works have focused on reinforcing civil society's ideals[5], on recovering historical memory[6] and on deepening trust and lawfulness[7]. As a result, researchers in the areas of

---

[1] Gagnon, Alain-G. and James Tully (eds.), *Multinational Democracies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[2] Lecours, André and Geneviève Nootens (eds.), *Dominant Nationalism, Dominant Ethnicity. Identity, Federalism and Democracy*, Brussels, PIE Peter Lang, 2009.

[3] Gagnon, Alain-G., André Lecours and Geneviève Nootens (eds.), *Contemporary Majority Nationalism*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011.

[4] Karmis, Dimitrios and François Rocher (eds.), *La dynamique confiance-méfiance dans les démocraties multinationales: le Canada en perspectives comparatives*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2012.

[5] Sauca, José María and Isabel Wences (eds.), *Lecturas de la sociedad civil. Un mapa contemporáneo de sus teorías*, Madrid, Trotta, 2007.

[6] Pallín, José Antonio Martín and Rafael Escudero Alday (eds.), *Derecho y Memoria Histórica*, Madrid, Trotta, 2008; Alday, Rafael Escudero (ed.), *Diccionario de memoria histórica. Conceptos contra el olvido*, Madrid, Libros de la Catarata, 2011.

[7] Mendieta, Manuel Villoria and Isabel Wences (eds.), *Cultura de la Legalidad: Instituciones, Procesos y Estructuras*, Madrid, Libros de la Catarata, 2009. See also

legal theories, political philosophy and international law have developed an interdisciplinary approach to diversity from different vantage points and especially exploring the impact of law on the social construction of identity.

Building on these political and juridical interpretations, this book seeks not only to synthesize and question current-day literature but to go beyond conventional approaches. It does so in three ways: first, by moving beyond the debates between communitarianism and liberalism through an in-depth interpretation of cultural and national diversity in the context of democratic multinational societies; second, by further sensitizing political and social actors in countries such as Canada and Spain, as well as the United Kingdom, Belgium and Switzerland, to the importance of both legal and constitutional implementation of diversity; and third, by advancing a theoretical stance that questions conventional wisdom and puts to the test dominant approaches in the field of comparative politics and law. Through these efforts, we will continue to advance a project based on an ongoing intellectual exchange within as well as across national settings.

As editors of this book, we are particularly grateful to all authors for their continued trust and support as well as to Olivier De Champlain and Thomas Lafontaine (UQAM) as well as Kyle Ritchie (Concordia University) who have assisted us in the last phase of the book preparation.